Synthesis Report

OF THE EVALUATION REPORTS FOR BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, HUNGARY AND SLOVAKIA

for the ‘External Evaluation of the Superar Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary and Slovakia, 2021-2024 (EESP 2021-2024)’

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Executive Summary

Context

Superar is an international music education programme that provides **free classes to children and youth**, including those who are disadvantaged and marginalised. This report evaluates the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the Superar programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary and Slovakia, covering the period from September 2021 to August 2024.

As at June 2024, Superar was serving **1,484 students across 20 affiliated institutions** in the three countries, including 12 schools (2 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 4 in Hungary, and 6 in Slovakia), 6 kindergartens (all in Slovakia), as well as a community centre and an afterschool care centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina. 38% of enrolled students were from marginalised backgrounds (66% in Hungary, 34% in Slovakia, and 29% in Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Studies on similar music education programmes **often challenge the widespread optimism** about the benefits of music training. However, prior to data collection, greater effectiveness was expected from Superar, given its focus on disadvantaged areas, marginalised children, high-frequency classes and regular performances.

Approach and methodology

The evaluation employs a theory-based design (Contribution Analysis). The findings are **based on robust evidence**, involving 274 responses to a representative online survey from the parents of children enrolled in Superar classes, 43 stakeholder interviews, 10 photovoice and storytelling sessions with children, 15 classroom observations, and 3 focus group discussions (involving 16 participants). This was complemented by Superar-administered surveys among the children ('Self-assessment survey'), tutors and educators ('Educator Survey'), as well as programme and monitoring data, and the relevant literature.

Assessment of the programme Theory of Change

The evaluation found Superar's contribution narrative robust, with no critical weaknesses in its impact chain. It demonstrates **high behavioural additionality**, indicating significant influence on the target group's behaviour beyond what would have occurred otherwise. Superar has improved various socio-emotional and practical skills, enhanced class cohesion, and positively impacted local communities. The programme has also inspired non-Superar teachers, contributing to lasting changes in teaching practices and school culture, particularly in long-term engagements. Parents believe that Superar has made a 'large' or 'very large' contribution to the achievements observed in their children in 58% of cases, which indicates a **strong causal link** between Superar's activities (especially classes and performances) and the observed changes, contributing to the children's personal development.

However, three factors influence these findings. Firstly, **socio-economic and political contexts** have limited Superar's ability to effectively impact national curricula and teacher training across all three countries. Secondly, **other activities** in the children's lives such as sports, dance, or the arts have often contributed to the observed changes in the children's skills to a similar extent as Superar. Thirdly, current **parental support** is invaluable, but it is still considered insufficient in many cases, which hinders the effectiveness of Superar to some extent.

Relevance of Superar

Superar's targeted approach effectively **addresses the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised children** in the schools, kindergartens and communities where it operates, providing a much-needed sense of community, self-confidence, and positive reinforcement. Although parents are generally reluctant to discuss specific struggles their children face, 90% of the surveyed parents consider Superar

useful, 83% report that their children are excited to participate in its activities, and 97% would recommend it to others.

Superar's **delivery mechanism** effectively addresses the needs of its beneficiaries, which is largely due to its tailored approach, flexible implementation, and integration into school routines. 86% of parents find Superar's organisation practical for both themselves and their children. Superar prioritises **equitable implementation** and inclusivity, selecting entire classes for participation in its curricular settings, and favouring schools and kindergartens with higher proportions of marginalised students.

To improve the programme's relevance, **stakeholders emphasised** the importance of further inclusion and representation in the Superar programme and advocating for broader accessibility for children with disabilities and Roma communities.

Effectiveness of Superar

Superar has successfully enhanced the **musical abilities** of its participants in all countries. 94% of parents have noticed improvements in their children's singing due to participation in Superar's choir classes, and similar benefits were found in instrumental courses regarding children's ability to play musical instruments. These perceptions align with the children's self-assessment survey.

Superar has significantly improved participants' **socio-emotional skills**, with the most notable effects in collaboration (89% of parents) and self-confidence (88%). The programme has fostered a growth mindset[1], with 83% of parents noting improvements in this area. Positive changes in empathy, social awareness, and relationship skills were observed by 81% and 80% of parents, respectively. Additionally, 75% of parents reported improvements in decision-making, while 62% and 59% observed gains in behavioural and emotional control. These findings are supported by stakeholder interviews and the 2024 'Educator Survey'.

Superar has positively impacted **cognitive skills**, primarily through frequent classes, performances, and a focus on marginalised youth. Specifically, 88% of parents noted improvements in memory, linked to memorising song lyrics in multiple languages. 80% observed increased ability to learn foreign languages, with lyrics aiding language acquisition. 73% reported progress in language skills and attention, while 97% of students in instrumental classes showed improvement in fine motor skills.

Superar has enhanced **class cohesion** by promoting shared activities that foster unity and belonging, with 69% of parents and most tutors and teachers acknowledging its impact. Additionally, 79% of parents reported a more nurturing **school environment,** and over time, Superar's approach has gained wider acceptance among teachers, some of whom have adopted its pedagogical methods. Furthermore, 90% of parents observed indirect effects on siblings, while 77% noted positive impacts on **local communities**.

The majority of parents (71%) feel that their children have **equal opportunities** to take part in performances, camps, and exchanges. Nevertheless, limited parental support still hinders some marginalised children's participation in performances and extracurricular classes.

The majority of the **non-participating students** in Superar schools are inspired through Superar performances and school-wide events. While some may feel excluded or envy their peers involved in the programme, the positive effects, such as increased enthusiasm for music and the arts, outweigh the negative impacts, creating a broader cultural benefit for the schools and communities involved. Similarly, Superar's presence in schools fosters positive behavioural changes and collaboration among **non-Superar schoolteachers**, having an indirect effect on the overall educational environment.

[1] Definition of 'growth mindset' by Superar: *'the belief that hard work leads to success, which promotes perseverance and resilience. Children with a growth mindset achieve better academic results than children with the opposite, so-called fixed thinking.'*

Children in non-Superar schools are influenced by Superar mainly through teacher trainings, promotional workshops and indirect engagement, including access to extracurricular Superar classes and public performances, and experiencing benefits through Superar's impact on their siblings.

Superar has successfully **expanded its reach to schools and kindergartens** and **increased the number of classes and children** served across all three countries in recent years, despite challenges related to financial resources and school management support. On the other hand, there have been only partial successes in **integrating Superar into national curricula and teacher training** across the three countries due to shifting political priorities, bureaucratic obstacles, and varying engagement from education officials, highlighting the need for tailor-made local strategies.

To increase Superar's effectiveness, **stakeholders recommended** to focus on increasing parental engagement, performance opportunities, and standardised tutor training (with creative flexibility), along with greater schoolteacher involvement, further partnerships and advocacy, capacity development, and exploring the idea of 'light Superar partnerships' to expand its reach sustainably.

Sustainability of Superar

The Superar programme shows **strong potential for lasting benefits** for young participants. The majority of parents believe the programme's long-term benefits will endure, with over 60% expecting positive effects to last a lifetime or for many years. Nevertheless, its long-term sustainability in schools, kindergartens, and among non-Superar teachers depends on sustained participation, supportive school management, and ongoing engagement of the non-Superar schoolteachers.

Funding stability of Superar is perceived to be adequate by its management in each country; however, **financial sustainability** could be improved through diversification, attracting private donors, dedicated regional fundraising, capacity building, local awareness campaigns, and paid performances and training sessions.

Key recommendations by the evaluators

- **Sustaining success – the case for continuing Superar**: the strong feedback from parents, tutors, non-Superar schoolteachers, and other stakeholders justifies Superar's current pedagogical approach, delivery setup, its strategy for selecting partner institutions, and its focus on entire-grade participation. To enhance effectiveness, it is recommended to engage non-Superar schoolteachers more by involving them in performances, joint training, and open lessons. Gradually introducing Superar to higher grades could foster long-term engagement with music beyond the programme.

- **Driving the change – the success factors of Superar**: it is recommended to expand performance opportunities in both scale and frequency to boost engagement and visibility. While maintaining flexibility in Superar's approach, the programme should continue upholding a shared pedagogical foundation for consistency. Further expansion into underprivileged, particularly rural, areas could extend Superar's reach and impact. More active involvement of parents and siblings in Superar events can strengthen community bonds and help sustain the programme's impacts on the long term.

- **Clearing the way – challenges and strategic growth**: given Superar's current coverage and maturity in each country, a formal growth strategy is recommended to be developed across all locations. This should include a roadmap with clear objectives, actions, performance indicators, and regular progress reviews, as well as a tailored organisational structure in each country. The strategy should also maximise Superar's international potential through shared practices, increased international exchanges, and performances. Focusing on building academic partnerships and using powerful storytelling techniques in the discussions with stakeholders could be alternative ways to enhance policy influence, especially in less-progressed countries. Additionally, diversifying funding sources, professionalising fundraising, and seeking larger corporate partners should be prioritised for long-term sustainability.

A. Summary of the findings

This Synthesis Evaluation Report is part of the *'External Evaluation of the Superar Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, and Slovakia, 2021-2024 (EESP 2021-2024).',* which assesses the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of Superar in the three countries. It should be read in conjunction with the three Country Evaluation Reports for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, and Slovakia, covering each of the three countries in more detail. The evaluation covers the period from September 2021 to August 2024, spanning three school years.

I. Introduction

As at June 2024, Superar was serving 1,484 students across twenty schools and affiliated locations in the three countries covered by this evaluation, offering free choir and instrumental classes made possible through a diverse range of funding sources.

Superar is an international music education programme that provides free classes to children and youth, including those who are disadvantaged and marginalised, in seven European countries. By partnering with schools, kindergartens, and community organisations, Superar aims to promote social cohesion and personal development through the power of music.

As at June 2024, in the three countries concerned, Superar operated in 12 schools (2 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 4 in Hungary, and 6 in Slovakia), in 6 kindergartens (all in Slovakia), as well as a community centre and an afterschool care centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Of the 1,484 students involved, 421 were enrolled in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 258 in Hungary, and 805 in Slovakia.

The participation breakdown shows that 1,033 students engaged in curricular choir classes, 381 in extracurricular choir classes, and 70 in extracurricular instrumental classes (guitar in Hungary and violin in Bosnia and Herzegovina). The evaluation focuses on ten Superar-affiliated institutions, specifically those with the longest history of participation in the Superar programme: four in Bosnia and Herzegovina, three in Hungary, and three in Slovakia[2].

The local Superar programmes are supported by a diverse range of funding sources, with crucial contributions from the If! Foundation (in all countries), Porticus (in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovakia), and Sziget (in Hungary). Additional funding comes from in-kind donations from corporate partners, local grants, EU subsidies, paid performances, fundraising campaigns, individual donations, tax donations, and paid training sessions.

➔ *See Section 2 for more information.*

The evaluation employs a theory-based design, building on a rich empirical base.

The evaluation applied a theory-based design and a mixed-method approach, using Contribution Analysis as a theoretical framework. The findings are based on the analysis of various primary qualitative and quantitative data, including 274 responses to a representative online survey from the parents of children enrolled in Superar classes, 43 semi-structured stakeholder interviews, 10 photovoice[3] and storytelling sessions with children, 15 classroom observations, and one focus group discussion in each country, involving a total of 16 participants. This evidence base was complemented

[2] The selection reflects the number of institutions in each country that have been part of the programme long enough to provide meaningful insights for the evaluation's data collection.

[3] In the context of this evaluation, '**photovoice**' was used as a participatory method, allowing participants, including younger children, to express their experiences, feelings, beliefs, and perspectives through visual means. While traditional photovoice typically involves photography, drawings were also incorporated to accommodate younger participants, enabling them to contribute their views either by bringing in pre-done drawings or creating them on-site.

with secondary data sources, including the children's self-assessment survey ('Smiley survey') and a survey among Superar tutors[4], non-Superar teachers, and other educators ('Educator survey'), both administered by Superar, in addition to programme data, monitoring data and the relevant literature.

➔ *See Section 1.2 for more information.*

The literature review found that music programmes primarily enhance musical, socio-emotional and fine motor skills, particularly in disadvantaged settings, with limited and potentially fading effects on cognitive skills. Therefore, prior to data collection, larger effectiveness was expected of Superar given its focus on operating in disadvantaged areas, including marginalised children, high-frequency classes, and enjoyable activities for children.

Studies overall challenge the widespread optimism about the benefits of music training; however, they indicate that music training can have a notable impact on certain skills. Contrary to general assumptions, according to relevant literature, transfer effects are unlikely to be significant for cognitive and intellectual skills, literacy, language, or academic attainment. Instead, transfer effects are more probable in areas closely related to music, such as social and emotional skills, personal well-being, and, for instrumental training, fine motor skills. Although these effects are often relatively small, they remain valuable given the relatively low cost[5] of implementing music training programmes. However, effects can fade over time, which raises questions about the long-term sustainability of these benefits. Studies suggest effects tend to be stronger in socio-economically disadvantaged settings and for children with lower initial skills, especially when teaching is context-specific and backed by a supportive curriculum and community. The main moderator of these effects appears to be the socio-economic context and children's initial skill levels, rather than factors like age, gender, or training duration. The likelihood of positive effects increases when music training is enjoyable and fulfilling. Finally, potential biases, such as participant self-selection or confirmation bias, must be carefully managed in the design and interpretation of evaluations to ensure robust conclusions.

Based on the literature review alone, somewhat greater effects were expected from Superar, as it operates primarily in socio-economically disadvantaged areas and is supported by a curriculum and community that are specifically adapted to the needs of this target group, favouring schools with a higher proportion of marginalised children. The music activities are frequent and designed around enjoyable experiences for children, such as various games and regular performances. Self-selection is generally not an issue for curricular classes (unlike for extracurricular ones), which, as seen later, was a moderating factor in the effects.

➔ *See Section 3 for more information.*

II. Assessment of the Theory of Change

Superar has a high behavioural additionality and a strong causal relationship between its activities and the observed changes in each country, resulting in a significant contribution to social cohesion and personal development.

Overall, as summarised in Figure 1 below, the contribution narrative of Superar in the three countries is robust, with no critical weaknesses identified in its impact chain to date. This underlines high

[4] Superar teachers on Superar payroll, see Annex 6.1 (Key terms used in the report).
[5] See further (Bigand & Tillmann, 2021)

behavioural additionality[6], indicating that the programme significantly influences the target group's behaviour in the desired direction beyond what would have occurred without their engagement.

There is a strong causal relationship between Superar's inputs and its activities, such as classes, performances, camps, and exchanges. While Superar fulfils its contractual obligations to implement these activities, their implementation is directly dependent on funding from key funders in each country. Without this funding, the activities would not take place, making it the primary driver of Superar's operations.

Superar has successfully enhanced various socio-emotional and practical skills among its target group, improved class cohesion in its affiliated institutions, and made a notable impact on local communities. Additionally, the programme has contributed to educational practices, inspiring non-Superar schoolteachers and fostering lasting changes in teaching methodologies and school culture, particularly in institutions with long-term engagement. Notably, in Slovakia, resources have been allocated to developing methodologies, leading to accreditation for 'innovative education' training in music pedagogy.

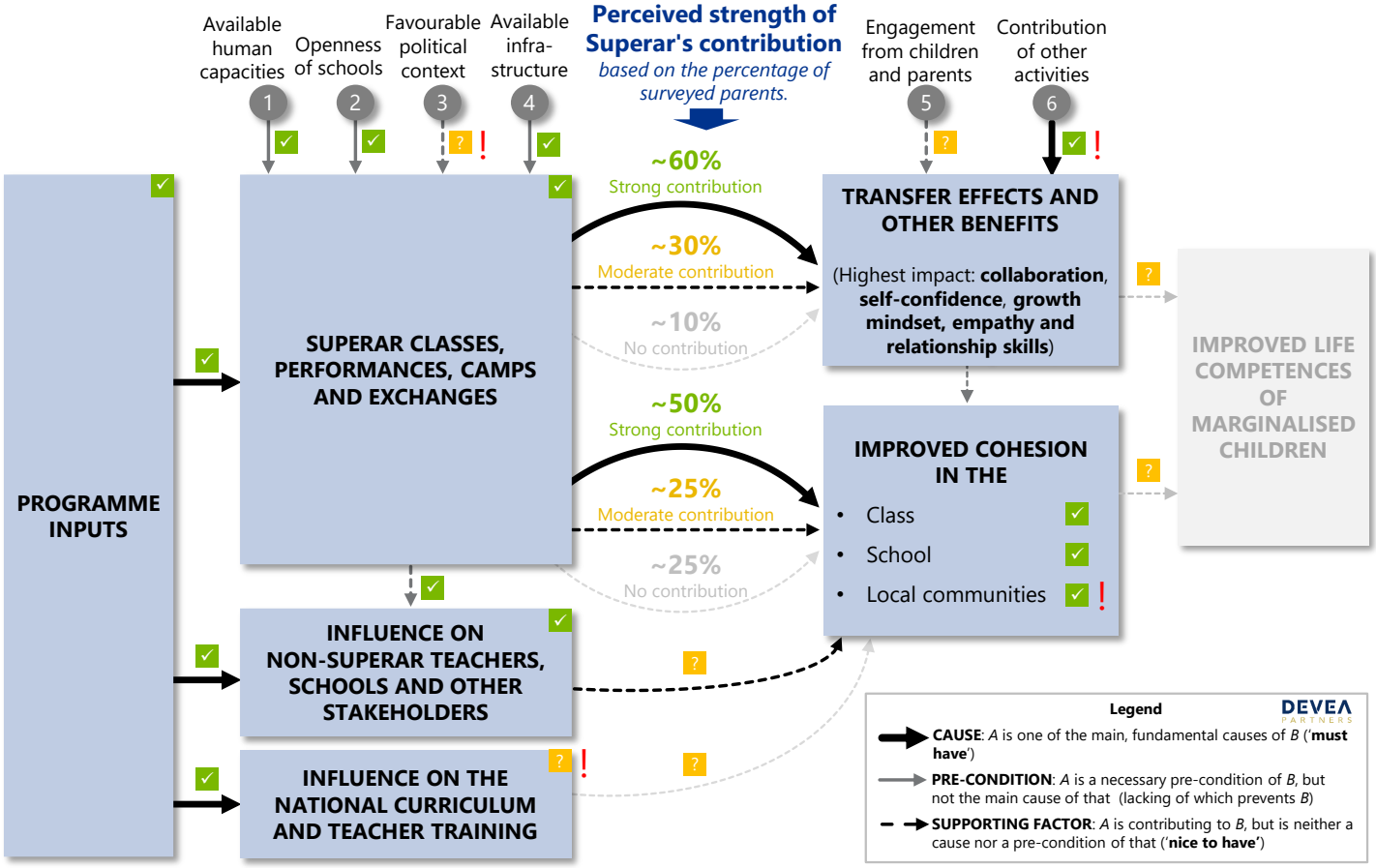
Parents believe that Superar has made a 'large' or 'very large' contribution to the achievements observed in their children in 58% of cases. Superar's strongest cause-effect relationship was observed in improving musical skills, fine motor skills, self-confidence, and collaboration, as well as positively affecting children's home environments through their siblings. Contribution Analysis has confirmed that the key assumptions underpinning these outcomes are valid and has clarified Superar's specific contributions, differentiating them from external activities.

Nevertheless, three factors nuance these findings. Firstly, specific socio-economic and political contexts have hindered Superar's ability to effectively influence national curricula and teacher training in all three countries. Secondly, other activities in the children's lives (sports, dancing, arts, etc.) have played a larger role in the observed outcomes than initially anticipated. This suggests that some of the improvements can be attributed to both Superar's influence and the impact of these additional activities. While Superar's contribution is necessary and significant, it alone does not fully account for the observed changes. Thirdly, current parental support is invaluable, but increased parental engagement[7] through targeted efforts by Superar and the affiliated schools and kindergartens could further amplify the programme's effects.

[6] 'Behavioural additionality' refers to the extent to which Superar has influenced changes in the behaviours, attitudes, or practices of the programme's direct and indirect beneficiaries that would not have occurred without its presence. It highlights how Superar contributes to shifts in actions, routines, and decision-making among its target groups. This evaluation specifically examined behavioural changes among children, their parents, non-Superar schoolteachers in Superar-affiliated institutions and beyond, as well as education policymakers.

[7] Parents are not direct participants, but since the children involved are typically quite young, Superar relies on parental support. Parental involvement is especially important in two areas: first, ensuring their children can attend performances, or even participating as spectators to motivate them; and second, encouraging their children's engagement in extracurricular activities.

Figure 1: Assessment of the simplified high-level Theory of Change of Superar across the three countries



Source: Devea Partners (2024), based on various primary and secondary data sources

➔ *See Section 4 for more information.*

III. Answers to the Evaluation Questions

III.1 Relevance

Superar's targeted approach effectively addresses the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised children in the schools, kindergartens and communities where it operates across the three countries, providing a much-needed sense of community, self-confidence, and positive reinforcement.

Superar serves a diverse target group across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, and Slovakia. As at June 2024, 38% of enrolled students were estimated to come from marginalised backgrounds, though proportions vary by country. Hungary had the highest proportion (66%), followed by Slovakia (34%) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (29%). Across the three countries, 21% of all students were estimated to have a 'marginalised or mixed ethnicity,' 14% have 'learning disorders', and another 14% come from 'marginalised family backgrounds', such as living in poverty or having single or disabled parents. Based on the stakeholder interviews, the target group faces various challenges related to social and economic barriers, including financial difficulties, low self-confidence, and educational difficulties linked to language and learning disorders.

Superar effectively addresses the needs of these children by providing a supportive, inclusive environment that fosters a sense of belonging and meets social and emotional needs often unmet at home or school. Stakeholder feedback highlights Superar's emphasis on building community, promoting integration, and offering positive experiences that are highly relevant to the target group. Although parents are generally reluctant to discuss specific struggles their children face, 90% of the surveyed parents consider Superar useful, 83% report that their children are excited to participate in its activities, and 97% would recommend it to others, underlining the programme's perceived relevance in creating opportunities for social and personal development for its target group.

➔ *See Section 5.1 for more information (Evaluation Question 1.1).*

Superar's delivery mechanism effectively addresses the needs of its beneficiaries, which is largely due to its tailored approach, flexible implementation, and integration into school routines, although challenges in fully engaging parents remain.

The delivery mechanism of the Superar programme effectively addresses the needs and challenges of its beneficiaries. 86% of parents find Superar's organisation practical for both themselves and their children, which aligns with the views of other interviewed stakeholders. The programme's flexible implementation, local adaptability, and smooth integration into school routines are praised, contributing to its overall effectiveness. Tutors appreciate Superar's departure from traditional methods, highlighting its tailored and interactive teaching approaches that engage children from diverse backgrounds, including those from marginalised communities. The advantage of having tutors who are external to the school is also widely emphasised, with parents often praising the tutors' creative and participatory methods that are well received by their children.

Nevertheless, challenges in engaging parents persist across all three countries, as some parents may struggle to connect with the programme or fully understand its benefits. Tutors recognise the need for improved outreach to families and have identified effective communication strategies, such as using a Viber channel in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to strengthen connections with parents and keep them informed about their children's progress and opportunities within Superar. Engaging parents more effectively could further enhance their involvement and support for their children's educational experiences.

➔ *See Section 5.1 for more information (Evaluation Question 1.2).*

Superar prioritises equitable implementation and inclusivity, selecting entire classes for participation in its curricular settings, and favouring schools and kindergartens with higher proportions of marginalised students.

The Superar programme is designed with a strong commitment to equitable implementation, ensuring that all children have access to high-quality music education, irrespective of their musical abilities, socio-economic status, or background. The programme embodies principles of inclusivity by offering free classes to children and youth, including those who are disadvantaged and marginalised. The selection process typically involves choosing entire classes to participate in its curricular settings, reinforcing the notion that no child is left behind. While some challenges persist in including all classes at certain schools, such as only lower-grade classes being selected or not all classes within a grade participating, stakeholders highlight the importance of ongoing efforts to engage every class.

Furthermore, the selection of schools and kindergartens prioritises institutions with a higher proportion of children from marginalised backgrounds, in line with Superar's 'lab' model as outlined in its Theory of Change. These schools and kindergartens serve as environments for testing and developing Superar's methods, and their selection is a conscious decision in each country, influenced by practical factors such as the local Superar's financial resources and support from school management, rather than being solely based on serving the 'most marginalised' schools.

➔ *See Section 5.1 for more information (Evaluation Question 1.3).*

Stakeholders emphasised the importance of further inclusion and representation in the Superar programme, advocating for broader accessibility for children with disabilities and Roma communities, while ensuring improved outcomes.

Several common suggestions emerged across the three evaluated countries, highlighting 'Further inclusion and representation' as particularly relevant for programme relevance. Focus group participants unanimously supported broadening Superar's accessibility, though they rated this with medium priority compared to other more urgent recommendations. Participants had specific suggestions regarding better targeting children with mental or physical disabilities or better addressing the needs of Roma communities. However, they also emphasised that simply increasing the number of participants would not necessarily lead to improved outcomes. Instead, they called for practical strategies and effective communication to increase the commitment and engagement of parents, thereby enhancing the programme's effectiveness for current participants.

Additionally, stakeholders proposed several ways to enhance the programme's relevance. These include expanding the Superar programme to rural areas (focusing on rural Hungary, Eastern Slovakia, and, for instance, cantons in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a divided school system[8]), to increase accessibility; diversifying the musical education offered by introducing a wider range of instrumental classes; and specifically engaging upper grade students. Other recommendations involve promoting choir participation among boys to challenge gender stereotypes; increasing teacher training in Superar's methodologies; strengthening partnerships with NGOs serving marginalised communities for better resource sharing; and improving brand awareness and promotional activities to raise the programme's visibility.

➔ *See Section 5.1 for more information (Evaluation Question 2).*

III.2 Effectiveness

Superar has significantly enhanced the musical abilities of its participants in all countries.

Superar has significantly enhanced the musical abilities of its participants across all three countries, including vulnerable and marginalised children. A survey reveals that 94% of parents have noticed improvements in their children's singing due to participation in Superar's choir classes, and similar benefits are reported in instrumental courses regarding children's ability to play musical instruments. Stakeholder interviews and photovoice sessions with children further confirm the programme's positive influence on musical skills. These findings align with existing literature on music education and are substantiated by class observations and the children's self-assessment surveys, demonstrating a clear cause-and-effect relationship between Superar's activities and enhanced musical competencies.

➔ *See Section 5.2 for more information (Evaluation Question 3.1).*

Superar has significantly enhanced the socio-emotional competencies of its participants, with particularly strong impact on their collaboration skills, self-esteem and self-confidence, growth mindset, empathy, social awareness, and relationship skills.

Superar has significantly contributed to the socio-emotional competencies of its direct beneficiaries across all countries, including vulnerable and marginalised children. Based on a literature review and an analysis of programme documents, the evaluators selected eight socio-emotional competencies to assess in detail. The most significant effects were identified in relation to collaboration skills, as well as self-confidence and self-esteem, with 89% and 88% of parents reporting improvements, respectively. Superar's emphasis on group activities, such as collective singing and performances, has fostered

[8] There are several schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina in which students of different ethnicities are separated within the same building. See further: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two_schools_under_one_roof

essential teamwork skills and strengthened social bonds, particularly benefiting shy, introverted, and insecure children.

Additionally, the programme has nurtured a growth mindset among participants, with 83% of parents observing improvements in this area, further enhancing resilience. While impacts on responsible decision-making and behavioural and emotional control were noted, these were ranked somewhat lower; however, focus group discussions suggested higher perceived effects in terms of impacts on the children's behaviour, especially in Hungary and Slovakia. Overall, Superar's inclusive and free-of-charge model provides important support to children from marginalised backgrounds, contributing not only to their musical education but also to their socio-emotional development. However, it is important to recognise that other extracurricular activities pursued by the children also play a similarly significant role in driving these changes (see Section 4.1.4).

➔ *See Section 5.2 for more information (Evaluation Question 3.2).*

Superar has positively influenced various cognitive skills among participants, including memory, language, attention, and fine motor skills, primarily due to its frequent classes, regular performances, and strong emphasis on reaching marginalised young people.

Superar is likely to have wider benefits and further effects beyond its explicitly planned outcomes. Specifically, 88% of parents reported enhancements in memory, largely attributed to the programme's focus on memorising song lyrics in multiple languages. Additionally, 80% of parents noted improvements in their children's ability to learn foreign languages, with feedback highlighting how musical activities facilitate language acquisition. Improvements in general language skills and attention were also observed, with 73% of parents acknowledging positive developments in both areas. Fine motor skills showed a remarkable 97% improvement rate among students in instrumental classes. Furthermore, 74% of parents indicated that their children were inspired to consider further musical education, reflecting the programme's broader impact on fostering passion and ambition in young learners.

Overall, Superar not only meets its educational goals but also fosters important life skills and aspirations among children, particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged contexts. Although the literature review suggests that far-transfer effects on cognitive and intellectual skills or academic achievement are generally limited, Superar programme has a high-frequency class schedule, includes regular performances in its curriculum and operates in schools serving a significant proportion of marginalised children. This context may contribute to a more pronounced impact compared to other programmes. Nevertheless, while Superar creates an environment conducive to cognitive growth, the effects on learning may be less immediate or pronounced than those seen in musical and certain socio-emotional competencies, often reflecting a slower trajectory of development.

➔ *See Section 5.2 for more information (Evaluation Question 5).*

Superar has significantly improved class cohesion, nurturing school environments, and community engagement among its participants and their families, while also fostering broader social connections and influencing the behaviours of non-Superar teachers.

Superar has significantly enhanced class cohesion among its direct beneficiaries by promoting shared activities that foster unity and a sense of belonging among students, with 69% of the surveyed parents acknowledging its direct contribution. Communal singing and collaborative projects encourage students to work together, leading to stronger relationships within the classroom.

According to 79% of the surveyed parents, the programme has also created more nurturing school environments. Additionally, Superar has enhanced overall cohesion within schools, where teachers have reported a growing acceptance of its approach over time across all participating countries. Superar has influenced the behaviour of non-Superar teachers in many cases, typically after a longer period of exposure to and active involvement in Superar classes, performances, and other activities. Some non-Superar teachers have benefited from the programme by incorporating Superar's pedagogical techniques into their everyday teaching practices.

Remarkably, 90% of parents observed indirect effects on siblings of Superar participants, highlighting the programme's broader influence on families and the community. Superar has provided substantial benefits to local communities, with 77% of parents recognising its positive impact, particularly noted in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovakia, where public performances foster cultural diversity and community engagement. Although only 52% of parents felt their behaviours in relation to their children (such as spending more time together or attending performances) had changed due to the programme, there have been gradual improvements in relationships with parents across all participating countries. This indicates a need for continued efforts to maximise Superar's potential impact on family and community involvement.

➔ *See Section 5.2 for more information (Evaluation Question 3.3).*

Choir and instrumental classes have similar attendance rates and effectiveness, with no significant differences in the impact on children and communities. Extracurricular classes tend to have lower attendance but higher engagement by children, resulting in only minor differences in effectiveness across all countries.

The attendance rates and effectiveness of Superar classes do not significantly differ between choir and instrumental formats. However, scheduling type influences participation rates, with extracurricular classes generally experiencing lower attendance due to their voluntary nature. Despite this, higher engagement from both children and parents helps to offset the negative impact of reduced participation on the effectiveness of the programme. In other words, even with fewer children attending in the afternoons, their increased engagement can help maintain the overall impact.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, both curricular and extracurricular classes positively impact student development, though parents perceive slightly greater benefits from curricular classes in emotional control and empathy, while extracurricular classes appear to offer higher advantages for local communities. In Hungary, the benefits for siblings of Superar participants are more pronounced in curricular classes. Data from Slovakia indicate that extracurricular classes are perceived as having a somewhat greater overall usefulness, generating more excitement among children, and having a stronger impact on communities (while these classes are attended by a self-selected subset of children, which may influence these perceptions). In contrast, curricular classes demonstrate slightly higher effectiveness in improving memory or enhancing collaboration.

➔ *See Section 5.2 for more information (Evaluation Question 3.4).*

Superar has been implemented equitably, with equal access across both curricular and extracurricular classes, though limited parental support still hinders some marginalised children's participation in performances.

Superar has been implemented in an equitable manner, ensuring broad access to participation, especially within mandatory curricular classes, where all students are included, reducing the risk of exclusion. The majority of parents (71%) feel that their children have equal opportunities to take part in performances, camps, and exchanges. Inclusivity is a key aspect of Superar's approach, particularly within curricular classes in each country.

Extracurricular classes also highlight equitable access, with Hungary and Bosnia and Herzegovina showing higher proportions of marginalised students participating compared to their non-marginalised peers (84% vs. 62% in Hungary, 33% vs. 24% in Bosnia and Herzegovina), while Slovakia reports a slightly lower rate of marginalised participation in the extracurricular setting (27% vs. 36%). Nevertheless, Superar management and tutors across all countries highlighted ongoing challenges in mobilising and ensuring the participation of young children in performances, as limited parental support continues to hinder involvement for many marginalised children.

➔ *See Section 5.2 for more information (Evaluation Question 3.5).*

Superar effectively engages direct and indirect beneficiaries through strong community connections and professional networks, but faces challenges related to parental engagement, and effectively engaging with policymakers.

Based on the self-assessment of Superar management members and tutors, Superar has sufficient capacity to effectively reach both direct and indirect beneficiaries[9]. The organisation's strong capacity to engage young people is highlighted by positive ratings from management, tutors, and schoolteachers. However, the current staff capacity, which is constrained by available financial resources, aligns with the current number of participants, limiting the potential for growth without additional support. Superar's ability to connect with parents is considered appropriate by tutors and local programme management, and each local Superar has demonstrated resilience and adaptability through proactive collaboration with the relevant schools and other affiliated institutions. Nonetheless, all local Superar organisations face obstacles in direct engagement of parents, particularly due to issues such as illiteracy, language barriers, and occasional lack of interest.

Established professional networks effectively facilitate Superar's recruitment of potential tutors and teacher candidates, with personal connections serving as an effective strategy across all three countries, although finding quality candidates remains a challenge. Financial constraints significantly influence Superar's outreach to schools and kindergartens, as management members emphasise the necessity for increased funding to expand relationships with educational partners. While Superar demonstrates promise in engaging with policymakers and education officials, the fluctuating political environment and lack of a systematic advocacy approach highlight the need for alternative strategies, including promoting the programme's benefits to policymakers, securing potential funding, and ensuring its alignment with educational priorities. Lastly, the international aspect of Superar is highly regarded by tutors, providing international opportunities for students, and enhancing the programme's impact through the collaboration of local Superar operations.

➔ *See Section 5.2 for more information (Evaluation Question 3.6).*

Superar's centrally designed monitoring and evaluation framework is generally perceived as structured and effective but still requires refinement.

The current monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for Superar is centrally designed to measure programme effectiveness through a system of regularly collected indicators and assessment tools like the Educator Survey, the Self-Assessment 'Smiley Survey' for children, and the Observation Tool for music directors and tutors. Feedback indicates the framework is structured but still being finetuned. Stakeholders generally view the monitoring of children's improvements as effective, though some concerns about its appropriateness for measuring musical education were raised. The evaluation provided practical suggestions to enhance Superar's M&E system during its inception phase, particularly for the 'Smiley Survey' and the 'Educator Survey.'

➔ *See Section 5.2 for more information (Evaluation Question 3.7).*

Superar has successfully expanded its reach to schools and kindergartens and increased the number of classes and children served across all three countries in recent years, despite facing challenges related to financial resources, school management support, and the general policy environment.

Superar has been effective in gradually increasing its reach to schools and kindergartens across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, and Slovakia by employing strategies that align with local educational contexts while adhering to its overarching mission. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for instance, the

[9] Indirect beneficiaries of Superar include schoolteachers (including school directors), parents and siblings of children, other school children (all children in the respective education system), general public in areas underserved by cultural offers. See Section 6.1 for key terms used in the report.

institutional portfolio has been complemented by a community centre that has a wide reach to potential target groups and stakeholders, while its teacher training initiatives have attracted significant interest from other schools. In Hungary, local management takes proactive steps to establish partnerships that align with school objectives, the national curriculum, and the priorities of the two relevant local educational districts, ensuring compliance and sustainability. Similarly, in Slovakia, Superar has implemented various strategies to expand its reach, including the development of accredited teacher training on innovative educational practices. Despite this effective expansion, common challenges persist, such as financial constraints and the need for supportive school management, along with potential political shifts that could impact Superar's operational capacity and growth prospects.

➔ *See Section 5.2 for more information (Evaluation Question 4.1).*

The majority of the non-participating students in Superar schools are inspired through Superar performances and school-wide events. While some may feel excluded or envy their peers involved in the programme, the positive effects, such as increased enthusiasm for music and the arts, outweigh the negative impacts, creating a broader cultural benefit for the schools and communities involved.

The presence of Superar within schools and kindergartens has a dual impact on students who are not enrolled in its classes, characterised by both positive and negative effects. Stakeholder interviews reveal that Superar's initiatives often inspire interest and enthusiasm for music and the arts among these students. However, some may also experience feelings of exclusion, envying their peers who are involved in the programme.

Based on the perceptions of tutors and non-Superar schoolteachers, Superar typically achieves a positive balance in this regard. This balance reflects anecdotal evidence and specific examples cited during interviews, with a majority of stakeholders emphasising the positive spillover effects, such as increased enthusiasm and a broader cultural impact, over the negative ones. Nonetheless, managing these contrasting impacts effectively remains an ongoing challenge.

➔ *See Section 5.2 for more information (Evaluation Question 4.2).*

Superar's presence in schools fosters positive behavioural changes and collaboration among non-Superar schoolteachers, having an indirect effect on the overall educational environment.

Teachers in Superar schools who are not in direct contact with Superar tutors generally experience a positive impact from the programme's presence. Evidence shows that there has been a shift in teachers' behaviours from initial unfamiliarity with Superar to its greater acceptance and, eventually, active involvement (such as assisting with the organisation of, and participating) in Superar classes, performances, and events. This has fostered increased collaboration and engagement within the school community. The presence of Superar has even led to the spontaneous adoption of its teaching methodologies by some of non-Superar teachers (such as effective methods for silencing students, using silence, or employing clapping in their classrooms), enhancing the overall educational experience for all students. However, variations exist in the degree of impact across different countries, with some respondents noting that the influence is not universally felt, highlighting individual differences in teacher engagement and the unique contexts of each school. Overall, Superar's presence contributes to a more enriched educational environment, benefiting both participating and non-participating teachers.

➔ *See Section 5.2 for more information (Evaluation Question 4.3).*

Children in non-Superar schools are influenced by Superar mainly through teacher trainings, promotional workshops, and indirect engagement, including access to extracurricular Superar classes and public performances, and experiencing benefits through Superar's impact on their siblings.

Children in non-Superar schools have been positively impacted by the local adaptation of the Superar programme, however, mostly indirectly and to a much lesser extent than those in Superar schools.

While Bosnia and Herzegovina and Hungary currently lack a comprehensive training programme for teachers in non-Superar schools, Slovakia has seen teachers who participated in Superar training actively adopt its methods. Moreover, children from non-Superar schools have engaged in Superar activities; in Slovakia, for instance, children from surrounding villages attend the Superar choir, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, extracurricular options like choir and violin classes are available to them. Additionally, Superar's public performances, some of them held in prestigious venues, expose many children to the arts and foster an appreciation for music. Importantly, the influence of Superar extends to the siblings of participating students, with a significant majority of parents noting that involvement in Superar positively affects their siblings' attitudes and interests towards music.

➔ *See Section 5.2 for more information (Evaluation Question 4.4).*

There have been partial successes in integrating Superar into national curricula and teacher training across the three countries due to shifting political priorities, bureaucratic obstacles, and varying engagement from education officials, highlighting the need for tailor-made local strategies.

Education policymakers across Slovakia, Hungary, and Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrate varying degrees of awareness and engagement with Superar, reflecting both successes and barriers in its potential integration into national curricula. In Slovakia, Superar has made significant strides, influencing the reformed national arts curriculum and receiving government accreditation, which has increased its credibility among policymakers. Conversely, while Hungary has established efficient local partnerships allowing Superar to function as official music classes, the formal integration of music programmes into the national curriculum remains unlikely given current educational priorities. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, initial recognition through a Memorandum of Understanding by the Ministry of Education of Canton Sarajevo has not translated into substantial policy adoption at the curricular level. Nevertheless, the local programme has access to all relevant schools and is also permitted to supplement the cantonal curriculum with the Superar curriculum. The interviewed education experts in the three countries suggest strategies to handle these obstacles, emphasising the importance of building strategic partnerships, enhancing visibility through public performances, leveraging existing networks, showcasing impactful case studies, and employing storytelling to convey the benefits of Superar's methodologies.

➔ *See Section 5.2 for more information (Evaluation Question 4.5).*

To increase Superar's effectiveness, stakeholders recommended increasing parental engagement, performance opportunities, and standardised tutor training (with creative flexibility), along with greater schoolteacher involvement, further partnerships and advocacy, capacity development, and exploring 'light partnerships' to expand its reach sustainably.

Stakeholders across the three evaluated countries offered insights to enhance the effective and equitable implementation of the Superar programme. Regarding recommendations for increasing effectiveness for the target group, increasing parental engagement[10] was identified as the top priority in each country, emphasising the need for effective connections among parents, children, and Superar. It is expected that, most importantly, engaged parents will be more likely to create the necessary conditions, both logistical and emotional, for their children to participate in performances, extracurricular classes, or even take part in Superar events themselves. Additionally, participants highlighted the importance of increasing the number of performance opportunities for students, advocating for partnerships with renowned artists to increase the programme's profile. The standardisation of tutor

[10] Through organising special classes involving parents, introducing special mobile-based communication channels (e.g. Viber, Messenger) to deepen engagement and active support from families, fostering a more inclusive and supportive community around the programme.

training was also deemed important, while ensuring flexibility in programme implementation and allowing tutors to maintain their creativity and individuality in delivering the curriculum.

In terms of increasing the reach of Superar, there was strong support in each country for enhancing the involvement of non-Superar schoolteachers[11], which could create a positive spillover effect and enrich the educational environment. Pursuing more partnerships and advocacy initiatives was deemed essential for influencing educational policies, while strengthening internal capacities was recognised as foundational for sustainable expansion. Lastly, the concept of developing 'light partnerships' with schools was discussed as a scalable model for disseminating Superar methodologies, enabling broader integration without significant resource demands.

➔ *See Section 5.2 for more information (Evaluation Question 6).*

III.3 Sustainability

The Superar programme shows strong potential for lasting benefits for young participants, yet its long-term sustainability in schools, kindergartens, and among non-Superar teachers depends on sustained participation, supportive school management, and ongoing engagement of the non-Superar schoolteachers.

The Superar programme appears to be on a promising path to sustaining its benefits, though its impact varies based on the length of participation, individual commitment, and institutional support. Survey data indicate that the majority of parents believe the programme's long-term benefits, particularly in musical competence, self-confidence, and social skills, will endure, with over 60% expecting positive effects to last a lifetime or for many years. While these are perceptions rather than pre-post comparisons, such positive expectations are promising and may signal long-term impact, potentially setting Superar apart from some of the other music education programmes discussed in the literature.

Tutors generally share this optimism, especially for children engaged in the programme from an early age, highlighting the programme's intensity and the empowering experience of performances as factors that reinforce its long-term impact. However, the programme's ability to sustain engagement through adolescence remains uncertain, as external factors, such as educational transitions and the quality of future music education, play significant roles.

Within schools and kindergartens, Superar's impact shows potential for lasting integration, particularly where the programme has been active for multiple years and local teachers are supported through continuous training and mentoring. Yet, the programme's effectiveness within schools depends on the alignment with school leadership priorities and teachers' commitment, with concerns about the added pressures from recent educational reforms, for instance, in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

➔ *See Section 5.3 for more information (Evaluation Question 7).*

Funding stability of Superar is perceived to be adequate by its management in each country; however, financial sustainability could be improved through diversification, attracting private donors, dedicated regional fundraising, capacity building, local awareness campaigns, and paid performances and training sessions.

The financial sustainability of the local Superar programme is currently regarded by Superar management members as adequate, leading tutors, Superar management, and schoolteachers to propose various strategies to improve financial stability. Key suggestions include diversifying funding sources to lessen reliance on major donors, building partnerships with local and corporate entities, and

[11] Through encouraging greater non-Superar schoolteacher involvement in performances, providing training and methodologies to non-Superar teachers, and organising open Superar classes, which can be effective strategies to build stronger commitment to Superar by non-Superar teaching staff, enhancing the visibility and spill-over effect of the programme.

establishing a regional fundraising team to streamline fundraising efforts. Additionally, enhancing staff capabilities in financial management and grant writing, engaging the community through awareness campaigns for local donations, and leveraging public performances and training sessions as fundraising opportunities are recommended, along with a few country-specific initiatives.

➔ *See Section 5.3 for more information (Evaluation Question 8).*

B. Key conclusions and recommendations

Hereby, we present the **key conclusions of the evaluators** regarding the Superar programmes, along with the **recommendations** to Superar International and local Superar programmes, all based on the evidence collected throughout the evaluation. For further evidence, see Sections 3 and 4 of the evaluation.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS: the case for continuing the Superar programme

1. **Strong perceived relevance and effectiveness among the direct target group emphasises the programme's relevance**: the high level of satisfaction expressed by both parents and children underlines the significant impact and relevance of the Superar programme across its locations, with 89% of parents finding it useful. The willingness of participants to recommend the programme, with an impressive 97% stating they would do so to friends and others, highlights its perceived effectiveness, even in areas where outcomes, such as emotional and cognitive skills, cannot be measured objectively. This ongoing support from parents demonstrates the programme's importance within the families of Superar students and their broader communities.

   ➔ *The programme's high relevance and effectiveness, along with the absence of any major issues identified during the evaluation, justify the continued operation of the Superar programme in all three countries, allowing it to build on its current momentum and positive influence.*

2. **The programme is successful in engaging the intended direct target groups**: the Superar programme effectively engages its intended target group across the three countries, demonstrating its ability to connect with children from marginalised backgrounds, as 38% of Superar students fall into this category on average (66% in Hungary, 34% in Slovakia, and 29% in Bosnia and Herzegovina). This underlines the programme's relevance and importance in supporting marginalised and disadvantaged populations through the power of music.

   ➔ *Superar's success in reaching its target group justifies the continued use of its strategic approach to selecting partner institutions, following its 'lab' model, where schools and kindergartens serve as environments for testing and developing Superar's methods.*

3. **Strong contribution of Superar to the observed changes justifies the programme's delivery setup and pedagogical approach**: the surveyed parents and interviewed stakeholders believe that Superar has made a significant contribution to the positive changes observed in the children, their parents, schoolteachers, and the wider communities. Beyond fostering musical skills, the programme is perceived to have significantly enhanced collaboration, self-confidence, self-esteem, and a growth mindset. Additionally, it nurtures empathy, social awareness, and relationship skills, which are essential for personal and community development.

   ➔ *Based on the positive feedback from its target group and the absence of any major challenges identified during the evaluation, the Superar programme is on the right track to continue its activities with the current delivery setup and pedagogical approach.*

4. **Superar could amplify its impact by influencing school environments and the behaviours of non-Superar schoolteachers**: the Superar programme significantly benefits non-participating teachers and the general school environment, resulting in observable positive changes within these institutions over time. These changes typically include an improved school culture, increased sense of belonging among students, and the occasional evolution of teaching practices among non-Superar teachers. This ripple effect not only enhances the overall educational environment but also contributes to the programme's long-term sustainability. By fostering a collaborative atmosphere, Superar can extend its influence beyond direct participants, thereby amplifying its impact across the educational environment.

➔ *To further harness this potential, it is recommended that Superar increase opportunities for open lessons and joint training sessions for non-Superar teachers. Additionally, promoting their participation in Superar events may enhance their engagement and strengthen the connections between Superar and the broader educational community.*

5. **Positive spillover effects on non-participant students further increases the relevance of the programme**: while it is acknowledged that some non-participating students may occasionally feel excluded from the activities, these feelings are generally offset by the numerous benefits that arise from the programme's influence on school culture, teacher behaviour, and Superar performances. Improvements in the overall school environment, such as better engagement among students, enhanced collaboration among teachers, and a more inclusive atmosphere, often lead to a stronger sense of belonging for all students. This shift fosters a more cohesive educational community where the positive impacts of Superar extend beyond its direct participants, enriching the experiences of non-participating students as well.

   ➔ *Evidence of occasional adverse effects justifies Superar's approach to prioritising entire-grade or entire-school participation in its activities whenever possible.*

6. **High sustainability of benefits indicates that Superar may enhance the life competencies of the target group in the long term**: the Superar programme demonstrates a strong sustainability of benefits for children, with promising signs indicating that its positive impact extends to schools and non-Superar teachers. Many students express a lasting interest in music, with intentions to continue participating in music-related activities even after their time in the programme. Furthermore, some of the non-Superar schoolteachers in the schools have begun to adopt certain pedagogical techniques pf Superar in their everyday practice, suggesting that the benefits of Superar extend into the broader educational context.

   ➔ *To capitalise on the momentum and further enhance the sustainability of music education, it is recommended that Superar increase its presence in the higher grades of elementary schools. Additionally, actively encouraging long-term engagement in music beyond the programme is essential. Establishing close relationships with local music schools will provide students with continued opportunities to pursue their musical interests.*

DRIVING THE CHANGE: the success factors of Superar

7. **Regular performances and classes are key to Superar's success**: Superar's effectiveness is largely due to the regularity and pedagogical consistency of its classes. This is complemented by a strong emphasis on various performances at local, regional, and international levels. These performances serve as significant motivators for children, fostering their engagement and enthusiasm for participation while enhancing the overall effectiveness of the programme by providing meaningful opportunities for learning and personal development.

   ➔ *It is recommended that Superar, while continuing its curricular and extracurricular classes, increase its emphasis on performance opportunities by expanding both the scale and frequency of events. This strategy could enhance the programme's visibility and further improve the skills and confidence of the children involved.*

8. **Tailored Superar approaches grounded in a common methodology yield better results**: the success of the Superar programme is largely attributed to its ability to adapt classes, performances, and other offerings to the specific local contexts of the schools and classes in which it operates, as well as to the professional backgrounds and personalities of the tutors. This adaptability, grounded in a solid common pedagogical foundation of Superar, enhances engagement and overall effectiveness. Flexibility has proven essential for all stakeholders, including tutors, schools, children, parents, and even political actors, enabling a more responsive and relevant educational experience.

   ➔ *It is recommended that Superar maintain this flexibility by avoiding an overly rigid curriculum, while continuing to invest in a consistent and shared methodological foundation*

and training opportunities for tutors. This can also allow for local adaptations to be effectively integrated into the programme's overall framework.

9. **Active leadership support from schools and kindergartens is a prerequisite for Superar's success**: the effectiveness of the Superar programme fundamentally relies on the support of school leadership. Schools that use Superar's approach and are willing to adapt their operations, particularly in providing the necessary physical infrastructure and human resources, are essential for successful implementation and overall impact. Strong, value-based partnerships with school leaders foster an environment where children can thrive, often enhancing the school's reputation in the process.

   ➔ *It is recommended that Superar prioritise partnerships with schools that fully integrate its values and methodologies, and where school leadership is most likely to be steady in the foreseeable future. By ensuring that leadership remains actively engaged and supportive, the programme can solidify its foundation for success in the long run.*

10. **Geographical focus enhances Superar's impact**: the success of the Superar programme is significantly influenced by its strategic geographical focus, concentrating on areas with a high density of its target groups. This targeted approach not only amplifies its relevance compared to other music education programmes but also enhances its effectiveness in less related competences of the children, such as influencing their cognitive skills. As Superar continues to develop its programmes, there is an ongoing effort to expand into the most underprivileged areas across all participating countries, which is key enhancing its overall impact.

    ➔ *It is recommended that Superar prioritise its expansion into the most underprivileged areas, often found in rural regions, to further increase its reach. This could focus on rural Hungary, Eastern Slovakia and, for instance, cantons in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a divided school system, provided that sufficient funding, local tutors, and supportive schools can be secured.*

11. **Influence on siblings of Superar students serves as an impact multiplier**: the Superar programme exerts a strong influence on the siblings of Superar students. Younger siblings often experience the programme's benefits, gaining exposure to musical education and the associated social-emotional skills through their older brothers and sisters. This early engagement can foster an interest in music and the arts, creating a supportive environment that encourages artistic exploration and collaboration within the family.

    ➔ *To further harness this potential, it is recommended that Superar actively encourage family involvement in its events, particularly through local concerts. By inviting siblings and families to participate, Superar can foster engagement and strengthen the community bonds, creating a culture of music appreciation that extends beyond the immediate participants.*

12. **Effectiveness is unaffected by class type or gender, with slight variations based on scheduling type**: the Superar programme demonstrates that effectiveness is not significantly influenced by the type of class, whether choir or instrumental, indicating that both formats can yield similar benefits for participants. While some specific competencies, such as fine motor skills and singing abilities, may differ between class types, the overall impact remains consistent. Scheduling choices do exhibit minor variations in effectiveness: extracurricular classes tend to have lower attendance rates, though these are often compensated by increased engagement from students and parents. Importantly, the programme has shown no notable differences in outcomes based on gender.

    ➔ *It is recommended that Superar continue its commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for all genders. Additionally, offering various class types (choirs and instrumental classes, while considering their costs and benefits) and scheduling options at each location can help accommodate different needs and preferences, ensuring equitable access to the programme's benefits.*

13. **Other extracurricular activities of children have a comparable influence to Superar on children's improvement**: the parent survey reveals that children across all three countries participate in a variety of popular activities, including sports, dancing, music education at other locations, various forms of art, and chess. Survey results and stakeholder interviews indicate that these extracurricular activities significantly contribute to children's development, showing impacts comparable to those of the Superar programme in 63% of cases. Participation in extracurricular activities varies slightly across Superar-affiliated institutions, with no clear pattern based on their geographical location within the three countries.

    ➔ *To maximise its impact, it is recommended that Superar consider expanding its offerings into regions with fewer extracurricular options available for children, where the programme can provide more unique opportunities for personal and social growth for children.*

CLEARING THE WAY: challenges and strategic growth

14. **Acknowledging its successes, Superar is still working towards achieving higher participation levels**: the programme has successfully engaged its direct target groups in the institutions where it is present. While it is not an objective for Superar to be directly involved in a large number of schools[12], there appears to be significant potential for further increasing the number of schools and kindergartens participating in the programme.

    ➔ *It is recommended that Superar implement a strategic initiative focused on growth and increasing participation levels across all locations. This effort may enhance both the visibility of the programme and its overall impact within the communities it serves (see recommendation on strategic management).*

15. **Policy impact varies by country**: the Superar programme's ability to influence education policy differs significantly across participating countries. While there have been notable successes in Slovakia regarding the integration of some elements of Superar into the national curriculum, progress is less advanced in Bosnia and Herzegovina (which operates 14 distinct curricula across various geographical and administrative levels) and Hungary, with the differing founding times of the individual organisations also explaining these variations. Strengthening collaboration with academic institutions can foster synergies and enhance policy impact, even in areas where advancements have been made.

    ➔ *To adapt to the local policy environment effectively, it is recommended that Superar promote academic partnerships and actively engage in building strategic partnerships, enhancing visibility through public performances, leveraging existing networks, showcasing impactful case studies, and employing storytelling to convey the benefits of Superar's methodologies.*

16. **Suboptimal parental engagement limits effectiveness of the programme**: the level of parental engagement in the Superar programme is perceived by interviewed tutors and schoolteachers as inadequate. The evidence indicates that children derive greater benefits from the programme when their parents actively support their involvement in classes, performances, and significant Superar events. Active parental participation not only enhances children's motivation and commitment but also reinforces the value of music education within the family context.

    ➔ *To strengthen parental engagement, it is recommended that Superar utilise best practices within its network to enhance communication with parents and collaborating closely with*

[12] Further information on the number kindergartens, primary schools and secondary schools in each country: http://www.edufile.info/?view=school_systems&topic=topic_general_infos&country=13; https://eduline.hu/kozoktatas/20190902_Az_oktatasi_intezmenyek_megoszlasa_fenntartok_szerint; https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-education-systems/slovakia/statistics-educational-institutions

schoolteachers. By implementing strategies such as regular updates, workshops, and family-focused events, Superar can create a stronger sense of community and encourage parental involvement.

17. **Superar's international potential is currently underutilised**: although the international aspect of the Superar programme is highly valued, evident in the appreciation for its performances and events for children, as well as the central training and resources provided for tutors, this potential is not being fully realised. Opportunities for travel and exchanges for both children and tutors exist but are often hindered by financial constraints and logistical challenges. By maximising the international dimension, Superar could enhance the educational experience and foster greater cultural exchange among participants.

    ➔ *To fully benefit from this international potential, it is recommended that Superar work towards enhancing international exchanges. Exploring funding options such as EU grants, as well as contributions from corporate partners, could facilitate cross-country performances, exchanges, and teacher training programmes.*

18. **Funding stability of Superar is acceptable, yet diversification is essential**: the Superar programme currently enjoys a degree of financial stability, primarily supported by two reliable donors in each participating country (If! and Porticus in Slovakia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and If! and Sziget in Hungary). This financial foundation is further bolstered by various efforts to finance operations. Nevertheless, financial constraints continue to pose challenges for growth, which must be addressed to ensure sustained effectiveness.

    ➔ *It is recommended that Superar adopt a more strategic approach to fundraising, invest in professionalising its fundraising efforts and actively seeking larger international corporate partners. Additionally, leveraging successful local fundraising practices can help diversify funding sources and reduce reliance on a limited number of donors.*

19. **Superar in the three countries could benefit from a more formal strategy-driven approach to drive future growth and impact**: while the programme has seen notable expansion and success, it has reached a point where a formal strategy is essential for sustainable progress. Developing a structured roadmap that includes regular revisions of the current situation and opportunities, as well as a growth strategy with clearly defined vision, hierarchy of objectives, key performance indicators, implementing initiatives, together with plans for measuring progress, and periodically reviewing the strategy will be needed to maintain momentum and effectiveness sustainably.

    ➔ *It is recommended that all Superar locations prioritise the development of formalised strategies, supported centrally and linked to an effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system. This process should ensure alignment across various locations and strengthen the collective strategy of Superar International, fostering ambitious growth.*

20. **Each Superar location is at a different development stage, where refining its organisational structure in line with its maturity and strategic objectives could significantly foster future growth**: the operations of Superar across the three countries show varying stages of development, reflecting the complexity of their portfolios. In some locations, the focus is on developing specialised teams within the organisation and formalising processes, roles, and responsibilities. In contrast, other locations focus more on stabilising the existing structure while promoting delegation and decentralisation to create a more stable organisation.

    ➔ *It is recommended that Superar locations develop their organisations in alignment with their strategic objectives while considering their unique growth rates and their specific circumstances. With central coordination to provide guidance and support, each location should drive its growth strategy, emphasising strategic thinking to select a model that best serves their objectives in the long run.*

21. **Long-term impact and behavioural changes are yet to be measured**: while there are early indications of long-term benefits associated with Superar, such as enhanced life competencies,

a more positive outlook on the future, and high perceived sustainability of the programme, there remains a need for comprehensive measurement of these long-term impacts and the extent of behavioural change. Further studies are essential to fully understand and quantify the effects of Superar, for instance, on the life competencies of its former students.

➔ *It is recommended that Superar conduct a follow-up study involving alumni to evaluate the long-term impacts of the programme. This assessment should focus on the skills developed and behavioural changes observed in former participants, providing insights for future programme enhancements, and demonstrating the lasting influence of Superar's initiatives.*

1 Context and methodology

This Synthesis Evaluation Report is part of the '**External Evaluation of the Superar Programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, and Slovakia, 2021-2024 (EESP 2021-2024).**' It should be read in conjunction with the three Country Evaluation Reports for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, and Slovakia, covering each of the three countries in more detail.

1.1 Objectives and scope of the report

The evaluation, spanning from July 2023 to November 2024, seeks to assess the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, equity, and delivery mechanism of the programme thus far in the specified countries, and to provide information for programme improvement in the future.

The objective of this report is to provide the Steering Committee with an overview of the evaluation's findings, conclusions, and recommendations, as well as an outline of the evaluation process in the three countries. The specific objectives of this report are as follows:

- Present a summary of the evaluation process and highlight key methodological aspects,
- Present key programme features and local specificities,
- Summarise the results of the literature review,
- Provide a synthetic assessment of the local Superar **Theories of Change**, acknowledging that these theories differ by country and that the report offers a summary rather than an overarching evaluation of Superar,
- Provide synthetic answers to the **evaluation questions**, acknowledging that responses may differ by country. The report seeks to identify common patterns while recognising the unique context of each programme, and
- Provide generalisable **conclusions and recommendations** for future actions, based on the findings from the three country reports.

This evaluation report aims to highlight specificities, good practices and differences across the countries involved. However, it purposefully **does not seek to provide a cross-country comparison**, as each programme operates within its unique context.

The evaluation covers the period from September 2021 to August 2024, covering three school years.

While the evaluation encompasses all aspects of the local delivery of Superar, it specifically **focuses on the following ten Superar affiliated institutions**, given their long history with the programme:

- Elementary School 'Kovačići' *(Sarajevo)*
- Elementary School 'Džemaludin Čaušević' *(Sarajevo)*
- Community Centre 'Children's House' *(Sarajevo)*
- Caritas Afterschool Programme, implemented in the 'Holy Family' kindergarten *(Sarajevo)*
- Elementary School 'Losonci Square' *(Budapest)*
- Elementary School 'Bem József' *(Budapest)*
- Elementary School, Secondary School and Kindergarten 'Wesley János'[13] *(Budapest)*

[13] The school ceased operations starting from the 2024-2025 school year.

- Church Elementary and Secondary School 'Narnia' *(Bratislava)*,
- Elementary School 'Lozorno' *(Lozorno)*, and
- Elementary School 'Alexandra Vagača' *(Detva)*.

1.2 Methodological notes

Please note that the key terms used in this report are provided in Annex 6.1.

1.2.1 Evaluation design: Contribution Analysis

The evaluation applies a theory-based design, specifically the **Contribution Analysis** (Mayne, 2011). Following this approach, the evaluation first reconstructed Superar's Theory of Change, taking into account the local specificities in the three countries, and then tested it using a mixed-method approach, involving qualitative and quantitative methods. The evaluation employed triangulation of information from multiple sources wherever possible to ensure robust and comprehensive conclusions. For more information about Contribution Analysis, please see Annex 6.2.

1.2.2 Evidence base: a mix of primary and secondary data sources

To assess the Theory of Change and address the evaluation questions within the local context, a **mixed-methods approach** was employed, incorporating various qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis methods. The key sources of evidence are outlined below.

Table 1: Summary of primary data collection activities in the three countries

Primary data sources	Setup	TOTAL	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Hungary	Slovakia
Responses to a representative survey questionnaire from the parents of children enrolled in Superar classes	Online and in-person	**274**	169	41	64
Stakeholder interviews with • parents of the children enrolled in Superar classes • Superar tutors • Schoolteachers of Superar classes • Schoolteachers of non-Superar classes • Superar management members • Superar trained teachers • Donating partners • Education policy experts and policymakers	Online and in-person	**43**	9	13	21
Photovoice and storytelling sessions with children enrolled in Superar classes, using on-the-spot drawings created by the children to capture and express their perspectives and experiences regarding Superar	In-person	**10**	3	4	3
Observations of Superar classes conducted by the evaluators (in-person)	In-person	**15**	4	7	4
Participants in a **focus group discussion** (online)	Online	**16**	5	5	6
TOTAL STAKEHOLDER INTERACTIONS		**358**	**190**	**70**	**98**

Source: monitoring data (June 2024)

Further methodological notes on **survey demographics** and **interview demographics** can be found in Annex 6.3 and Annex 6.4. Furthermore, see Annex 6.11 for the outcomes of the **photovoice sessions** in each country.

For a more detailed breakdown and explanation of the local primary data collection activities, please refer to the relevant **Country Reports**.

The evaluation utilised the following secondary data sources:

- **Superar programme data** and **monitoring data** for the relevant school years (source: Superar International).
- '**Smiley survey**' data from children enrolled in Superar classes, a self-assessment tool administered by Superar (source: Superar International).
- '**Educator survey**' data from tutors, teachers, and other educators (source: Superar International).
- Relevant **literature** (see Section 3) and general **desk research**.

1.2.3 Representativeness and cross-country data presentation

Based on the statistical analysis, the survey sample was weighted for schools and schedule type of classes for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, and Slovakia separately. Consequently, the final sample is both **weighted and representative for each** country. By employing this approach, the results accurately reflect the population, and any biases that could arise from over-representing or under-representing specific groups at the country level are mitigated.

To present the survey results across countries, several approaches were considered by the evaluators to account for the varied responses. One approach involved combining responses from all three countries into a single distribution, weighted by the number of respondents per country. While this would offer a clear overview, it risked overemphasising programmes with a higher number of Superar students, such as Slovakia, and potentially skewing the results. Another option was normalisation, which would adjust each country's data to account for underlying differences in response patterns. However, this approach would be complex and could obscure the original distribution of responses. Therefore, a simpler, more transparent approach was selected: **presenting each country's results separately alongside an overall arithmetic mean**. This allows readers to view each country's response pattern while drawing attention to the overall trend and minimising direct comparisons, thus making the data accessible to a broader audience.

1.2.4 Data collection process

The evaluation began with a review of the relevant literature and an analysis of available programme data and supplementary information in the autumn of 2023. This was followed by a scoping interview to test the data collection approach, after which the remaining stakeholder interviews, photovoice sessions, and storytelling sessions were conducted throughout 2023 and early 2024. Concurrently, the evaluators participated in classroom observations to gain practical insights into the local Superar programme. Halfway through the evaluation, the evaluators submitted an interim report to discuss preliminary findings with the Steering Committee.

The online survey, informed by experiences from the interviews, was conducted from April to June 2024. In some cases, data had to be collected in person and recorded in the online survey format at a later date. Once the survey results were available, the data were analysed using statistical methods and weighted to ensure representativeness. Subsequently, the evaluators facilitated a focus group discussion to validate and expand upon the preliminary findings. The updated monitoring data, along with the outcomes of the 'Smiley Survey' and 'Educator Survey,' were then integrated into the analysis. Finally, the evaluators drafted the present report, considering all sources of evidence.

For further details on **general and country-specific limitations** of the evaluation, please refer to Annex 6.5.

2 The local Superar programmes

The following sections provide a high-level overview of the local Superar programmes. For more comprehensive information on the programmes' key features and financing, including a detailed stakeholder register, please refer to the **Country Evaluation Reports**.

2.1 Superar in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Superar in Bosnia and Herzegovina began as a pilot project in Sarajevo Canton in autumn 2016. The association was formally **established in August 2017** by Managing Director Klaudija Bilić-Selmanović, Artistic Director Alma Karić, and Lamia Kacila.

In the school year 2023-2024, the programme operated in **Canton Sarajevo**, with activities running in **four locations** as shown in the table below.

Table 2: Superar institutions and Superar students as at June 2024 (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Institution	Location	Total number of students	Choir		Instrumental	
			Curricular	*Extracurricular*	*Curricular*	*Extracurricular*
Elementary School '**Kovačići**'	Sarajevo	**133**	133			
Elementary School '**Džemaludin Čaušević**'	Sarajevo	**78**	78			
Community Centre '**Children's House**'	Sarajevo	**137**		86		51
Caritas Afterschool Programme (implemented at the 'Holy Family' kindergarten)	Sarajevo	**73**		73		
TOTAL	**Bosnia and Herzegovina**	**421**	**211**	**159**	**0**	**51**

Source: monitoring data (June 2024)

During the 2023/2024 school year, Superar's **curricular programme** consisted of three teaching hours per week, focusing on pupils in grades 3, 4, and 5 due to recent educational reforms that are being phased in for grades 1 and 2. This programme integrates the standard music curriculum with elements of art and sport, following Superar's methodology. The **extracurricular offerings** include a two-hour weekly instrumental programme featuring violin lessons (additionally one rehearsal hour per week), alongside various choir groups, such as the Superar Children's Choir for ages 5 to 13, the Superar Cadenza for ages 13 to 22, and additional two choir groups for school children from the first to fourth grades in the Caritas Afterschool Programme. Potential expansion areas include **peripheral schools in Canton Sarajevo** and **regions with divided school systems**. The **new educational curriculum**, implemented in September 2023, combines traditional subjects into broader fields, necessitating a reorganisation of teaching methods, which has been challenging for teachers with limited preparation time. Concerns exist that this may lead to a blending of subjects, complicating the scheduling of Superar's weekly programme.

Since its launch, the programme has primarily relied on funding from the **Porticus** Foundation, with co-financing from the **If! Foundation** starting in the 2021/2022 school year, where it initially contributed 50% of the funding, decreasing to 30% over three years, with opportunities for budget increases through matching grants. Project management has also secured smaller-scale funding from various local sources, including municipal and cantonal **grants**, as well as **in-kind donations** from organisations like the National Theatre in Sarajevo, the Sarajevo Philharmonic and the Municipality of Novo Sarajevo. Despite ongoing efforts to secure local and national funding through grants and potential sponsorships, significant support from local sources is unlikely due to limited funds. The programme is considering

sustainable options, such as developing **income-generating training programmes**, although this will require time and resources to implement effectively.

The **specificities** of the local programme that are relevant for the assessment of the Theory of Change in Bosnia and Herzegovina are as follows:

- The **programme's reach is currently limited to the capital region**, despite aspirations to expand to more peripheral and underserved schools where there is potentially a higher percentage of vulnerable children.
- A significant local challenge is the **recent educational reform** that began in September 2023, which restructured the curriculum by grouping traditional subjects into broader conceptual fields. While this shift presents opportunities for a more holistic learning experience, it also complicates the organisation of the Superar programme, especially in the school timetable, as teachers have had little time to adapt to these changes.
- **Efforts to expand the programme to new locations**, such as peripheral schools in Canton Sarajevo, cantons with divided school systems (e.g., Herzegovina-Neretva and Central Bosnia), and locations within the Republic of Srpska entity, are constrained by both financial limitations and political sensitivities. In addition to securing additional funding (for at least one primary school period), approval from the relevant Ministry of Education is required, which makes growth potential more difficult.
- Superar in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still in the **initial phase of teacher training efforts**. So far, three training courses in the form of promotional workshops have been held in autumn 2023, two in spring 2024 and another two in August 2024, in addition to previous promotional workshops for pre-service teachers at the Music Academy in Sarajevo.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina is unique among the evaluated countries in its **incorporation of a community centre** (Children's House), and an **afterschool care centre (**Caritas) into its programme, making it a distinctive feature of the local Superar programme.

2.2 Superar in Hungary

The Superar programme in Hungary was **started in the 2019/2020 academic year**. Under the management of Director Judit Morvay, the programme operates through the collaboration of Superar tutors, who specialise in choir and guitar instruction, and a **team** responsible for monitoring, fundraising, and various other non-teaching duties.

As at June 2024, the initiative encompassed **four schools in Budapest**, as detailed in the table below (focus schools marked with yellow background).

Table 3: Superar institutions and Superar students as at June 2024 (Hungary)

Institution	Location	Total number of students	Choir		Instrumental	
			Curricular	*Extracurricular*	*Curricular*	*Extracurricular*
Elementary School **'Losonci Square'**	Budapest	**120**	114	6		
Elementary School **'Bem József'**	Budapest	**69**	69			
Elementary School, Secondary School and Kindergarten '**Wesley János'**[14]	Budapest	**44**	25			19
Elementary School, Secondary School and Kindergarten **'Budapest School'**	Budapest	**25**		25		
TOTAL	**Hungary**	**258**	**208**	**31**	**0**	**19**

Source: monitoring data (June 2024)

The network includes cultural institutions and corporations aligned with Superar's philosophy, fostering collaboration. Future plans aim to **expand within Budapest and into rural areas**, focusing on accessibility for **upper-grade students** and **kindergartens**.

The **If! Foundation** is a cornerstone of the funding ecosystem, with a crucial contribution to the programme's sustainability. Despite attempts to engage Porticus, Superar Hungary seeks alternative financial support. A key partnership with **Sziget** ensures stability, complemented by in-kind contributions and EU funding. Plans for an Erasmus+ grant and various national grants are underway. Revenue also comes from paid performances at venues like MÜPA and the Hungarian House of Music, alongside a peer-to-peer fundraising campaign launched in 2023, among others.

The **specificities** of the local programme that are relevant for the assessment of the Theory of Change in Hungary are as follows:

- Superar Hungary **focuses its efforts on children in Grades 1-8** of elementary schools, as it does not provide musical education in kindergartens or daycare centres.
- To date, Superar Hungary **has not implemented a comprehensive training programme** for teachers from non-Superar affiliated schools. However, the organisation has begun to develop and deliver training programmes specifically for kindergarten teachers, signalling a commitment to enhancing educational quality in early childhood settings.
- The **elementary school 'Wesley János',** which was the only location for guitar classes in the previous school year (the scope of this evaluation), **closed in the 2024/2025 school year**. Nevertheless, Superar can continue offering guitar classes to former Wesley students, most of whom have transferred to the Superar-affiliated 'Bem József' Elementary School. The director of 'Bem József' has provided rehearsal space for the afternoon classes, and students from other schools are also welcome to join. Additionally, Superar has launched guitar groups at two new locations in the 2024/2025 school year: Elementary School 'József Attila' and 'Kompánia Tanoda', a civil society organisation providing afternoon support for the studies of disadvantaged children.
- The programme has **not actively pursued strategies aimed directly at influencing top-tier education policymakers** in Hungary due to the centralised nature of the education system and stakeholders' perception of limited opportunities for external engagement or effective dialogue

[14] The school ceased operations starting from the 2024-2025 school year.

on policy matters. This decision reflects the current operational context and the need to prioritise everyday operation over broader policy advocacy.

- As at June 2024, the programme operated in key locations in Budapest. The programme's reach is currently **limited to the capital region**, despite aspirations to expand to more peripheral and underserved schools where there is a higher percentage of vulnerable children.

2.3 Superar in Slovakia

Superar Slovakia **launched in spring 2013** at the Church Elementary School in Banská Štiavnica and officially registered as an NGO in 2016. Superar Slovakia is managed by a team of three: Marek Kapusta (Executive Director), Ivan Siller (Pedagogical Director), and Eva Suskova (Music Director), supported by an M&E officer and internal consultant, Andrej Salner, as well as experts in methodology development, teacher training and supervision, the mentoring programme, and classroom management, including Tomas Boros, Ivan Siller, and Kristina Uhlikova.

As at June 2024, the programme operated in **five locations** across **12 educational institutions** (focus schools marked with yellow background).

Table 4: Superar institutions and Superar students as at June 2024 (Slovakia)

Institution	Location	Total number of students	Choir	
			Curricular	*Extracurricular*
Church Elementary and Secondary School '**Narnia**'	Bratislava	**62**	28	34
Elementary School '**Lozorno**'	Lozorno	**182**	131	51
Elementary School '**Alexandra Vagača**'	Detva	**194**	140	54
Elementary School '**2**'	Veľký Krtíš	**148**	111	37
Kindergarten '**Veselé slniečka**'	Veľký Krtíš	**34**	34	
Elementary School '**1**'	Zvolen	**73**	58	15
Kindergarten '**Alexandra Vagača**'	Detva	**16**	16	
Kindergarten '**Obrancov mieru**'	Detva	**26**	26	
Kindergarten '**Stožok**'	Stožok	**25**	25	
Kindergarten '**Lozorno**'	Lozorno	**29**	29	
Elementary School '**Rozmanita**'	Bratislava	**16**	16	
Kindergarten '**Rozmanita**'	Bratislava	**0**		
TOTAL	**Slovakia**	**805**	**614**	**191**

Source: monitoring data (June 2024)

The programme comprises music classes integrated into the curriculum and extracurricular choir classes. Recent expansions included eight new institutions, but the focus remains on **stabilising operations and developing internal capacities**. One of the long-term goals is to **establish Superar in eastern Slovakia**, thereby covering all three regions of the country, and to work with a school where all pupils come from marginalised communities.

Superar Slovakia's funding relies on 85% private contributions, mainly **If! Foundation** and **Porticus**, and 14% public grants, with a small portion from other sources. Management acknowledges financial vulnerabilities due to dependence on few donors, leading to a focus on diversifying funding. Planned initiatives include selling educational materials internationally and expanding in-kind support. By the end of 2023, Superar Slovakia was officially authorised by the Ministry of Education to offer **'innovative education'** in the fields of music pedagogy, didactics, and methodology. Starting in 2024, this paid, accredited training for educators will be introduced across Slovakia and is expected to become a new source of revenue for the NGO.

The **specificities** of the local programme that are relevant for the assessment of the Theory of Change in Slovakia are as follows:

- In Slovakia, Superar has established a **comprehensive music education methodology**, detailed in three publications, and supported by instructional videos. These resources form the basis of Superar's accredited teacher training programmes and workshops, providing educators with structured guidance for music pedagogy.
- Unlike other Superar locations, Superar Slovakia **does not offer instrumental classes**, focusing instead on music education and choir classes. The absence of instrumental instruction influences range of musical competencies assessed in the evaluation.
- Superar Slovakia is now in its **11th year of operation** since its launch in 2013. This gives it a longer operational history compared to other Superar locations discussed in the Synthesis Report, allowing it to refine and stabilise its approach over time.
- Superar Slovakia's activities are geographically limited to **Western and Central Slovakia**, with no current operations in the eastern part of the country.
- Superar in Slovakia **focuses its operations on schools and kindergartens** and does not currently offer any classes in community centres.

3 Results of the literature review

SUMMARY

Studies overall challenge the widespread optimism about the benefits of music training; however, they indicate that music training can have a notable impact on certain skills. Contrary to general assumptions, transfer effects are unlikely to be significant for cognitive and intellectual skills, literacy, language, or academic attainment. Instead, transfer effects are more probable in areas closely related to music, such as social and emotional skills, personal well-being, and, for instrumental training, fine motor skills. Although these effects are often relatively small, they remain valuable given the relatively low cost of implementing music training programmes. However, effects can fade over time, which raises questions about the long-term sustainability of these benefits. Studies suggest effects tend to be stronger in socio-economically disadvantaged settings and for children with lower initial skills, especially when teaching is context-specific and backed by a supportive curriculum and community. The main moderator of these effects appears to be the socio-economic context and children's initial skill levels, rather than factors like age, gender, or training duration. The likelihood of positive effects increases when music training is enjoyable and fulfilling. Finally, potential biases, such as participant self-selection or confirmation bias, must be carefully managed in the design and interpretation of evaluations to ensure robust conclusions.

Based on the literature review alone, somewhat greater effects were expected from Superar, as it operates primarily in socio-economically disadvantaged areas and is supported by a curriculum and community that are specifically adapted to the needs of this target group, favouring schools with a higher proportion of marginalised children. The music activities are frequent and designed around enjoyable experiences for children, such as various games and regular performances. Self-selection is generally not an issue for curricular classes (unlike for extracurricular ones), which, as seen later, was a moderating factor in the effects.

This chapter outlines the main implications of the literature review. A **full list** of the reviewed literature is provided in Annex 6.6, while the **abstracts** of the reviewed literature are available in Annex 6.7 for quick reference.

The literature review was guided by two themes: **transfer of skills to other domains**, where we examined studies on the transferability of skills gained through music education to areas such as cognitive abilities, academic performance, and socio-emotional development, exploring factors that

influence successful skill transfer; and **evidence on similar music education programmes**, where we reviewed research highlighting the impact of music education for disadvantaged or marginalised children, focusing on potential benefits in cognitive, socio-emotional, and other skill areas.

3.1 Transfer of the acquired skills to other domains

3.1.1 Definition of transfer effects

Over the past century, considerable empirical and theoretical research has analysed the nature of skill transfer and its occurrence across different contexts, resulting in a substantial body of literature on the subject. Following scientific terminology, we differentiate between two types of skill transfer (Barnett & Ceci S. J., 2002):

- **'Near-transfer'**: transfer of an acquired skill to a similar context within the same domain.
- **'Far-transfer'**: transfer of an acquired skill to a different, unrelated domain.

The boundary between these categories is not always straightforward. We use the framework developed by Barnett & Ceci, which take six contextual dimensions of the skill transfer into account to differentiate between the two (i.e. the knowledge domain, the physical context, the temporal context, the functional context, the social context and modality, see Annex 6.8 for further details).

3.1.2 Skills potentially subject to transfer effects

The evaluation established the following taxonomy of skills and personal achievements that are potentially relevant to the Superar Theory of Change and where a transfer effect may occur. A more detailed definition of this taxonomy can be found in Annex 6.9.

A: SKILLS

1. **Cognitive and intellectual skills**: memory, general intelligence, mathematical reasoning, spatial-navigational reasoning, abstract reasoning, creativity, logical reasoning, critical thinking, problem-solving, information literacy, quantitative literacy, attention to detail.
2. **Motor skills**: perceptual skills, fine motor skills, and gross motor skills.
3. **Literacy and language skills**: writing skills, phonological skills and speech clarity, vocabulary, reading fluency and comprehension, listening skills and verbal reasoning.
4. **Social and emotional skills**: social interaction, self-esteem, self-control and emotional regulation, conflict resolution, resilience, empathy and understanding others.
5. **Musical skills**: singing, rhythm and timing, pitch perception, instrument proficiency, music notation, music theory, music interpretation, musical creativity, music appreciation.

B: PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

6. **General attainment**: academic progress, study skills.
7. **Personal well-being**: physical health, mental health, sense of belonging, and self-sufficiency.

3.1.3 Highlights from the literature

There is a wealth of literature on the transfer effect of music training to other domains. While researchers tend to agree that the **near-transfer** of the acquired skills to similar domains (e.g., other musical skills) is likely, the **conclusions of studies regarding the effectiveness of music training in terms of far-transfer vary**.

In recent years, rigorous meta-analyses have been prepared that analysed and compared the outcomes of multiple studies. We looked at these meta-analyses given their holistic perspective and synthesising

nature and complemented those with domain-specific research. The most relevant studies are summarised below. Please note that **results grouped according to various skills and competence areas** are provided in Annex 6.9 (Taxonomy and definitions of skills used in the literature review).

Sala and Gobbet have prepared a series of studies on the **cognitive** and **academic** benefits of music training with children, see (Sala & Gobet, 2017a), (Sala & Gobet, 2017b), (Sala & Gobet, 2019), and (Sala, et al., 2019). In their most recent meta-analysis (Sala & Gobet, 2020) they applied a systematic search strategy, and retrieved 3,044 relevant papers, which were further filtered according to specific criteria. These criteria required for the paper the use of an experimental design with a cognitively demanding music training, the use of at least one control group, the use of non-music-related cognitive tests or academic outcomes, participants being aged 3 to 16 years with no previous formal music experience or clinical conditions, and sufficient data for effect size calculation. As a result, 54 studies were included in the meta-analysis. Their analysis found that the overall effect of music training programmes is negligible, and consistent across studies. Results showed small statistically significant effects only in studies with no random allocation of participants and non-active controls. Cross-sectional evidence also indicated that music engagement had no impact on non-music *cognitive* skills or *academic* achievement. Therefore, the researchers conclude that **optimism about the benefits of music training to cognitive skills and academic achievement is empirically unjustified**, possibly influenced by misinterpretation of data and confirmation bias.

A recent study (Bigand & Tillmann, 2021) revisited the meta-analyses conducted by Sala & Gobet over the last five years, using and complementing their data sets. They investigated whether far transfer following musical training existed, if yes, whether its size was of practical interest, and if so, whether it was caused by the training programme. Having analysed 41 studies on the near and far transfer effects of music training, including 190 estimated effect sizes, Bigand & Tillmann found evidence that music training does have a significant effect on general **cognition**, and it can be considered of practical interest, even though its effect size remains relatively small compared to other educational interventions. They conclude that *'music is a recreational activity that may be special in allowing for **small but statistically significant far-transfer effects**.'* (p. 339). They also point out that the need for further research to determine **whether music is the cause of these benefits**. They argue, however, that the effects of music training on cognitive abilities may be considered small, but **they hold practical significance**, as small effects can still be important depending on the cost of implementation. Music training, being a recreational activity with low cost, has effect sizes comparable to or larger than other teaching approaches explicitly designed to improve achievement. As referenced by Bigand & Tillmann, Hattie's work on the synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement (Hattie, 2008) ranks music-based programmes favourably among variables that influence school achievement, further supporting the relevance of music training despite its generally modest effect size.

Another meta-analysis (Gordon, Fehd, & McCandliss, 2015) investigated the direct transfer hypothesis of music training on children's literacy-related language skills. Thirteen studies (totalling 901 participants) were reviewed, and the analysis revealed that music training led to small gains in **phonological awareness** skills. Transfer effects for rhyming skills tended to strengthen with increased hours of training. However, no significant aggregate transfer effect was found for **reading fluency measures**. The potential influence of other study design factors, including intervention design, IQ, and socio-economic status, was also considered, and the results suggest that music training may enhance literacy development through shared brain mechanisms supporting music and language cognition.

Cooper's random-effects meta-analysis (Cooper, 2020) analysed 100 studies with more than 5,600 participants and analysed the cognitive benefits of music training in schoolchildren in the United States. The overall mean effect was found to be small to medium, with music training showing more improvement compared to active control groups. However, methodological quality-related moderators rendered the overall findings non-significant, indicating that while music training may have positive **cognitive effects**, its utility compared to other cognitive interventions is less empirically supported. Cooper found that positive effects failed to be significant for studies performed in a controlled setting, compared to a classroom or community-centre setting.

Slightly more positive effects are reported regarding social and emotional skills and other social improvements. While (Rickard, Bambrick, & Gill, 2012) have not found any significant effects regarding social skills, (Gooding, 2011) has identified **positive effects related to social competences**, (Welch, Himonides, Saunders, Papageorgi, & Sarazin, 2014) concluded significant effects related to the children's self-concept and **sense of being socially included**, and (Schellenberg, Corrigall, Dys, & Malti, 2015) have also found positive effects related to sympathy and **prosocial behaviours**, including **behavioural changes** (Habibi, Damasio, Ilari, Sachs, & Damasio, 2018). The latter, however, concludes that the effects were *'limited to children who had poor prosocial skills before the lessons began.'* In addition, (Costa-Giomi, 2004), (Choi, Lee, & Lee, 2010) and (Zapata & Hargreaves, 2017) identified positive effects regarding the children's **self-esteem**, while (Rickard, Bambrick, & Gill, 2012) found none. (Wu & Lu, 2021) and (Greenberg, Rentfrow, & Baron-Cohen, 2015) found corroborating evidence regarding the change in **empathy** skills. Some studies, for instance (Holochwost, et al., 2021), identified effects regarding the sub-skill of **growth mindset**.

Furthermore, the children's ability to detect changes in tonal environment and their skills related to **auditory processing** also seems to improve as a result of music training (Habibi, Cahn, Damasio, & Damasio, 2016). Finally, improvements in **fine motor skills** seem to be evident in case of instrument trainings (Costa-Giomi, 2006).

3.2 Effectiveness of similar music education programmes

The analysis focused on three music education programmes with a similar concept to Superar (the influential Venezuelan El Sistema, the French Démos programme, and the British Voices Foundation).

3.2.1 El Sistema – Venezuela

El Sistema is a publicly funded music education programme founded in Venezuela in 1975 by José Antonio Abreu, with a focus on providing **free classical music education** to underprivileged children. El Sistema[15] *'focuses on intensive and joyful music making as a vehicle for social development for the disadvantaged.'* It has since expanded internationally, with over 400 music centres and 700,000 young musicians involved by 2015. The programme typically offers several hours of musical training and rehearsal each week. The initiative aims to promote human opportunity and development through music for social change[16].

El Sistema has been an influential programme, with several pieces of literature available on the effectiveness of the programme and other programmes inspired by El Sistema in the USA, Canada, United Kingdom (e.g. In Harmony), Portugal (e.g. Orquestra Geração), Philippines, Colombia, Peru, Germany (e.g. Musaik) and Uruguay.

A meta-analysis of peer-reviewed articles published between 2010 and 2020 (Bolden, Corcoran, & Butler, 2021) examined **El Sistema and Sistema-inspired music education programmes**, and found 30 relevant articles focusing on programme impacts, using various research methods, including randomised control trials, longitudinal studies, qualitative interviews, and ethnographic studies. The study concluded positive impact on students regarding **musical** and **social-emotional development**, with less convincing evidence of increased academic achievement and cognitive development. However, realising this potential **requires tailored teaching**, **curricula**, and **community support**.

[15] https://elsistema.org.ve/
[16] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Sistema

3.2.2 Démos Programme – France

The Démos programme[17] *'provides classical music and orchestral training for underprivileged children in France.'* Since 2010, Démos (*Dispositif d'éducation musicale et orchestrale à vocation sociale*) has been dedicated to promoting access to classical music through instrumental practice in orchestras. The programme provides educational support, collaboration between cultural and social actors, a specific collective pedagogy, and continuous training for facilitators.

Initiated and coordinated by the Cité de la musique - Philharmonie de Paris, Démos is now being implemented nationwide through partnerships with local authorities.

The programme was evaluated in 2019 (Barbaroux, Dittinger, & Besson, 2019). The evaluation focused on the impacts of Démos on the development of children from low socio-economic backgrounds, focusing on the domains of general intelligence, phonological awareness, reading abilities, auditory and visual attention, working and short-term memory and visuomotor precision. The researchers applied a longitudinal approach using standardised tests before the training and 18 months after the training.

The study argues that the programme has improved **musicality scores**, total **IQ** and **Symbol Search**[18] **scores**, **concentration** abilities, and **reading** precision. The authors conclude a positive impact of Démos on the **cognitive** development of children from low socio-economic backgrounds and encourage the broader implementation of similar music education programmes in disadvantaged school settings.

3.2.3 Voices Foundation – United Kingdom

The **Voices Foundation**[19] in the United Kingdom *'supports schools in their mission to embed daily singing into school life through the curriculum and extracurricular choral enrichment.'* They operate since 1993. The Voices Foundation partners with teachers to *'develop their knowledge, skills, and confidence in effectively teaching music*. *'Their approach to teacher development 'supports schools in their mission to embed daily singing into school life through the curriculum and extracurricular choral enrichment.'* The programme works with children from 0-18, they focus on the primary school level, as *'early intervention has the most significant impact on pupils'.* They recognise the need to support the most disadvantaged children and they *'work closely with disadvantaged schools to develop and fund programmes.'*

The Impact Report of the Voices Foundation 2020-21[20] uses qualitative tools to estimate the programme's impact, with no pre-post design. They measure the **pupils' perception**, where they report impact on the **general well-being** ('singing makes them happy'), **memory** ('singing can help them remember things'), and **social dimensions** ('liking school more when they do singing'). They also measure the **teachers' perception** of impacts for pupils. They conclude positive (qualitative) impacts on their **wellbeing**, **confidence**, **self-esteem**, **social** and **communication** skills, as well as pupil **learning** and **attainment**.

3.3 Likeliness of transfer effects of music training

The table below summarises the results of the literature review, organised according to the skill and personal achievement categories introduced previously. The 'Likelihood' column reflects the evaluators' conclusions regarding the probability of transfer effects occurring as a result of music training.

[17] https://demos.philharmoniedeparis.fr/le-projet.aspx
[18] https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-0-387-79948-3_1336
[19] https://www.voices.org.uk/
[20] https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61274f0fa915c578b8f7c0d3/t/61a4a5df71260f45d4406d87/1638180326230/VF+Impact+Report+2020-21.pdf

Table 5: Likeliness of transfer effects of music training to various domains

Skill / Achievement	Likeliness of transfer effects	Comments
1. Cognitive and intellectual skills	**Low**	Small-size transfer effects may be expected in memory skills and non-verbal intelligence.
2. Motor skills	**Medium**	Medium-size transfer effects may be expected in relation to fine motor skills (for musical instrument trainings only).
3. Literacy and language skills	**Low**	Small-size transfer effects may be expected in relation to reading, phonological awareness and verbal reasoning.
4. Social and emotional skills	**Medium**	Medium-size transfer effects may be expected in relation to prosocial skills, empathy, sympathy, sense of being socially included, self-esteem and aggression scores.
5. Musical skills	**High**	Large-size transfer effect is expected in most sub-skills (near-transfer).
6. General attainment	**Low**	Medium-size transfer effects may be expected only regarding school music marks (near-transfer).
7. Personal well-being	**Medium**	Medium-size transfer effects may be expected in relation to the sense of belonging.

Source: Devea Partners (2023), based on the reviewed literature (see Annex)

4 Assessment of the programme Theory of Change

SUMMARY

Overall, the contribution narrative of Superar in the three countries is robust, with no critical weaknesses identified in its impact chain to date. This underlines high behavioural additionality, indicating that the programme significantly influences the target group's behaviour in the desired direction beyond what would have occurred without their engagement.

There is a strong causal relationship between Superar's inputs and its activities, such as classes, performances, camps, and exchanges. While Superar fulfils its contractual obligations to implement these activities, their implementation is directly dependent on funding from key funders in each country. Without this funding, the activities would not take place, making it the primary driver of Superar's operations.

Superar has successfully enhanced various socio-emotional and practical skills among its target group, improved class cohesion in its affiliated institutions, and made a notable impact on local communities. Additionally, the programme has contributed to educational practices, inspiring non-Superar schoolteachers and fostering lasting changes in teaching methodologies and school culture, particularly in institutions with long-term engagement. Notably, in Slovakia, resources have been allocated to developing methodologies, leading to accreditation for 'innovative training' in music pedagogy.

Parents believe that Superar has made a 'large' or 'very large' contribution to the achievements observed in their children in 58% of cases. Superar's strongest cause-effect relationship was observed in improving musical skills, fine motor skills, self-confidence, and collaboration, as well as positively affecting children's home environments through their siblings. Contribution Analysis has confirmed that the key assumptions underpinning these outcomes are valid and has clarified Superar's specific contributions, differentiating them from external activities.

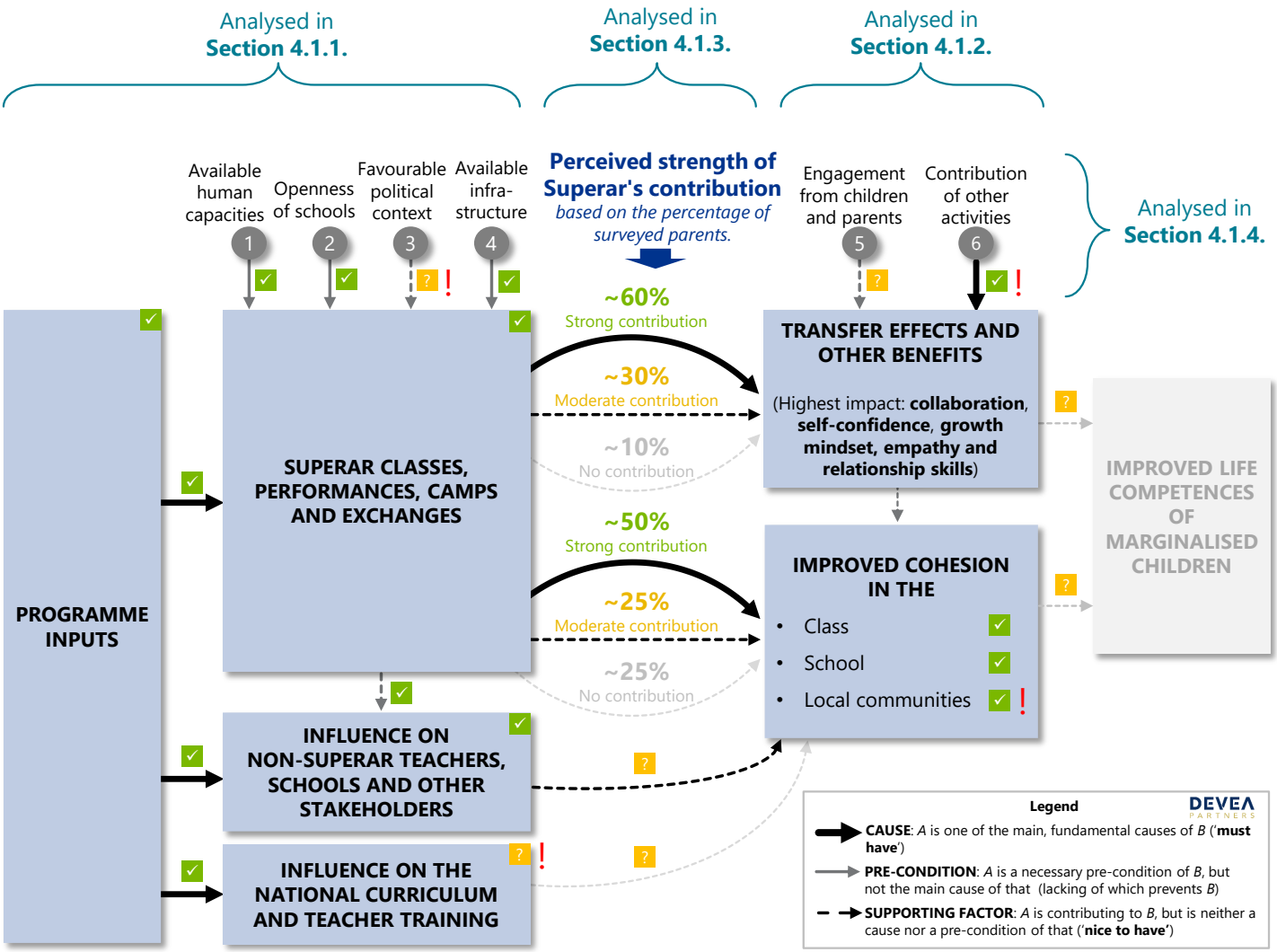
Nevertheless, three factors nuance these findings. Firstly, specific socio-economic and political contexts have hindered Superar's ability to effectively influence national curricula and teacher training in all three countries. Secondly, other activities in the children's lives (sports, dancing, arts, etc.) have played a larger role in the observed outcomes than initially anticipated. This suggests that some of the improvements can be attributed to both Superar's influence and the impact of these additional activities. While Superar's contribution is necessary and significant, it alone does not fully account for the observed changes. Thirdly, current parental support is invaluable, but increased parental engagement through targeted efforts by Superar and the affiliated schools and kindergartens could further amplify the programme's effects.

The following figure summarises the assessment of the high-level, simplified Theory of Change for the three countries. It indicates whether key elements of the causal package (blue boxes) have been realised[21], whether key assumptions (grey circles) have been confirmed, and whether the nature and strength of the causal relationships between these elements (represented by *arrows*[22]) have been established. Unexpected results and significant differences in the assessment of the three local theories of change are marked with a red exclamation mark (!).

An explanation of the figure is provided below. For further evidence supporting these findings, see Section 4 of this report, and the Country Evaluation Reports. The **detailed assessment** of the Theory of Change is included in Annex 6.10.

[21] The intended outcome (improved life competencies) could not be evaluated at this stage of programme implementation.
[22] See 'Legend' on the figure for explanation.

Figure 2: Assessment of the simplified high-level Theory of Change of Superar across the three countries



Source: Devea Partners (2024), based on various primary and secondary data sources

4.1.1 Inputs, programme activities and key assumptions

A **strong causal relationship exists between programme inputs and the Superar classes, performances, camps, and exchanges**, underlining the critical role of these inputs. This indicates that, without the financial and non-financial support, most of these programme activities would not have been carried out. Key contributors in the funding ecosystem include the If! Foundation (for all three countries), Porticus (for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovakia), and Sziget (for Hungary).

Superar has effectively **inspired non-Superar teachers across** Hungary, Slovakia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly within the schools and kindergartens where it operates. While it has taken years for these changes to manifest across all educational institutions, Superar appears to have made a lasting and significant impact by changing teachers' behaviours and teaching approaches in each country.

In Slovakia, Superar has committed significant resources to **developing its own methodology**, producing three comprehensive methodological publications and a library of several tutorial videos that serve as structured guides for educators in diverse educational settings. Additionally, Superar in Slovakia has recently received an accreditation from the Ministry of Education to provide training on '**innovative education**' in the fields of music pedagogy, music didactics, and music education methodology, with this training recently accredited. Despite this progress, there remains a gap in

comprehensive training for teachers from non-affiliated schools. However, initiatives are underway, such as the development of targeted training programmes for kindergarten teachers in Hungary and the introduction of training sessions for non-Superar schoolteachers in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which aim to enhance educational quality and expand the reach of the Superar methodology.

Superar **faces a challenge in its efforts to integrate its methodologies into the national education systems** of Hungary, Slovakia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Hungary, while the organisation has established positive relationships with public officials and educational districts, broader systemic changes to the national curriculum and teacher training remain challenging due to political and policy-related obstacles. In Slovakia, policymakers recognise Superar's contributions, particularly noting the success of **involving Superar experts in recent national educational reforms** related to art, which underlines Superar's local influence. However, the effectiveness of implementation depends upon the motivations of decision-makers and recent shifts in the political agenda. Meanwhile, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, policymakers are aware of Superar, and there was initial willingness to collaborate; however, incorporating Superar into the curriculum was deemed too far-reaching at that stage. Nevertheless, discussions are ongoing, and there is an initial interest from institutions such as the Music Academy and the Faculty of Pedagogy at the University of Sarajevo. Across all three countries, Superar's approach involves **building practical, mutually beneficial relationships** with policymakers, education officials and educational institutions to sustain its operation within existing frameworks while addressing the challenges posed by varying political priorities.

Regular **Superar classes are conducted** across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, and Slovakia, providing choir sessions for participants, usually at least three hours per week, with extracurricular instrumental sessions specifically offered in Hungary and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Each country organises **performances regularly**, with the annual Sziget Festival in Hungary serving as a significant milestone where children from various countries come together to sing in front of a large audience, fostering cultural exchange and collaboration.

At all Superar locations, **essential preconditions have been met**, including the presence of qualified Superar tutors, a supportive school environment, and adequate physical infrastructure such as classrooms, musical instruments, and appropriate facilities, all of which were physically verified by evaluators. However, parent engagement in Superar remains suboptimal across all three countries. Despite the efforts of local staff and teachers, there is significant potential for improvement in fostering greater involvement from parents in the programme. Additionally, while these essential preconditions have been established, the willingness of policymakers to adapt new approaches remains a significant challenge to increasing the impact of Superar's initiatives.

4.1.2 Perceived effects

Superar has significantly enhanced children's **musical skills** across all countries, particularly by improving singing abilities in choir classes and instrumental skills in guitar classes in Hungary and violin classes in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In addition to musical development, the programme has made notable contributions to improving children's **socio-emotional competencies**. Key impacts include boosting self-confidence, promoting growth mindset, improving collaboration, and enhancing relationship skills, empathy, and social awareness. While these competencies emerged as areas of highest impact across all three countries, slight variations were observed. For instance, self-confidence was particularly emphasised in Hungary, while socio-emotional skills showed stronger growth in Slovakia. These findings are widely supported by focus group discussions in each country, corroborated by Superar's Educator Survey, and aligned with existing literature on the benefits of music education.

Although there is limited evidence for that in the relevant literature, the Superar programme appears to have a notable impact on **various additional skills**. Memory, attention, language skills, and the ability to learn foreign languages have emerged as the areas most significantly affected by Superar, with slight variations observed across the countries. For example, attention was particularly emphasised in Slovakia, while language skills demonstrated slightly higher growth in Hungary. Development in these

skills is often not observed in traditional music education programmes, and while these findings are based on perceptions, they may indeed be valid due to the high frequency of Superar classes each week and the regular performances integrated into its curriculum.

The impact of Superar on **cohesion within classes,** the **schools** and **the local communities** has been significant. Notably, benefits for the siblings of Superar children, contributions to a more nurturing school environment, increased behavioural changes among non-Superar schoolteachers, and improvements in class cohesion are particularly strong. While these positive effects are observed across all three countries, there are some variations. For instance, the influence on local communities is more pronounced in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovakia, while in Hungary the effects on local communities are less significant. Conversely, while Slovakia demonstrates strong benefits in class cohesion, the overall impact on behavioural changes among non-Superar teachers is reported to be slightly lower compared to the other two countries. Overall, Superar has played a decisive role in enhancing social cohesion and fostering a sense of belonging among students in all countries.

Superar makes considerable efforts to **build relationships with parents** in close collaboration with schoolteachers across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, and Slovakia. While there have been successes in mobilising parents, such as using a Viber group for parents in Bosnia and Herzegovina, significant potential remains to further enhance parental engagement, which could improve the programme's overall effectiveness.

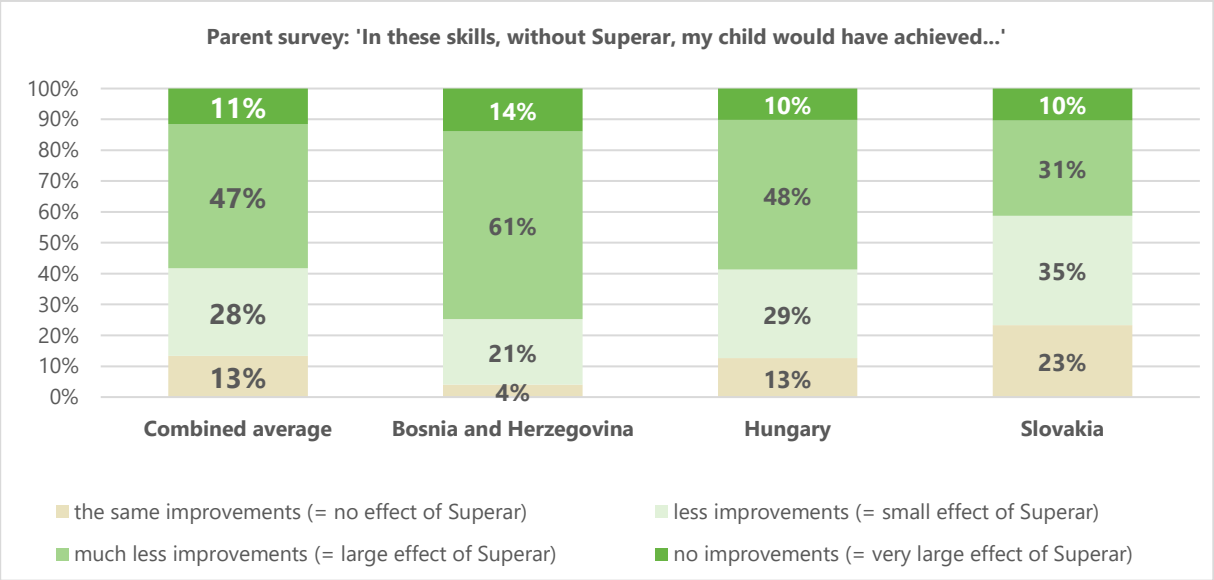
Additionally, the positive impact of Superar extends to non-Superar teachers, and even schools in Slovakia, in a way that non-Superar schoolteachers have been observed **incorporating Superar tools and methods into their teaching practices**. This incorporation is either directly inspired by interactions with Superar tutors or derived from their own training experiences within the Superar programme, highlighting the programme's influence beyond its immediate participants.

➔ *See Section 5 for more information.*

4.1.3 Superar's contribution to the observed changes

Stakeholders agree that, **without Superar, both children and schools would have experienced less development**. This points to the strong causal relationship between Superar activities and the observed effects, highlighting Superar's contribution to promoting individual and community development. The following figure shows the results of the parent survey, which is broadly in line with the outcomes of the stakeholder interviews regarding Superar's role in the achieved changes. According to this, parents believe that Superar has made a **'large' or 'very large' contribution to the achievements observed** in their children in 58% of cases.

Figure 3: Parental perceptions on the net effect of Superar (counterfactual)



Source: parent survey (N = 264 respondents out of 274), showing weighted % for each country and their arithmetic mean.

Without Superar, there would have been **significantly less improvement for children** across various domains, and the absence of Superar would likely result in substantial changes to school culture, pedagogical approaches, and the teaching community, particularly in schools where Superar has been present for an extended period.

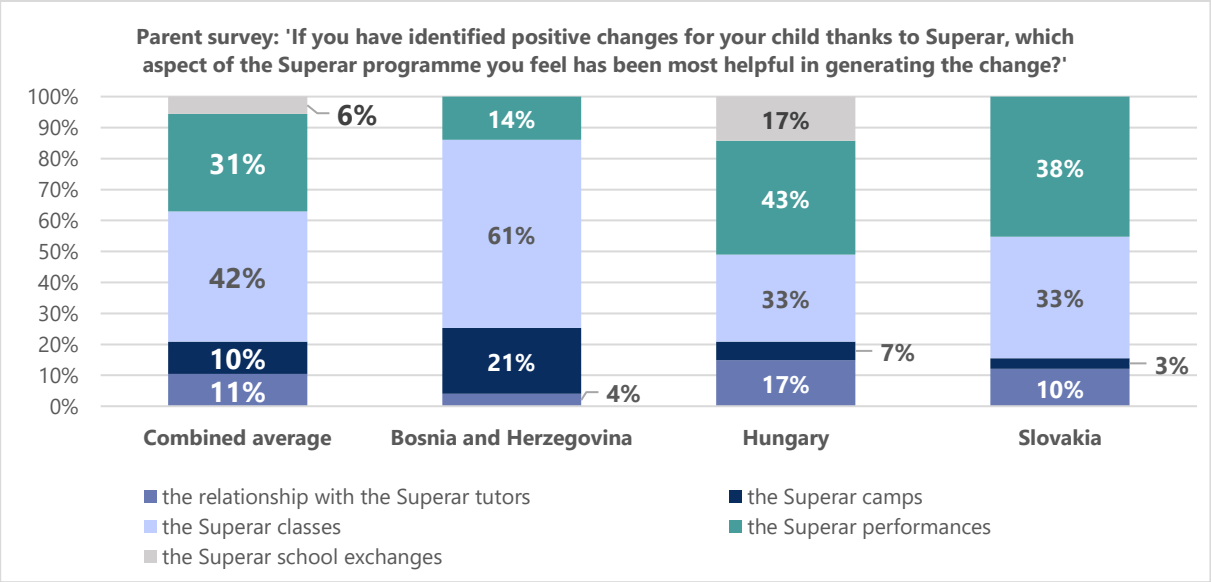
The parent survey revealed that the **strongest cause-and-effect relationship** and **contribution from Superar** was observed in improving musical skills, fine motor skills, self-confidence, collaboration, and impacting the children's immediate home environment through their siblings. In these cases, on average, over 50% of parents identified Superar as a main cause and driver of the observed change. Additionally, Superar's contribution was notably high in promoting a growth mindset, improving relationship skills, empathy, social awareness, memory, the ability to learn foreign languages, fostering a more nurturing school environment, enhancing the cultural diversity of local communities, inspiring behavioural changes among non-Superar teachers, and improving class cohesion and group solidarity, with more than 40% of parents recognising its strong influence in these areas. The contribution of Superar was assessed somewhat lower in areas such as responsible decision-making, behavioural and emotional control, and improvements in language skills, attention, and comprehension, while it was found to be the weakest in relation to cognitive and intellectual skills.

The 2024 'Educator Survey' also identified **significant contribution from Superar** across all of the observed competences. Beyond musical competences, the survey revealed that Superar's strongest contribution lies in developing children's socio-emotional competencies, particularly self-confidence and teamwork (64% and 57% of educators identified a strong causal link, respectively)[23], while the strength of its contribution is somewhat less in terms of social inclusion, general social skills, the children's attitudes and self-management (53%, 52%, 44% and 36% of educators identified a strong causal link, respectively). The contribution of Superar was assessed as moderate (26%) with respect to learning abilities.

Beyond regular classes, **Superar performances play a key role** in contributing to the children's development, with strong role identified for their relationships with Superar tutors and their participation in Superar camps, notably the Sziget Festival, as depicted in the figure below.

[23] The percentage of respondents that selected 'To a large extent' or 'It was a main cause of the change' regarding Superar's contribution to various observed effects on a scale of 5, for the three countries in total. N = 87.

Figure 4: Parental perceptions of Superar's most helpful aspect in generating the change



Source: parent survey (N = 265 respondents out of 274), showing weighted % for each country and their arithmetic mean.

One parent described the Superar experience as *'A well-rounded package. The teaching methods are excellent, the content they sing is relevant, and meeting with other kids contributes to the development of my child.'* Another parent referred to the performances as *'transformative experiences,'* reflecting the significant impact these events have on children. Performances and the personality of Superar tutors were captured many times in the **children's drawings during the photovoice sessions** (See Annex 6.11).

As shown above, responses regarding the perceived usefulness of various aspects of the Superar programme vary significantly across countries and among Superar institutions. This suggests that the **effectiveness of Superar's offerings largely depends on local contexts**, the types of classes offered, scheduling arrangements, and the level of community engagement.

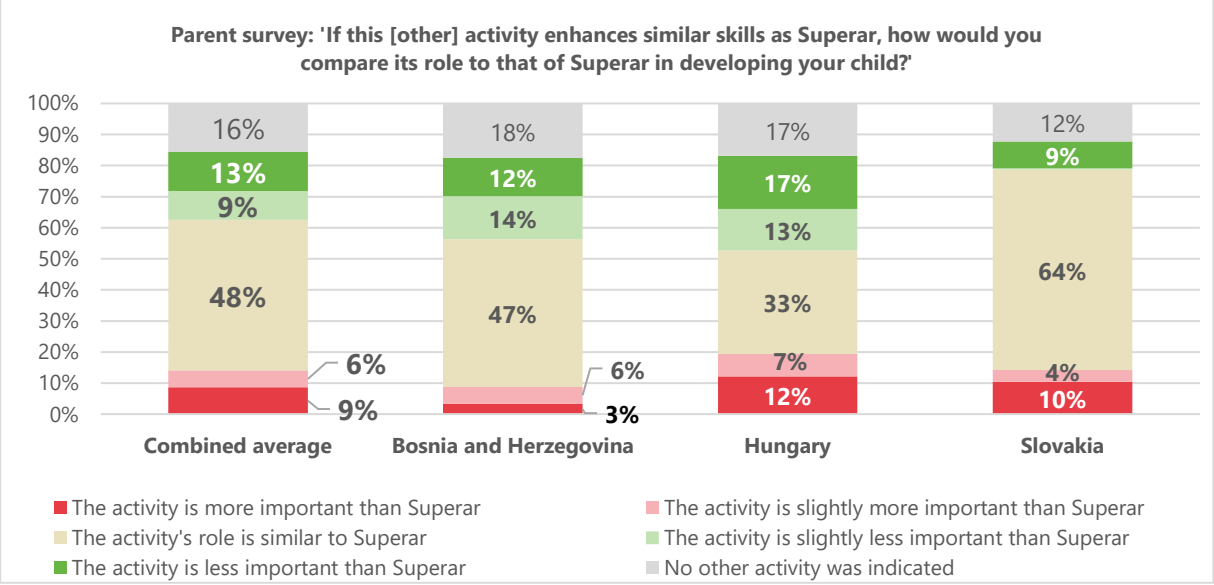
4.1.4 Alternative explanations and other contributing factors

Finally, to **eliminate potential alternative explanations** for the observed changes attributed to Superar, the evaluation examined a wide range of extracurricular activities in which the children participate. According to the parent survey, popular activities among children across all three countries include sports (especially football, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, martial arts, and swimming), alongside dancing, music education (piano, guitar, drums, etc.), various forms of arts (such as drama and ceramics), and chess. Participation in extracurricular activities varies slightly across Superar-affiliated institutions, with no clear pattern based on their geographical location within the three countries[24].

[24] In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there were no significant differences in extracurricular activity participation between two elementary schools, with 81% and 77% of parents reporting at least one activity at Elementary School 'Džemaludin Čaušević' and 'Kovačići', respectively. However, the participation rate was lower in the Superar-affiliated Children's House and the Caritas Afterschool Programme, where 58% and 68% of parents, respectively, reported similar involvement. In Hungary, participation rates were notably higher, with 91% and 100% of parents at Elementary School 'Bem József' and 'Wesley János' reporting at least one extracurricular activity, contrasting with just 43% at Elementary School 'Losonci Square'. In Slovakia, feedback from Superar's management suggests that extracurricular opportunities are most available at Elementary School 'Narnia' in Bratislava, though positive outcomes were observed at all three focus schools. At Elementary School 'Narnia' and 'Alexandra Vagača' in Detva, 86% of parents reported at least one extracurricular activity, while 74% of parents at Elementary School 'Lozorno' indicated the same.

The survey results and stakeholder interviews indicate that these **extracurricular activities play a significant role** and are **comparable to Superar's impact** in the majority (63%) of the cases (see figure below). Thus, while Superar's contribution is considerable, it is essential to recognise the positive effects of these additional activities when assessing the overall impact on children's development.

Figure 5: Parental perceptions on the role of other activities



Source: parent survey (N = 274 respondents out of 274), showing weighted % for each country and their arithmetic mean.

In Slovakia, the evaluation also identified the **influence of attendance at nearby music art schools** as a factor contributing to improved musical competencies among children. While such schools are available at a modest fee in all three countries, the impact in Slovakia appears more pronounced due to their easier accessibility compared to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Hungary, as these institutions were specifically highlighted by parents and teachers. However, the assessment indicates that the influence of these music art schools is moderate, given that the associated fees may pose a barrier for some disadvantaged families. This underlines Superar's decisive role in providing accessible music education to children whose parents may not be able to afford individual lessons at music art schools.

Please note that the **detailed assessment of the Theory of Change** is included in Annex 5.6.

5 Answers to the evaluation questions

The section presents the **answers to the eight evaluation questions (EQ)** and their sub-questions. Each response is grounded in the underlying evidence gathered during the evaluation process, detailed in the three Country Evaluation Reports. The findings are organised according to three key evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the Superar programme in the three countries.

5.1 Relevance

1. Do the programme objectives and implementation respond to the needs and challenges of beneficiaries?

1.1 Do the objectives of the Superar programme respond effectively to the needs and challenges of its beneficiaries?

SUMMARY

Superar serves a diverse target group across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, and Slovakia. As at June 2024, 38% of enrolled students were estimated to come from marginalised backgrounds, though proportions vary by country. Hungary had the highest proportion (66%), followed by Slovakia (34%) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (29%). Across the three countries, 21% of all students were estimated to have a 'marginalised or mixed ethnicity,' 14% have 'learning disorders', and another 14% come from 'marginalised family backgrounds', such as living in poverty or having single or disabled parents. Based on the stakeholder interviews, the target group faces various challenges related to social and economic barriers, including financial difficulties, low self-confidence, and educational difficulties linked to language and learning disorders.

Superar effectively addresses the needs of these children by providing a supportive, inclusive environment that fosters a sense of belonging and meets social and emotional needs often unmet at home or school. Stakeholder feedback highlights Superar's emphasis on building community, promoting integration, and offering positive experiences that are highly relevant to the target group. Although parents are generally reluctant to discuss specific struggles their children face, 90% of the surveyed parents consider Superar useful, 83% report that their children are excited to participate in its activities, and 97% would recommend it to others, underlining the programme's perceived relevance in creating opportunities for social and personal development for its target group.

According to monitoring data from June 2024, the composition of Superar classes across the three countries is diverse, with a substantial proportion of marginalised young people. Overall, **38% of the 1,484 students enrolled are estimated to come from marginalised backgrounds**. However, there is significant variation among the countries: Hungary has the highest proportion at 66%, followed by Slovakia at 34%, and Bosnia and Herzegovina with the lowest share at 29%.

In **Hungary**, the largest groups include students of marginalised or mixed ethnicity (45%), those with learning disorders (43%), and students from marginalised family backgrounds (37%). Hungary has the highest share of migrant students (16%) in the three countries. In **Slovakia**, the main groups are similar, with students of marginalised or mixed ethnicity (23%), those with marginalised family backgrounds (9%), and those with learning disorders (8%). **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, however, presents a different profile: the largest marginalised groups are those with minority religions (11%), students from marginalised family backgrounds (10%), and those with learning disorders (9%), as depicted in the table below.

This variation highlights the need for a context-sensitive approach in supporting Superar's diverse student population across these regions and also underlines the need for **caution when making direct comparisons of country-level results**, as each context presents unique social and demographic characteristics.

Table 6: Superar institutions and Superar students as at June 2024

Category	TOTAL		Bosnia and Herzegovina		Hungary		Slovakia	
	Number of students	*Share of all students*	Number of students	*Share of all students*	Number of students	*Share of all students*	Number of students	*Share of all students*
Total number of young people enrolled	**1,484**	***100%***	**421**	***100%***	**258**	***100%***	**805**	***100%***
Anonymous estimate of marginalised young people	**568**	***38%***	**121**	***29%***	**171**	***66%***	**276**	***34%***
Marginalised or mixed ethnicity	319	*21%*	14	*3%*	117	*45%*	188	*23%*
Learning disorders	212	*14%*	37	*9%*	112	*43%*	63	*8%*
Marginalised family background[25]	212	*14%*	43	*10%*	96	*37%*	73	*9%*
Mother tongue other than language of instruction	82	*6%*	13	*3%*	36	*14%*	33	*4%*
Migrant background	68	*5%*	0	*0%*	42	*16%*	26	*3%*
Minority religion	68	*5%*	48	*11%*	19	*7%*	1	*0%*
Mental disability	60	*4%*	28	*7%*	10	*4%*	22	*3%*
Physical disability	28	*2%*	19	*5%*	2	*1%*	7	*1%*
Other	9	*1%*	4	*1%*	2	*1%*	3	*0%*

Source: monitoring data (June 2024)

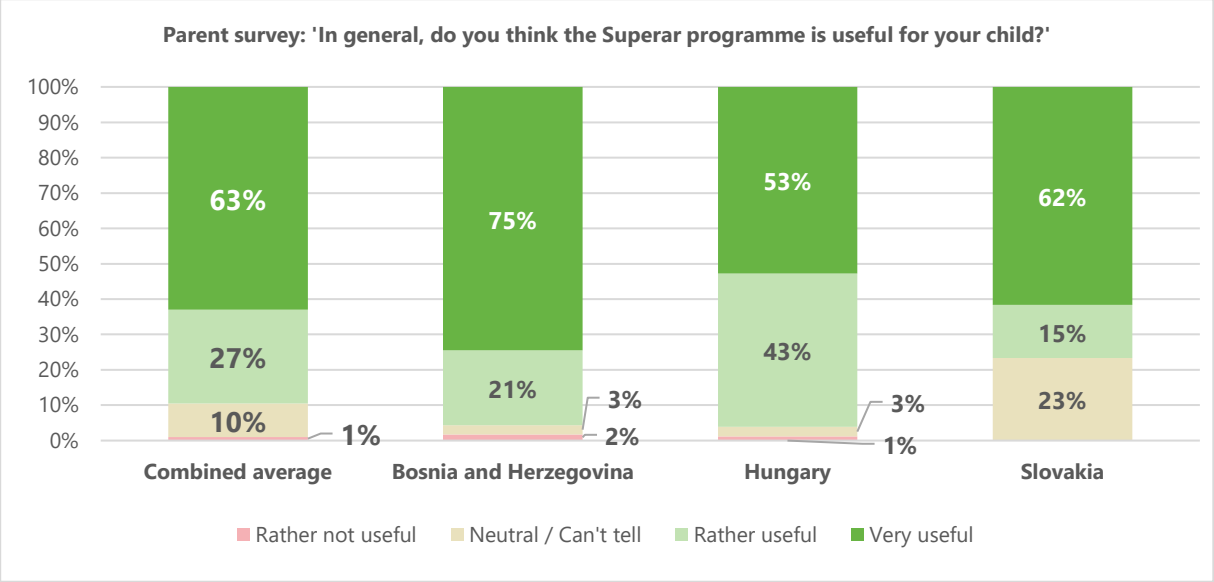
Across the three countries, marginalised children in the Superar programme face a multitude of social, economic, and educational challenges. Based on the stakeholder interviews with schoolteachers and tutors, a common theme is **financial difficulty**, which often restricts access to basic necessities like food, housing, and healthcare, and affects these children's ability to fully participate in learning and extracurricular activities. **Social challenges** are also significant: low self-confidence, a fear of failure, and a reluctance to try new things are common issues in all three countries, often compounded by feelings of exclusion and discrimination. These barriers, coupled with limited positive reinforcement at home, can create a cycle of learned helplessness, where children can feel destined to fail. **Educationally**, many children experience difficulties stemming from language barriers, learning disorders, and limited parental support, especially when parents face their own struggles, such as illiteracy or unemployment. Additionally, **negative stereotypes** from peers and sometimes even educators can further harm the children's self-esteem and motivation to engage in school. These children's needs underline the importance of inclusive support systems to help them overcome these barriers.

The broader parent survey across all three countries revealed a **general reluctance among parents to openly discuss the challenges their children face**, despite contextual evidence that suggests significant obstacles exist for marginalised families. In many cases, parents tended to focus on the positive aspects of their children's lives, often downplaying or omitting difficulties. For instance, in Hungary, a parent stated that their child *'does not generally face disadvantages at school,'* though later they acknowledged occasional hostility linked to their background. This discrepancy between parent responses and the broader context provided by teachers and community insights suggests that parents may not be forthcoming about their children's struggles. The interviewed parents generally agreed that their children have ample opportunities to learn, participate in extracurricular activities, make friends, engage in cultural events, and develop their talents as they grow.

[25] Defined as 'Poverty, single parent, disabled parents'.

Against this background, an average of **90% of parents consider Superar to be beneficial** for their children, emphasising the programme's high perceived relevance across all three countries (see figure below).

Figure 6: Parental perceptions of Superar's usefulness for their children



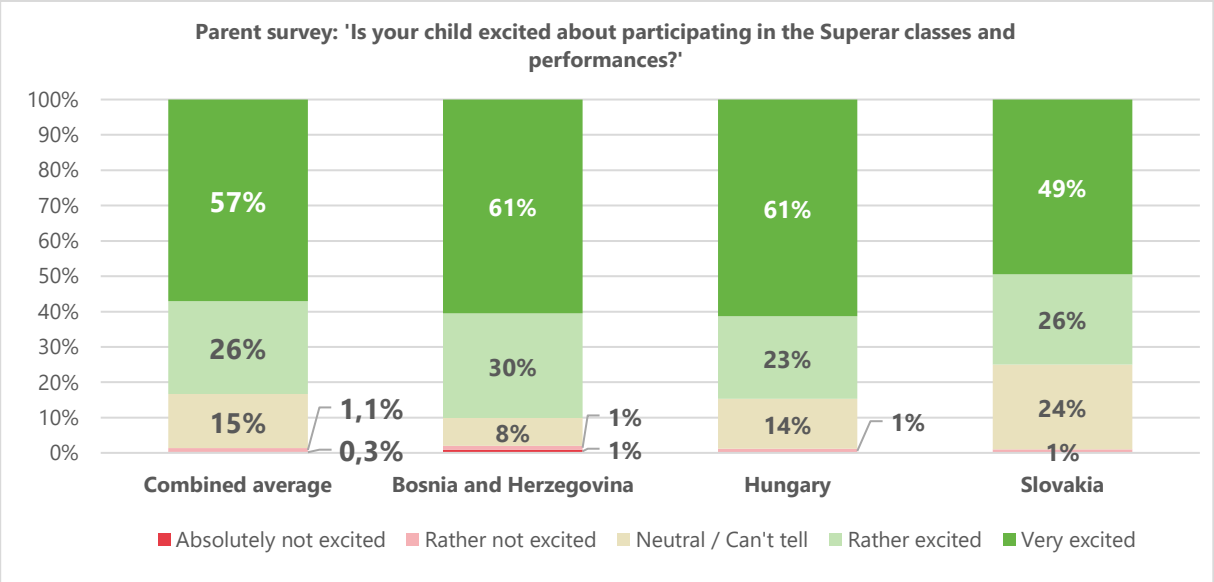
Source: parent survey (N = 274 respondents out of 274), showing weighted % for each country and their arithmetic mean.

Stakeholder interviews confirm that Superar is **useful for the children**[26], and **responds to their needs**, especially those from marginalised backgrounds[27]. Stakeholder feedback across the three countries highlights Superar's adequate response to the target groups' needs by fostering an **inclusive and supportive environment**. In all three countries, Superar is praised for building community, promoting integration, and providing structure and positive experiences often missing from children's home or school lives. The programme's emphasis on creativity and holistic development goes beyond music education in the regular curriculum; it improves skills like teamwork and emotional expression, which are especially useful for its target group. Teachers and parents consistently recognise Superar's ability to help children **feel a sense of belonging**. As one parent from Bosnia and Herzegovina summarised, the programme is *'high quality and well-designed with a positive impact,'* while a Slovak parent valued the *'creative and participatory'* teaching methods, which are effective for all students.

Another indicator of this usefulness is the perceived enthusiasm of children about participating in Superar classes and performances. An average of **83% of parents observed that their children are excited to attend** these events, further confirming the programme's alignment with the children's needs (see figure below).

[26] 43 out of 43 relevant interview respondents agreed with this statement.
[27] 34 out of 34 relevant interview respondents agreed with this statement.

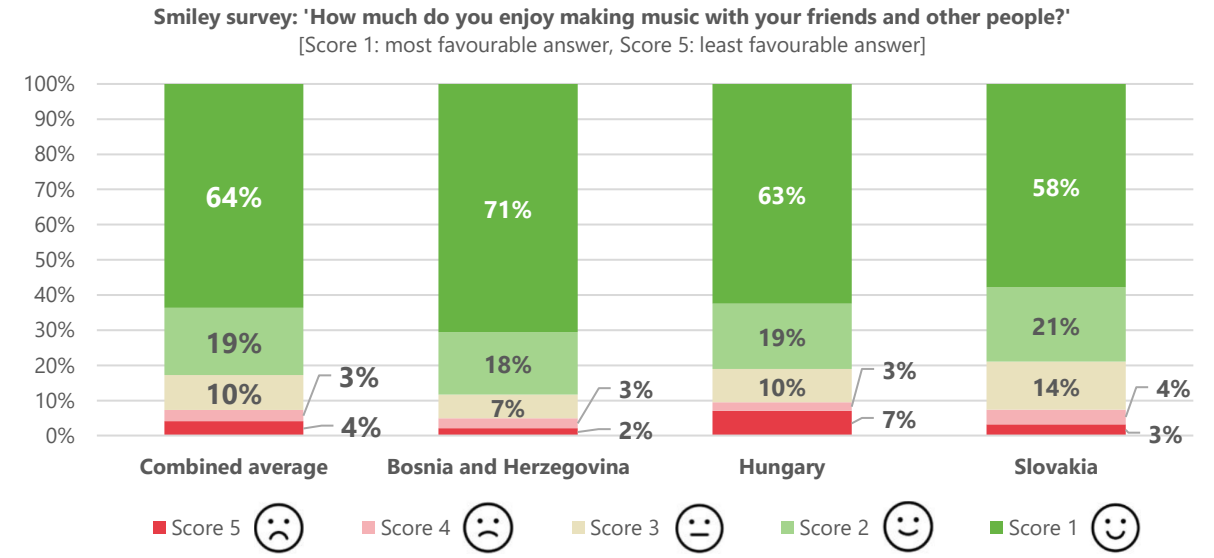
Figure 7: Parental perceptions of their children's excitement to participate



Source: parent survey (N = 274 respondents out of 274), showing weighted % for each country and their arithmetic mean.

This high level of excitement was captured at **all photovoice sessions** with children (see Annex 6.11) and is also reflected by the children's **Self-assessment Survey** in 2024 ('Smiley Survey'), as shown below.

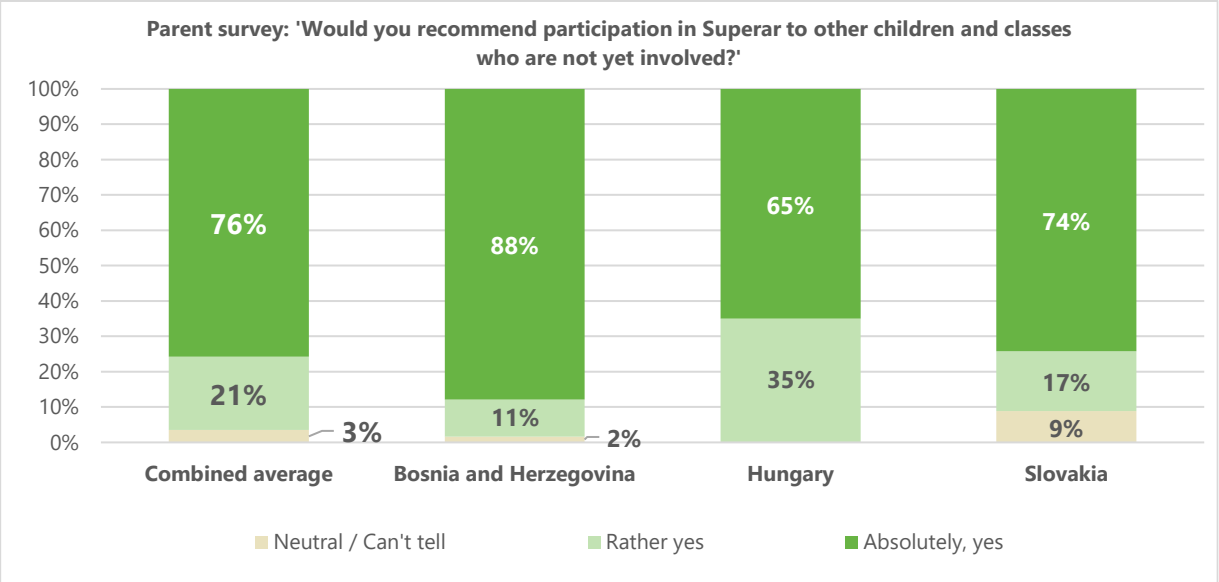
Figure 8: Children's Self-assessment Survey ('Smiley survey'): enjoying music with friends and other people



Source: Superar (2024, N = 863), edited by Devea Partners (2024)

Finally, an indirect way to assess the programme's relevance for the target group is by measuring how likely participants are to recommend it to others, similar to the Net Promoter Score concept. As shown in the figure below, the **97% of parents recommend Superar**, and 76% gave the highest possible score, identifying them as strong promoters of the programme.

Figure 9: Recommendation of Superar participation to other children and classes



Source: parent survey (N = 261 respondents out of 274), showing weighted % for each country and their arithmetic mean.

1.2 Does the delivery mechanism of the Superar programme adequately address the needs and challenges of its beneficiaries?

SUMMARY

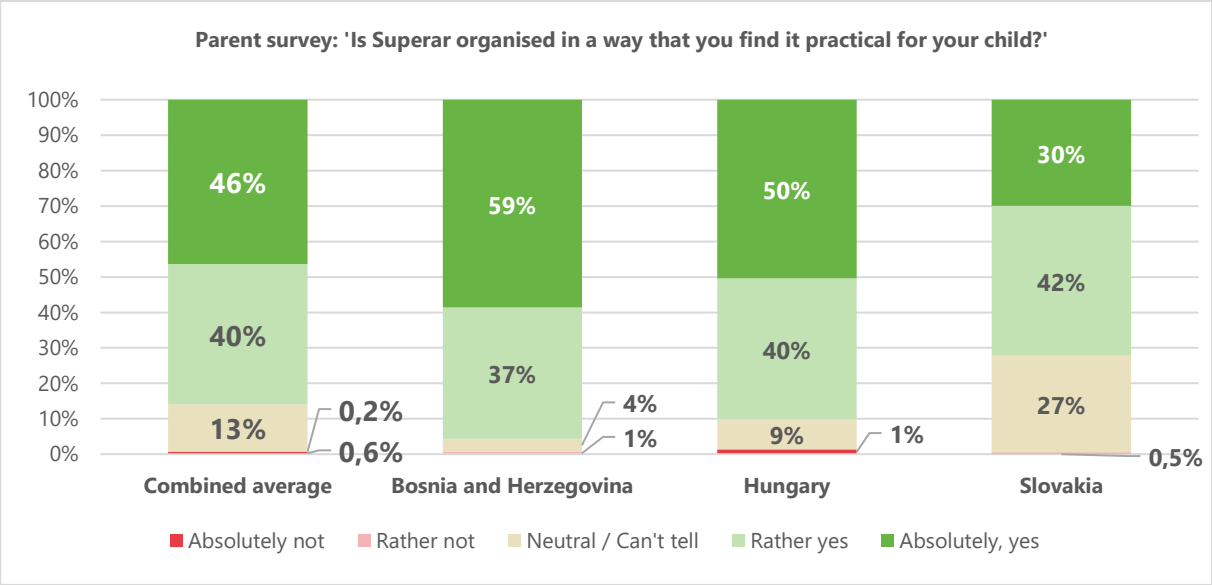
The delivery mechanism of the Superar programme effectively addresses the needs and challenges of its beneficiaries. 86% of parents find Superar's organisation practical for both themselves and their children, which aligns with the views of other interviewed stakeholders. The programme's flexible implementation, local adaptability, and smooth integration into school routines are praised, contributing to its overall effectiveness. Tutors appreciate Superar's departure from traditional methods, highlighting its tailored and interactive teaching approaches that engage children from diverse backgrounds, including those from marginalised communities. The advantage of having tutors who are external to the school is also widely emphasised, with parents often praising the tutors' creative and participatory methods that are well received by their children.

Nevertheless, challenges in engaging parents persist across all three countries, as some parents may struggle to connect with the programme or fully understand its benefits. Tutors recognise the need for improved outreach to families and have identified effective communication strategies, such as using a Viber channel in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to strengthen connections with parents and keep them informed about their children's progress and opportunities within Superar. Engaging parents more effectively could further enhance their involvement and support for their children's educational experiences.

86% of parents find the way Superar is organised to be practical for both them and their children (see figure below). These results align with the outcomes of stakeholder interviews, which show a similar percentage distribution for the same question[28].

[28] 39 out of 41 relevant interview respondents agreed that Superar responds to the needs of its direct beneficiaries (choosing 'Rather yes', or 'Absolutely yes' from a scale of 5).

Figure 10: Parental perceptions on Superar's delivery



Source: parent survey (N = 268 respondents out of 274), showing weighted % for each country and their arithmetic mean.

Superar has been recognised for its **flexible implementation** and **local adaptability**, effectively meeting the needs of children, parents, and schools in each context. Common themes emerge from the feedback of parents and tutors in all three countries, highlighting the programme's ability to **integrate into existing school routines** and cater to local preferences, which contributes to its successful implementation. Tutors consistently praised the programme for its **departure from traditional, textbook-based education**, with tutors appreciating the approach that fosters engagement among children from diverse backgrounds, including those coming from marginalised communities or those with neurodevelopmental disorders. The advantage of having tutors who are external to the school was also emphasised, as this fosters a positive environment that is distinct from the regular school setting.

The tutors' **creative and participatory teaching methods** were generally appreciated, as a parent in Slovakia observed, the *'approach is tailor-made to the kids. It is not boring, it is interactive… kids are learning without realising it.'* This indicates that the programme's delivery mechanism not only meets the educational needs of the children but also keeps them engaged and motivated, reinforcing the relevance and effectiveness of Superar's delivery structure.

Superar's ability to **deliver extracurricular activities in a way that is manageable for marginalised families** was particularly noted in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in great part due to its unique setup with a community centre involved among its institutions, providing extracurricular choir and instrumental classes. A parent remarked in this regard, *'Superar is very professional; they bring together children from different backgrounds and integrate them well.'*

Despite its successes, **reaching parents remains a common challenge** across all three countries. Tutors have noted difficulties in engaging certain parents, viewing these challenges as external factors rather than shortcomings of Superar itself. In Slovakia, one tutor mentioned, *'There is room for improvement to work better with the target groups... We need to understand more their needs,'* indicating a recognition of the necessity for stronger outreach to marginalised families. In Hungary, while parents generally reported no significant obstacles to participation, the limited availability of teachers and tutors to accompany children to performances occasionally affected parents' decisions, suggesting that enhanced communication could improve participation rates. Nevertheless, interviewees identified effective practices in this regard, particularly the Viber channel in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has proven successful in maintaining communication with parents.

Teacher trainings in Slovakia have been perceived as well-promoted and well-organised by its target group, with sessions organised in various parts of Slovakia to ensure wide participation.

1.3 Is the programme designed in a way to enable equitable programme implementation?

SUMMARY

The Superar programme is designed with a strong commitment to equitable implementation, ensuring that all children have access to high-quality music education, irrespective of their musical abilities, socio-economic status, or background. The programme embodies principles of inclusivity by offering free classes to children and youth, including those who are disadvantaged and marginalised. The selection process typically involves choosing entire classes to participate, reinforcing the notion that no child is left behind. While some challenges persist in including all classes at certain schools, such as only lower-grade classes being selected or not all classes within a grade participating, stakeholders highlight the importance of ongoing efforts to engage every class.

Furthermore, the selection of schools and kindergartens prioritises institutions with a higher proportion of children from marginalised backgrounds, in line with Superar's 'lab' model as outlined in its Theory of Change. These schools and kindergartens serve as environments for testing and developing Superar's methods, and their selection is a conscious decision in each country, influenced by practical factors such as the local Superar's financial resources and the support from school management, rather than being solely based on serving the 'most marginalised' schools.

The responses from Superar tutors consistently affirm that Superar is designed with a **strong commitment to equitable implementation**, ensuring that all children, regardless of their musical abilities, socio-economic status, or background, have access to high-quality music education. The programme operates on principles of inclusivity, offering free classes to children and youth, including those who are disadvantaged and marginalised. As a tutor in Bosnia and Herzegovina noted, *'We do not select children based on their musical talents... we tailor our activities to meet the diverse capabilities of the children.'* This reflects a fundamental principle shared across all participating countries, with a Hungarian tutor affirming that *'Superar fully embodies the principles of equal opportunity.'* Similarly, in Slovakia, a tutor highlighted that the programme *'ensures equal opportunities for children to access high-quality music education.'*

The selection process for Superar **typically involves choosing entire classes to participate** across the three countries, thereby reinforcing the notion that no child is left behind. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, tutors emphasised that *'we make sure that the programme is available to all children where we work,'* ensuring comprehensive participation within schools. Similarly, in Hungary, a tutor pointed out that *'the whole class participates, irrespective of the children in the class.'* In Slovakia, the commitment to inclusion was also demonstrated, as one schoolteacher observed, *'[The tutor] is treating the Roma children equitably; they are part of the class or choir and building their self-esteem through this.'* This collective approach underlines the programme's intention to integrate all children into its activities.

While the programme strives for full participation, **challenges remain in including all classes at certain schools**. In some instances, only lower-grade classes are selected for participation, while in other locations, typically due to resource constraints, not all classes within a grade are included. This highlights the need for ongoing efforts and resources to ensure that every class is engaged, which has been expressed by the interviewed stakeholders.

The selection of schools and kindergartens for the Superar programme **prioritises institutions with a higher proportion of children from marginalised backgrounds** in all countries, demonstrating an awareness of social disparities. However, stakeholders indicate that practical factors also influence this selection, particularly the availability of financial resources and the support and openness of school management, as noted across all three countries as key drivers of selecting a new Superar location.

2. Are there any insights from stakeholders that would increase the programme's relevance to its beneficiaries?

SUMMARY

Several common suggestions emerged across the three evaluated countries, highlighting '*Further inclusion and representation'* as particularly relevant for programme relevance. Focus group participants unanimously supported broadening Superar's accessibility, though they rated this with medium priority compared to other more urgent recommendations. Participants had specific suggestions regarding better targeting children with mental or physical disabilities or better addressing the needs of Roma communities. However, they also emphasised that simply increasing the number of participants would not necessarily lead to improved outcomes. Instead, they called for practical strategies and effective communication to increase the commitment and engagement of parents, thereby enhancing the programme's effectiveness for current participants.

Additionally, stakeholders proposed several ways to enhance the programme's relevance. These include expanding the Superar programme to rural areas (focusing on rural Hungary, Eastern Slovakia and, for instance, cantons in Bosnia and Herzegovina with a divided school system), to increase accessibility; diversifying the musical education offered by introducing a wider range of instrumental classes; and specifically engaging upper grade students. Other recommendations involve promoting choir participation among boys to challenge gender stereotypes; increasing teacher training in Superar's methodologies; strengthening partnerships with NGOs serving marginalised communities for better resource sharing; and improving brand awareness and promotional activities to raise the programme's visibility.

Several common suggestions emerged across the three evaluated countries, and '**Further inclusion and representation'** was highly related to programme relevance. These common suggestions were discussed and assessed in all local focus group sessions. This suggestion emphasises the importance of broadening the accessibility of Superar for children. Participants in all three countries **acknowledged the relevance of enhancing inclusion** but typically rated this suggestion with medium priority, as other suggestions regarding effectiveness (see evaluation question 6) were deemed more urgent. Also, despite acknowledging the programme's existing inclusivity, participants expressed concerns about the recommendation's cost-efficiency and practicality in comparison to other suggestions.

In Hungary, focus group members noted that while they already work with children from various backgrounds, there is a significant opportunity to **include children with mental or physical disabilities**, a group not currently targeted by the programme. Similarly, in Slovakia, suggestions included ensuring accessibility for children with disabilities and specifically **addressing the needs of Roma communities**, with calls for the inclusion of schools serving predominantly Roma students and the need for specialised personnel to support these efforts. Again, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, focus group participants emphasised the significance of increasing access to the programme for **socially vulnerable groups**, reinforcing the idea that all children should benefit from high-quality music education.

While there was a consensus on the importance of enhancing inclusion and representation in all countries, focus group participants highlighted that **merely increasing numbers may not lead to improved outcomes**. They emphasised the need for practical strategies and effective communication to ensure that all families can engage meaningfully with the programme, thereby enhancing its effectiveness for existing participants.

In addition to these overarching suggestions, interviewed stakeholders proposed several potential ways to enhance the relevance of the local Superar programme, which could be explored further and validated in future discussions:

- **Expanding the Superar programme to more rural areas** has emerged as a priority across all countries involved. Superar management members and tutors have emphasised that such an expansion could significantly increase accessibility and relevance for a broader audience,

particularly underserved populations who currently lack adequate educational resources and opportunities.

In Hungary, the management has plans to extend the programme to rural locations, while in Slovakia, there are intentions to expand operations specifically to Eastern Slovakia. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, new locations outside Sarajevo are also being targeted, particularly in cantons with a divided school system, where the issue of *'two schools under one roof'* persists, such as in the Herzegovina-Neretva and Central Bosnia Cantons.

- The **diversification of musical education** was also a key theme across discussions. For instance, participants in Hungary expressed a desire for a wider range of instrumental classes (beyond guitar).
- **Engaging upper grade students (grades 5-8) more** was noted as another important consideration in Hungary, where stakeholders indicated that tailoring the programme to align with the interests of these students could encourage their continued involvement after their initial participation.
- **Promoting choir participation among boys** in Bosnia and Herzegovina was identified as an important strategy to challenge gender stereotypes and foster a more inclusive environment. Encouraging boys to engage in extracurricular choir activities, which currently see predominantly female participation, is important to achieving this goal.
- Another prominent suggestion is the **need for more teacher training in Superar's methodologies**, specifically mentioned in Bosnia and Herzegovina. With recent education reforms in Canton Sarajevo introducing an interdisciplinary teaching model, stakeholders stressed the importance of equipping teachers to effectively adapt to this new curriculum using Superar's compatible methodologies.
- **Strengthening NGO partnerships** was emphasised by stakeholders in Slovakia, who advocated for establishing strategic collaborations with other organisations working with marginalised communities. This could enhance resource sharing and advocacy efforts, making the collective impact of these initiatives more substantial.
- **Improving brand awareness and promotional activities** was also recognised as a necessary step to increase Superar's impact within the community. Enhanced promotional efforts can help to raise visibility and support for the programme, ensuring it reaches a wider audience and meets the needs of diverse groups.

5.2 Effectiveness

3. To what extent is the Superar programme delivering its desired outcomes for its key beneficiaries?

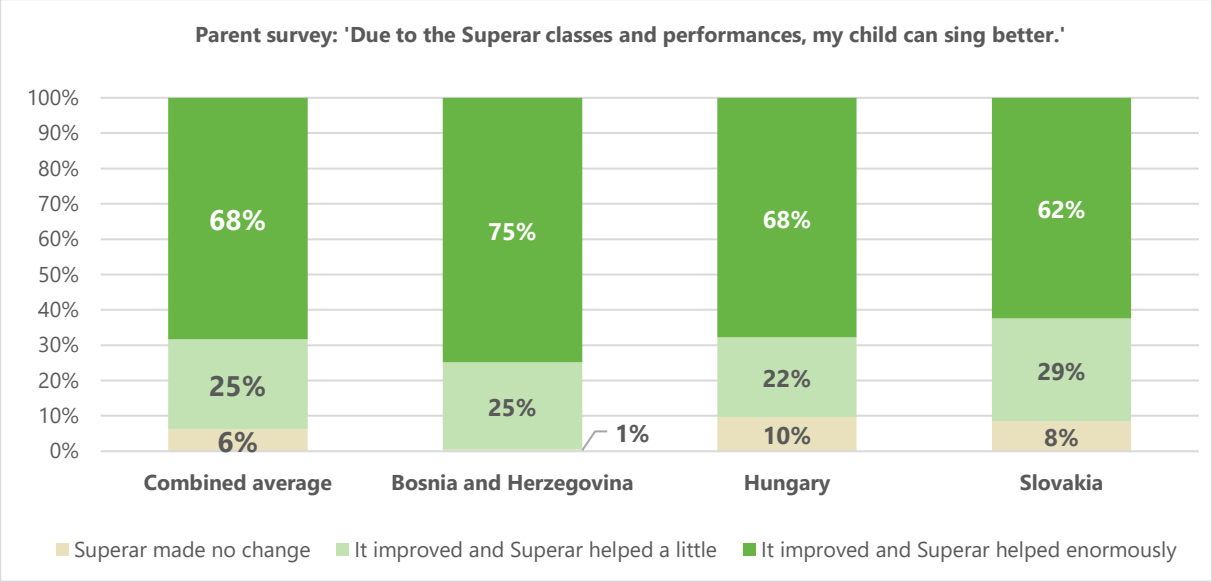
3.1 To what extent has the Superar programme contributed to the musical competencies of its direct beneficiaries, particularly vulnerable and marginalised children?

SUMMARY

Superar has significantly enhanced the musical abilities of its participants across all three countries, including vulnerable and marginalised children. A survey reveals that 94% of parents have noticed improvements in their children's singing due to participation in Superar's choir classes, and similar benefits are reported in instrumental courses regarding children's ability to play musical instruments. Stakeholder interviews and photovoice sessions with children further confirm the programme's positive influence on musical skills. These findings align with existing literature on music education and are substantiated by class observations and the children's self-assessment surveys, demonstrating a clear cause-and-effect relationship between Superar's activities and enhanced musical competencies.

Based on the results of the online survey, **94%** of parents perceive that their children's **singing skills have improved** as a result of participating in Superar choir classes, as demonstrated below. This finding aligns with the literature review on similar music education programmes (see Section 3).

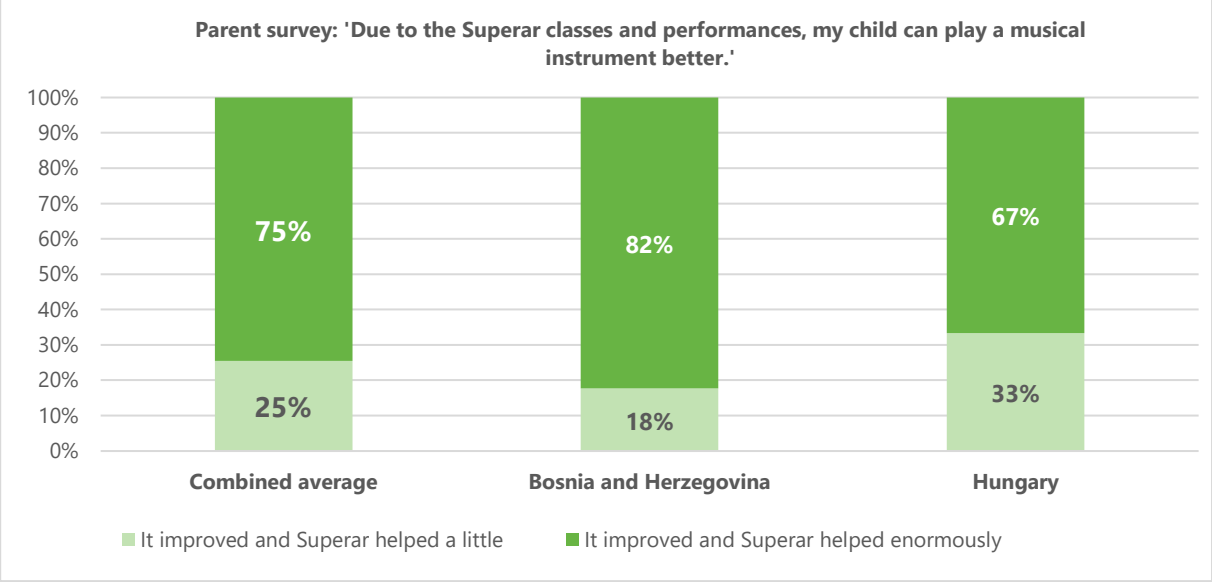
Figure 11: Parental perceptions of Superar's impact on singing



Source: parent survey (N = 238 respondents out of 274), showing weighted % for each country and their arithmetic mean.

Children enrolled in extracurricular instrumental courses in Bosnia and Herzegovina (violin) and Hungary (guitar) have reported a similarly high rate of improvement in their **ability to play a musical instrument** as a result of participation in Superar (see figure below).

Figure 12: Parental perceptions of Superar's impact on playing a musical instrument



Source: parent survey (N = 20 respondents out of 274), showing weighted % for each country and their arithmetic mean.

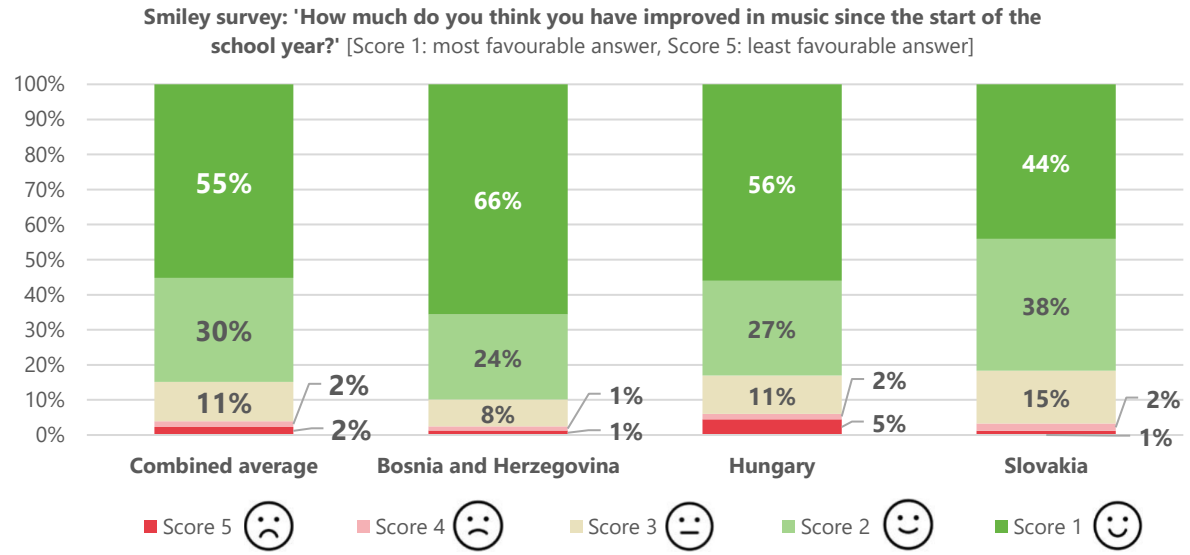
The responses from **interviews** with Superar tutors, teachers, parents[29], and the **photovoice sessions** with children (see Annex 6.11) **unanimously affirm the positive impact** of Superar on enhancing the musical abilities of participating children.

In Hungary, stakeholders widely agreed on the programme's effectiveness, with a tutor stating, *'Superar has a very strong and direct impact on the children's musical abilities.'* Class activities designed to enhance skills like reading sheet music and rhythmic sense were applied frequently, and parents reported noticeable **behavioural changes in their children**, such as singing spontaneously at home, an indication of their growing musical interest. As a non-Superar schoolteacher in Bosnia and Herzegovina noted, *'Children in Superar do musical dictations without any effort and sing in foreign languages.'* Stakeholders in Slovakia experienced similar impacts, as a schoolteacher enthusiastically remarked in Slovakia, *'The choir helps the children a lot... Superar is the best.'*

Class observations conducted by evaluators in each country reinforced these findings, revealing that all observed classes incorporated various exercises, games, and activities specifically designed to enhance children's musical skills, such as singing techniques and rhythmic awareness. Overall, the results from all three countries demonstrate that Superar significantly improves the musical abilities of participating children, promoting both skill development and a deeper engagement with music.

The above results are **in line with the results of the children's Self-assessment Survey** in 2024 (the 'Smiley survey'), carried out in 2024 by Superar, as shown below.

Figure 13: Children's Self-assessment Survey ('Smiley survey'): improvement in music



Source: Superar (2024, N = 864), edited by Devea Partners (2024)

[29] 35 out of 35 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in this skill that resulted from Superar's contribution.

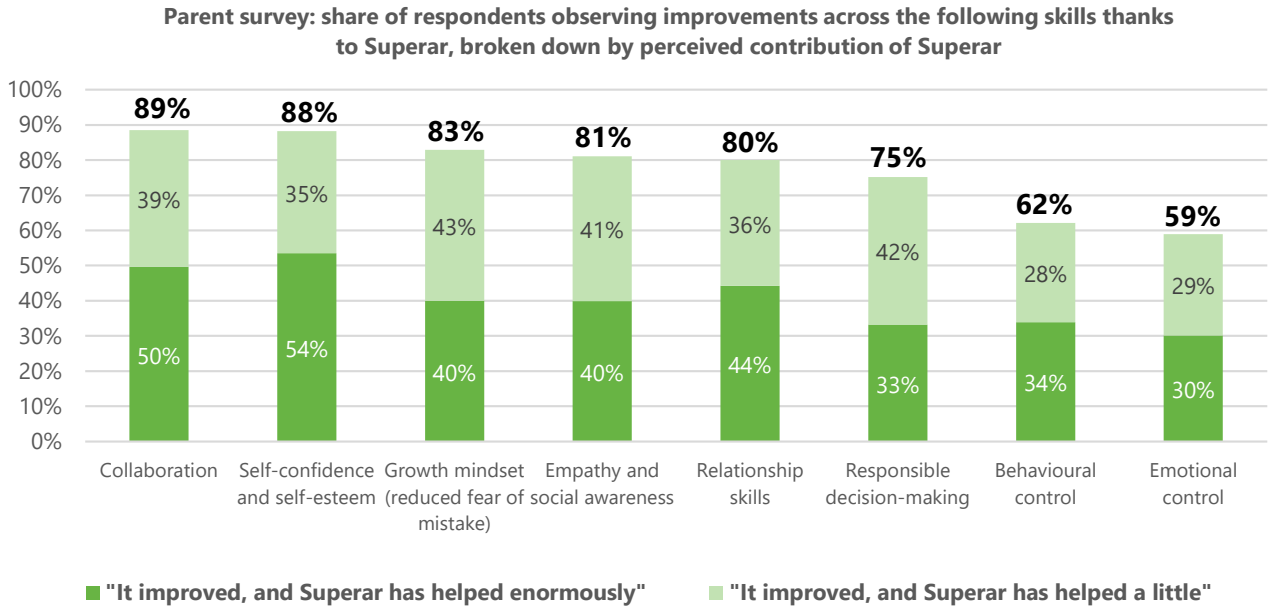
3.2 To what extent has the Superar programme contributed to the socio-emotional competencies of its direct beneficiaries, particularly vulnerable and marginalised children?

SUMMARY

Superar has significantly contributed to the socio-emotional competencies of its direct beneficiaries across all countries, including vulnerable and marginalised children. Based on a literature review and an analysis of programme documents, the evaluators selected eight socio-emotional competencies to assess in detail. The most significant effects were identified in relation to collaboration skills, as well as self-confidence and self-esteem, with 89% and 88% of parents reporting improvements, respectively. Superar's emphasis on group activities, such as collective singing and performances, has fostered essential teamwork skills and strengthened social bonds, particularly benefiting shy, introverted, and insecure children. Additionally, the programme has nurtured a growth mindset among participants, with 83% of parents observing improvements in this area, further enhancing resilience. While impacts on responsible decision-making and behavioural and emotional control were noted, these were ranked somewhat lower; however, focus group discussions suggested higher perceived effects in terms of impacts on the children's behaviour, especially in Hungary and Slovakia. Overall, Superar's inclusive and free-of-charge model provides important support to children from marginalised backgrounds, contributing not only to their musical education but also to their socio-emotional development. However, it is important to recognise that other extracurricular activities pursued by the children also play a similarly significant role in driving these changes (see Section 4.1.4).

Superar's vision and mission statement emphasises that a high-quality music programme can provide benefits to children beyond just musical skills[30]. Based on a literature review and analysis of Superar programme documents, the evaluation assessed the programme's impact on eight socio-emotional competencies. According to the parent survey results (see below), parents perceive improvements in all of these competencies among their children as a result of participating in Superar, although the **degree of improvement and Superar's contribution** varies across different competencies.

Figure 14: Parental perceptions of Superar's impact on socio-emotional skills of its target group



Source: parent survey (N = 258 respondents out of 274), showing the arithmetic mean of weighted country percentages.

[30] See further 'Superar International – Vision, Mission, Theory of Change', Section 1.2 ('Our Approach').

Superar has significantly enhanced children's **collaboration skills** across all three countries, with 89% of parents observing notable improvements in this area. This is consistent with feedback from stakeholder interviews[31]. Focus group discussions in each country highlighted collaboration as one of the three most important outcomes of Superar, with Bosnia and Herzegovina ranking it as the top impact. This impact is attributed to Superar's emphasis on group activities, such as collective singing, choreography, and joint performance preparations, which foster essential teamwork skills. As a tutor from Bosnia and Herzegovina noted, *'Music is a powerful tool for developing this competence, and children work on that on a continuous basis.'* In addition to skill-building, Superar's collaborative approach strengthens social connections, helping shy and introverted children build confidence alongside more outgoing peers. As a Hungarian schoolteacher added, *'playing games and performing together not only promote collaboration but also strengthen social bonds and group dynamics,'* emphasising Superar's role in fostering a supportive environment for all children. A Slovak schoolteacher highlighted the unique demands of Superar's choir experience, saying, *'Superar is more demanding in inspiring collaboration, especially through choir experience.'* Many of the above techniques were experienced in person by the evaluators during class observations.

Superar has had a substantial impact on children's **self-confidence and self-esteem** across all three countries, with 88% of parents reporting positive changes in these areas on average. This aligns with feedback from interviews[32] and focus groups, where self-confidence was identified as the most significant impact in Hungary and Slovakia and ranked second in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Superar's approach, which actively involves children in group activities and encourages them to present their ideas, is frequently cited as central to building confidence. A tutor from Bosnia and Herzegovina provided an example for that: *'We are successful at developing children's confidence. Activities like the Secret Conductor[33] game are designed to foster self-assurance in a supportive group setting.'* The chance to perform regularly in front of audiences also plays a key role. As a Hungarian schoolteacher remarked, *'Often, they perform in front of thousands of people, which undoubtedly increases their self-esteem and confidence.'* For many children, these performances have become formative experiences. A parent in Slovakia shared how a child, after a Christmas concert, continued to play piano proudly at home, gaining admiration in the local community. Another tutor from Bosnia and Herzegovina described Superar's communication strategy as particularly important for marginalised children, helping them develop both identity and self-worth. These findings underline Superar's role in nurturing the self-confidence of young participants through positive reinforcement and public recognition.

Superar has fostered a **growth mindset** among children across all three countries, with 83% of parents observing this positive impact on average. These results align with the feedback from interviews[34] and, to some extent, focus groups, where Superar's impact on growth mindset was ranked among the strongest effects in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Hungary, though it was somewhat less prominent in Slovakia. This progress is largely attributed to Superar's supportive learning environment, which encourages children to see mistakes as learning opportunities rather than setbacks. A tutor in Hungary explained, *'Children do not have to get it right on the first try; they just have to try, without striving for perfection. Mistakes are completely OK, but they must learn from them and keep trying, as they will eventually succeed.'* This approach is especially welcome by children who typically fear errors due to potential ridicule, creating an atmosphere of acceptance in Superar classes that boosts resilience and self-assurance. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, both parents and tutors have observed the gradual development of a growth mindset, especially in children who have participated for multiple years. As one parent from Bosnia and Herzegovina shared, *'She [my child] is generally afraid of making mistakes, but when she makes them in the Superar class, she learns from them.'* In Slovakia, despite being rated

[31] 33 out of 34 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in this skill that resulted from Superar's contribution.
[32] 35 out of 36 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in this skill that resulted from Superar's contribution.
[33] The 'Secret Conductor' game is an engaging activity designed to enhance children's self-confidence and attention by encouraging them to take the lead and express their creativity in a supportive and engaging group setting.
[34] 30 out of 34 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in this skill that resulted from Superar's contribution.

lower overall, Superar was still credited by parents for helping children overcome their initial reluctance to perform due to fear of making mistakes.

Superar has made a notable impact on children's **empathy and social awareness**, as well as **relationship skills**, with 81% and 80% of parents respectively observing positive changes in these areas on average. These findings align with insights from interviews[35]. Focus group discussions in the three countries consistently highlighted both relationship skills and empathy and social awareness as significant, generally ranking them as the fourth or fifth most important effects of Superar in socio-emotional development. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, tutors emphasised the focus on building relationship skills through both group and individual activities. One tutor highlighted, '*We constantly work on the development of relationship skills through group work and individual work with children,'* noting that the programme has fostered a sense of care and consideration within the group. A Hungarian parent described the change in their child's social interactions, sharing that their child now approaches peers with a more open and accepting attitude, saying that her child told her *'I will play with those who are interested in playing with me.'* In Slovakia, Superar's impact extends to children forming connections across different schools and across diverse backgrounds, as illustrated by two boys from Mexico and Ukraine who bonded in Slovak after joining Superar. Additionally, a Slovak schoolteacher noted that the experience of choir participation has helped some children become *'less egoistic through traveling and performances,'* providing an example for Superar's influence on social awareness and empathy.

Superar has positively influenced children's **responsible decision-making skills** across all three countries, with an average of 75% of parents observing its impact. Although both interviewees[36] and focus group participants ranked this competence lower among the eight analysed socio-emotional effects, typically placing it between sixth and eighth positions, the Superar's contributions remain noteworthy. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a tutor remarked that *'this effect can be observed in children who participate in Superar for several years,'* suggesting that long-term involvement might lead to increased responsibility. In Slovakia, a tutor explained that '*in Superar, we deliberately try to shift more responsibility and decisions to the children.'* Such responsibilities enable children to make informed choices within their competencies, thereby fostering a sense of accountability and independence. In Hungary, while the impact on responsible decision-making was acknowledged, it was seen as less pronounced compared to other skills by all stakeholders.

Superar has influenced children's **behavioural control** and **emotional control**, with an average of 62% and 59% of parents observing improvements on average, respectively. While these competences typically rank lowest among the analysed socio-emotional skills and show the weakest cause-and-effect relationship with Superar's activities, focus group discussions indicated a higher perceived impact, particularly for behavioural control, especially in Hungary and Slovakia. Focus group participants in Hungary emphasised that, as teachers spending significant time with the children, they have witnessed substantial changes in behaviour, particularly during important events like performances at the Sziget Festival. A tutor shared insights on emotional control, highlighting that Superar provides a unique space for children to express their emotions and relieve tension, including a *'rest corner'* in the classroom where students can recharge, fostering group cohesion. In Slovakia, focus group participants noted that behavioural control is closely linked to the methodologies employed by Superar teachers. However, challenges remain, particularly in affecting behavioural control among marginalised groups, such as Roma children, as noted by a member of Superar's management.

The findings of the 2024 **'Educator Survey**' conducted by Superar **confirm these results**. Educators assessed whether their class/group has improved or deteriorated in various dimensions since the start of Superar activities. The highest share of improvement[37] was observed in case of general social skills

[35] 30 out of 32 and 32 out 34 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in these skills, respectively, that resulted from Superar's contribution.
[36] 20 out of 30 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in this skill that resulted from Superar's contribution.
[37] Combined share of respondents choosing 'improved significantly' or 'improved slightly' on a discrete scale of 5, covering all countries. N = 87.

(92%), self-confidence and self-esteem (89%), followed by teamwork (86%), self-management (78%), and general attitudes (77%).

The 'Educator Survey' reports that 78% of educators believe Superar affects all children similarly. However, 16% of educators identified differences between non-marginalised and marginalised children, with marginalised children benefiting more (while 6% not identifying any effects at all). Exploring this further during the stakeholder interviews, it appears that Superar positively impacts children from all backgrounds, yet in some cases **children from marginalised backgrounds may experience additional, more profound benefits** that go beyond the programme's core musical education, including developments in self-confidence and social skills, areas where they might lack support outside the programme[38]. One schoolteacher in Hungary pointed out, *'those who come with some disadvantage often feel stigmatised, and Superar is a great help for these children.'* Furthermore, the emotional stimulation and attention provided by Superar are often beyond what marginalised children are accustomed to at home, making the impact greater on them, as another Hungary tutor noted. Further examples of individual success stories have emerged during the stakeholder interviews, such as the significant positive improvements observed in a Roma boy's studies and overall performance (see Country Reports for more examples).

As noted by a Superar management member in Bosnia and Herzegovina, *'for some of these children, what may seem like small improvements can represent significant achievements.'* This support is important, especially since the programme is free of charge for parents and inclusive for all children. As another Superar management member noted, *'If there were no Superar, children whose parents cannot afford to pay would be excluded. Additionally, many children with disabilities would also be left out, as many programmes tend to avoid including them.'*

The findings of this section are in line with the results of the literature review, which concluded that the so-called 'transfer effects' are more likely to take place to other musical skills and domains that are close to music, notably social and emotional skills. Nevertheless, **Superar distinguishes itself** through its **high-frequency class schedule**, with multiple classes per week, and its integration of regular performances into its curriculum. Also, by operating in schools with socio-economically disadvantaged environments and reaching a large proportion of children from vulnerable backgrounds, the programme is expected to yield greater impacts in these areas.

3.3 To what extent has the Superar programme contributed to improved class cohesion for its key direct and indirect beneficiaries, and improved social cohesion at the school and in the local communities?

SUMMARY

Superar has significantly enhanced class cohesion among its direct beneficiaries by promoting shared activities that foster unity and a sense of belonging among students, with 69% of the surveyed parents acknowledging its direct contribution. Communal singing and collaborative projects encourage students to work together, leading to stronger relationships within the classroom.

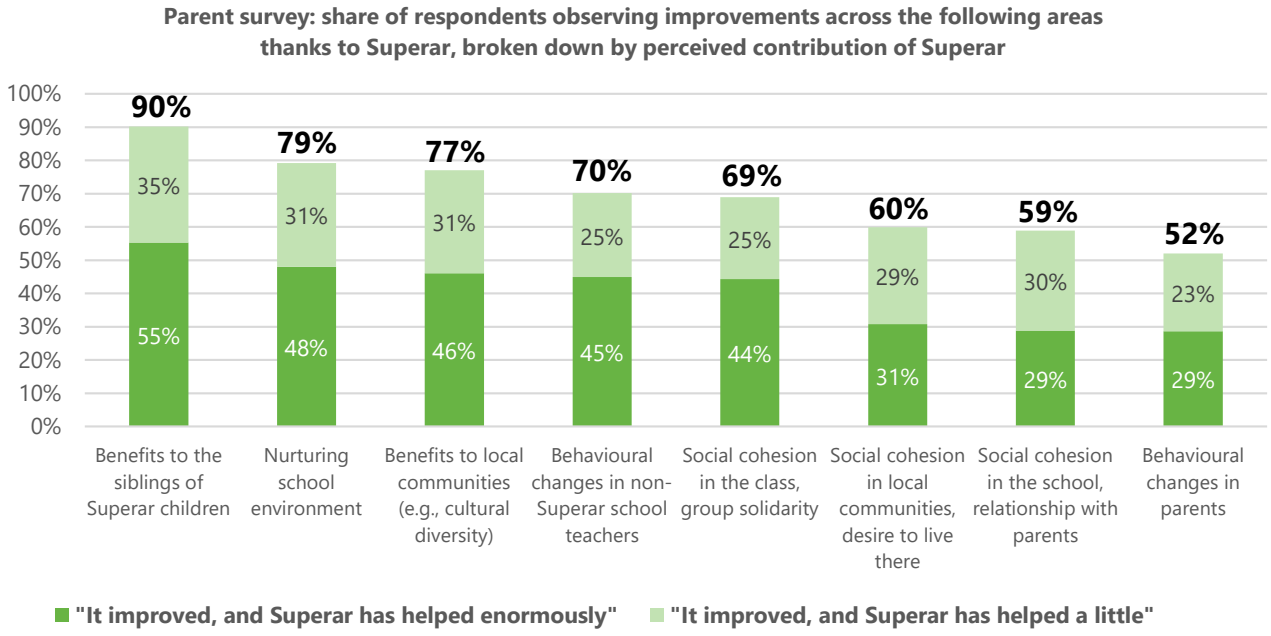
According to 79% of the surveyed parents, the programme has also created more nurturing school environments. Additionally, Superar has enhanced overall cohesion within schools, where teachers have reported a growing acceptance of its approach over time across all participating countries. Superar has influenced the behaviour of non-Superar teachers in many cases, typically after a longer period of exposure to and active involvement in Superar classes, performances, and other activities. Some non-Superar teachers have benefited from the programme by incorporating Superar's pedagogical techniques into their everyday teaching practices.

[38] 17 out of 23 relevant interview respondents (tutors and schoolteachers) agreed with this statement.

Remarkably, 90% of parents observed indirect effects on siblings of Superar participants, highlighting the programme's broader influence on families and the community. Superar has provided substantial benefits to local communities, with 77% of parents recognising its positive impact, particularly noted in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovakia, where public performances foster cultural diversity and community engagement. Although only 52% of parents felt their behaviours in relation to their children (such as spending more time together or attending performances) had changed due to the programme, there have been gradual improvements in relationships with parents across all participating countries. This indicates a need for continued efforts to maximise Superar's potential impact on family and community involvement.

Based on the results of the parent survey, Superar has been successful in enhancing cohesion in Superar classes, schools, kindergartens, and some specific areas that foster cohesion within the local communities (see below).

Figure 15: Parental perceptions of Superar's impact on class, school, and community cohesion



Source: parent survey (N = 248 respondents out of 274), showing the arithmetic mean of weighted country percentages.

The impact of Superar extends beyond its direct beneficiaries to foster cohesion within families and local communities, particularly through its **influence on the siblings of Superar students**. Remarkably, 90% of parents across all countries observed that their children's siblings benefitted indirectly from their involvement in the programme, highlighting Superar's capacity to spread its musical philosophy and skills. This phenomenon serves as a conduit for broader community engagement, with focus group participants, primarily tutors and schoolteachers, consistently ranking this effect among the top three impacts of Superar on cohesion[39]. Tutors in all countries noted that younger siblings often become familiar with the entire repertoire before joining the programme, engaging in songs and games at home. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a parent shared, *'Two of my older children always sang songs to my youngest child.'* Similarly, in Hungary, a parent reported that her child, after being enrolled in Superar, regularly sang Superar songs during bath time with their siblings, making it an everyday habit. In Slovakia, one tutor described how siblings become *'little music teachers at home,'* eagerly sharing what they learn in Superar with younger family members. These insights underline Superar's role in

[39] 22 out of 30 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in this area that resulted from Superar's contribution.

nurturing community cohesion through shared musical experiences, positively influencing not only participants but also their families and local environments.

Superar has a provided significant **wider benefit for the local communities** and contributes to the **cohesion of the relevant local communities**, with 77% and 60% of the parents identifying contribution from Superar in these fields, respectively, in line with the interviewed stakeholders[40]. The effects of Superar, however, vary across countries. In Slovakia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, focus group participants ranked the benefits to local communities as the most significant, while in Hungary, these impacts were viewed more moderately. This discrepancy may be attributed to the locations of Superar schools, particularly in Hungary, where the central location of the Superar schools and the proximity to the rich cultural offerings of the capital city might limit the programme's perceived influence.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, both parents and interviewees noted that Superar plays a considerable role in promoting cultural diversity, with children learning songs in foreign languages and gaining insights into associated cultures. The involvement of Roma children has also been positively recognised within their community. A parent highlighted that *'the most significant impact comes from public performances, which convey a clear message to society about the importance of learning, solidarity, and mutual support,'* emphasising how such events allow children to showcase their talents and connect with the broader community. In Slovakia, the programme fosters strong community support, as indicated by examples such as parents in Lozorno becoming more involved and the municipality of Detva automatically counting on the Superar choir for local events. One tutor summarised that Superar *'creates opportunities for local performances, making it a cultural component for the municipality.'* Despite the somewhat lower ratings, Superar's influence in Hungary is also evident, where positive examples such as local concerts and outdoor flash mobs demonstrate its potential to foster a sense of community and shared cultural experiences.

Superar has contributed to creating **more nurturing school environments**, with 79% of parents identifying its positive impact, as well as enhancing **overall school cohesion**, noted by 59% of parents. Interviewees[41] acknowledged the importance of this contribution, though focus group participants expressed varying views on its relative significance across different countries. In Hungary, the impact on fostering a nurturing environment was particularly pronounced, with one schoolteacher noting, *'Over the course of four years with Superar, the programme has been able to influence the overall culture of the school decisively.'* A school director added that *'thanks to Superar, the school's standard and reputation are improving,'* which enhances cohesion not only among the students but also within the teaching community. In Slovakia, a tutor remarked*, 'Superar is the brand that the school lives by, and it is clearly a unifying element,'* reflecting the programme's integral role within the school community. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, focus group participants and interviewees ranked Superar's effects in these dimensions slightly lower, which can be attributed to a greater prevalence of extracurricular activities that may diminish the relevance of these effects compared to regular schools with curricular classes.

Superar has successfully influenced the **behaviour of non-Superar schoolteachers**, with 70% of parents recognising this positive change on average, a view shared by interviewed stakeholders[42]. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, many educators have improved their teaching practices through Superar's training sessions, as noted by a Superar management member: *'Teachers who collaborate with us are open and motivated; they use Superar tools in their work and share these resources with colleagues.'* In Hungary, a tutor remarked on the growing acceptance of Superar among teachers, stating, *'Initially, teachers were unaware of what Superar was, but over time they came to understand it and are now pleased to have it in their school.'* This shift reflects a broader trend towards support for the programme. In Slovakia, several examples highlighted increased interest among teachers, such as participation in

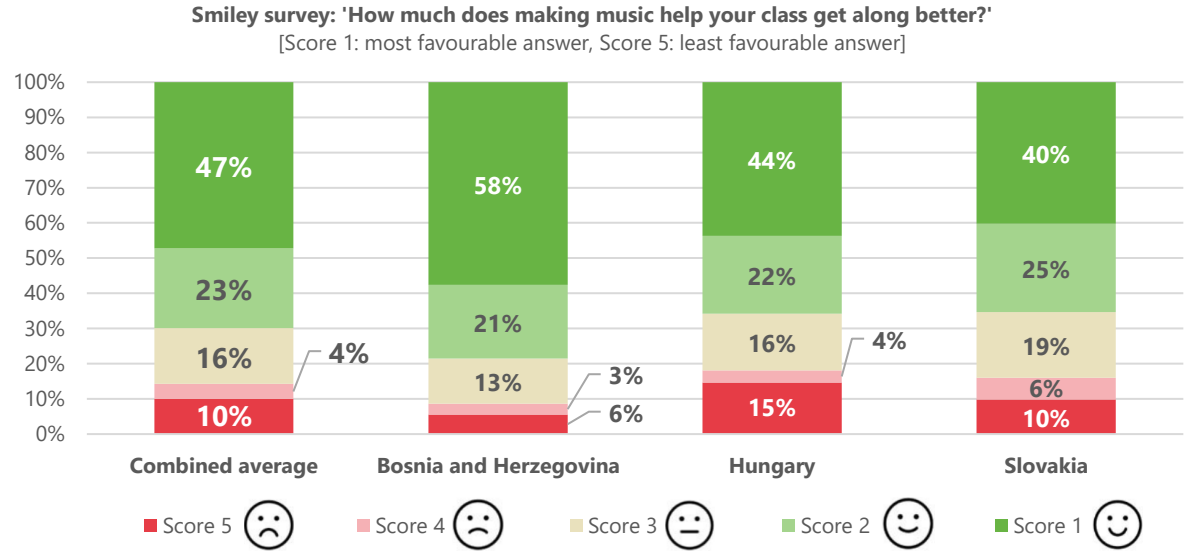
[40] 24 out 27 and 25 out of 30 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in these areas, respectively, that resulted from Superar's contribution.
[41] 24 out of 30 and 18 out of 22 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in these areas, respectively, that resulted from Superar's contribution.
[42] 24 out of 30 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in this area that resulted from Superar's contribution.

workshops and trainings. The interviewed stakeholders provided several examples from each country of non-Superar schoolteachers beginning to apply pedagogical techniques from Superar, such as effective methods for silencing students, using silence, and employing clapping in their classrooms.

In terms of **class cohesion**, Superar was found to be particularly effective by both survey respondents (69% of them identifying contribution from Superar) and the interviewed tutors, schoolteachers, and parents[43], fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose among students through activities like singing together and engaging in communal projects. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, focus group participants emphasised the significance of this effect, ranking it even higher than community impacts. A tutor noted, *'We make sure that all children take part in activities equally. We do not allow them to form internal groups,'* which reflects Superar's commitment to inclusivity. This approach encourages cooperation among students, with games designed to promote interaction, even among those who may be introverted or reluctant to engage. As one schoolteacher put it, *'the class breathes as one.'* In Hungary, teachers highlighted that singing together significantly enhances cohesion, with one recalling a performance at a homeless shelter that fostered unity within the group. In Slovakia, while parents noted less pronounced effects, interview respondents, primarily tutors and schoolteachers, observed strong bonds forming among choir members, underlining the importance of shared experiences in building relationships. This supportive atmosphere enables students to connect more deeply and understand one another better, contributing to a more cohesive class culture.

The effect of Superar on class cohesion is also highlighted by the results of the children's self-assessment, as shown below, and the 2024 '**Educator survey'**[44].

Figure 16: Children's self-assessment survey ('Smiley survey'): class cohesion



Source: Superar (2024, N = 853), edited by Devea Partners (2024)

Superar also enhances the **sense of belonging** among its participants, with one tutor from Hungary noting, *'Superar strengthens the sense of belonging. They proudly wear the Superar and school T-shirts,'* illustrating the pride and community spirit fostered by the programme. Interestingly, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the significance of wearing Superar T-shirts was also specifically mentioned as a good practice.

[43] 27 out of 30 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in this area that resulted from Superar's contribution.
[44] 82% of educators reported either slight or significant improvements in terms of social inclusion in the classes/groups they teach. N = 87.

While Superar has made efforts to establish contact and develop a relationship with the parents of Superar children, only 52% of **parents** believe **their behaviours have changed** as a result of the programme. It was also reflected during the interviews[45] and focus groups, where participants ranked this effect between sixth and eighth among the eight evaluated impacts of Superar in this category. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, tutors and Superar management observe gradual improvements in relationships with parents, though recognising the need for greater parental engagement to fully exploit the programme's benefits. Similarly, in Hungary and Slovakia, improvements in relationships with parents have been noted, but these changes have been slow, presenting a significant barrier to maximising Superar's potential within the community.

3.4 Are there any differences in effectiveness between choirs and instrumental classes, as well as between in-school and after-school classes?

SUMMARY

The attendance rates and effectiveness of Superar classes do not significantly differ between choir and instrumental formats. However, scheduling type influences participation rates, with extracurricular classes generally experiencing lower attendance due to their voluntary nature. Despite this, higher engagement from both children and parents helps to offset the negative impact of reduced participation on the effectiveness of the programme. In other words, even with fewer children attending in the afternoons, their increased engagement can help maintain the overall impact.

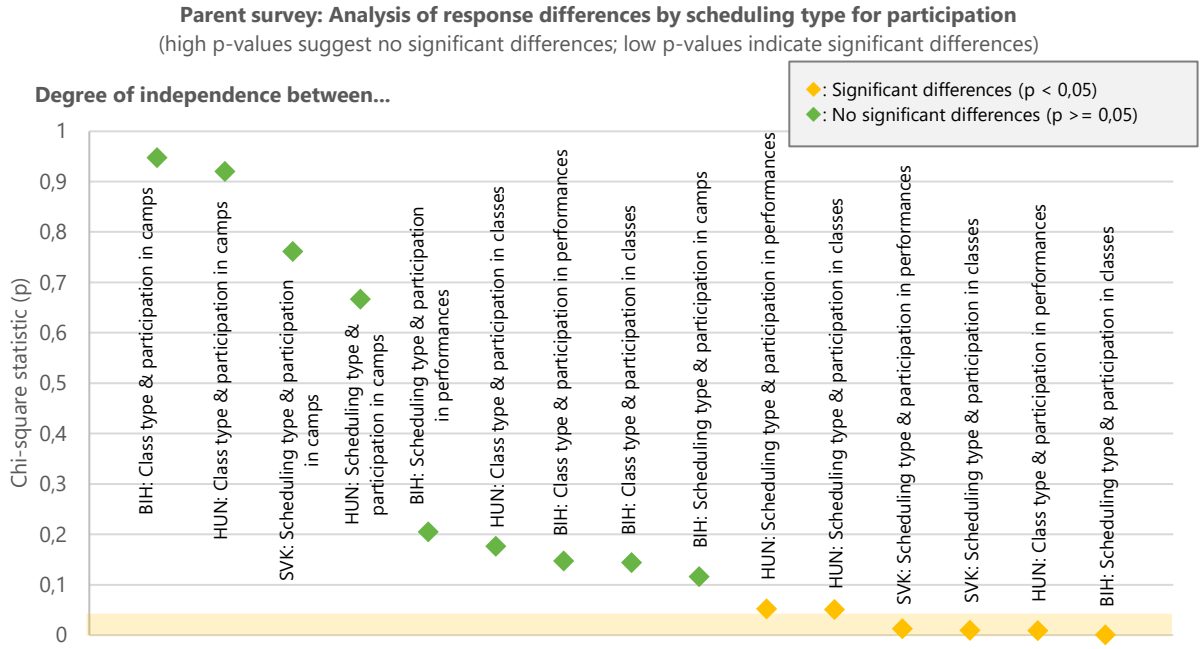
In Bosnia and Herzegovina, both curricular and extracurricular classes positively impact student development, though parents perceive slightly greater benefits from curricular classes in emotional control and empathy, while extracurricular classes appear to offer higher advantages for local communities. In Hungary, the benefits for siblings of Superar participants are more pronounced in curricular classes. Data from Slovakia indicate that extracurricular classes are perceived as having a somewhat greater overall usefulness, generating more excitement among children, and having a stronger impact on communities (while these classes are attended by a self-selected subset of children, which may influence these perceptions). In contrast, curricular classes demonstrate slightly higher effectiveness in improving memory or enhancing collaboration.

Differences in participation

The statistical analysis indicates that, in general, **scheduling type significantly affects participation rates in Superar classes and performances**, whereas class type (choir vs. instrumental) does not appear to influence these rates (see below).

[45] 23 out of 30 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in this area that resulted from Superar's contribution.

Figure 17: Analysis of response differences by class type and scheduling type for participation



Source: parent survey (N = 274). 'HUN' = Hungary; 'SVK' = Slovakia; 'BIH' = Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In **Hungary**, there is a strong relationship between class type and scheduling type, since all four instrumental classes are extracurricular, while 10 out of 13 choir classes are held as curricular. Parents reported that only 13% of children in curricular classes and 12% in choir classes miss many performances, in stark contrast to the much higher rates of 51% in extracurricular classes and 67% in instrumental classes. As one tutor noted, *'The attendance rate at extracurricular lessons is significantly lower than at curricular Superar lessons, which is a disadvantage of the extracurricular sessions,'* although parents of children in these optional classes tend to be more engaged, providing a supportive atmosphere for performances, compensating the above disadvantage.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, children's participation also varies significantly depending on scheduling, as extracurricular activities are voluntary and therefore can lead to varied attendance. While only 8% of parents reported that children in curricular classes miss a lot of classes, this number rises to 17% for extracurricular classes. Focus group discussions highlighted that those children that learn the violin, as pioneers of a custom-developed method called 'Integrated Violin Technique' (IVT), face unique challenges due to the method's novelty, but they also benefit from the experience, helping them develop a strong sense of responsibility.

In **Slovakia**, while the statistical difference in class attendance is slight (with 2% of extracurricular students and 5% of curricular students missing classes), attendance at performances is notably higher for children in extracurricular classes. Similarly to other Superar locations, stronger commitment and enthusiasm from children and their parents in extracurricular classes in Slovakia seem to offset the typical trend of lower attendance in non-compulsory sessions. In Slovakia, 89% of students in extracurricular classes reported being 'Rather excited' or 'Very excited' to participate, compared to 68% of curricular students. Parents noted that only 13% of children in extracurricular classes miss many or most performances, while 33% in curricular classes do. As one schoolteacher observed, *'In the afternoon, it's only those kids that want to and have passion,'* emphasising how motivation plays an important role in driving student engagement.

Differences in effectiveness

Similar to attendance patterns, class type does not influence the effectiveness of Superar. However, **scheduling type does reveal some differences in certain dimensions**, as summarised below (further details available in the Country Evaluation Reports). However, as a general conclusion, while

statistically significant differences are noted, qualitative insights and data analysis suggest that many **identified differences are moderate**, with no substantial disparities found in any of the below dimensions.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, both curricular and extracurricular classes have positive impact on overall student development, including vocal skills in choir classes and fine motor skills in violin classes. The broader effects on social skills are comparable across both types. Parents of children in extracurricular classes perceive equal opportunities slightly less favourably than those in curricular classes, potentially due to self-selection and the non-compulsory nature of extracurricular options. They appear to provide higher benefits for local communities, however. Curricular classes, on the other, tend to offer greater benefits in emotional control and empathy, likely due to their more compulsory nature, higher teaching hours, and attendance rates.

In **Hungary**, choir classes also prioritise vocal development and collaboration, leading to significant benefits in singing abilities and body awareness, whereas guitar classes naturally focus more on fine motor skills. The perceived impacts on social skills are similar across all scheduling types, with some exceptions. Notably, the benefits for siblings of Superar participants are more pronounced in curricular classes, with 96% of parents reporting positive outcomes compared to 33% for extracurricular instrumental classes.

Slovakia's findings also indicate that while differences between curricular and extracurricular classes exist, they are not substantial. Parents of students in extracurricular classes report slightly higher overall usefulness, excitement to participate, and stronger impacts on community social cohesion compared to those in curricular classes. Consequently, these parents are more likely to recommend Superar to friends (98% vs. 87%). However, curricular classes show slightly higher effectiveness in fostering responsible decision-making, memory improvement, and collaboration.

Differences based on participation frequency and duration

Across all three countries there is a consistent finding that **children who frequently participate in performances experience greater benefits from the Superar programme**. Parent surveys and qualitative interviews reveal that regular involvement in concerts not only enhances musical development but also provides significant opportunities for personal growth and a sense of achievement. For instance, as noted by a tutor in Hungary, performances contribute to increased self-confidence and expose children to genuine cultural experiences. Schoolteachers have expressed similar views across all countries, observing that children engaged in performances tend to be more confident and open in their interactions. However, it is important to note that despite a desire to participate, many children face parental constraints that limit their involvement, indicating a need for additional resources to encourage greater parental engagement (see Section 5.2, Evaluation Question 6).

The benefits of long-term participation in Superar also reflect a common pattern across the countries studied. Tutors and teachers report that while **children initially experience a steep learning curve** and rapid development in musical skills, self-confidence, and social abilities, these gains tend to level off over time, leading to a **phenomenon of diminishing returns**. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Superar management member explained that children require time to develop some of their skills, yet the most significant improvements occur in the early years of participation. As children continue their involvement over multiple years, they do experience steady, yet less dramatic, advancements in their abilities. A Superar management member in Slovakia noted that *'**during the first three years, children experience the greatest change** and acceleration in development,'* indicating an important window for growth. Another Superar management member remarked, *'Work with graduates and alumni is also an issue... we will have to wait about 15 years more before there are potential individual funders and donors from current Superar children.'*

This suggests that **sustained engagement is beneficial** for enriching their overall experience and fostering long-term personal growth.

3.5 Has the programme been implemented in an equitable way?

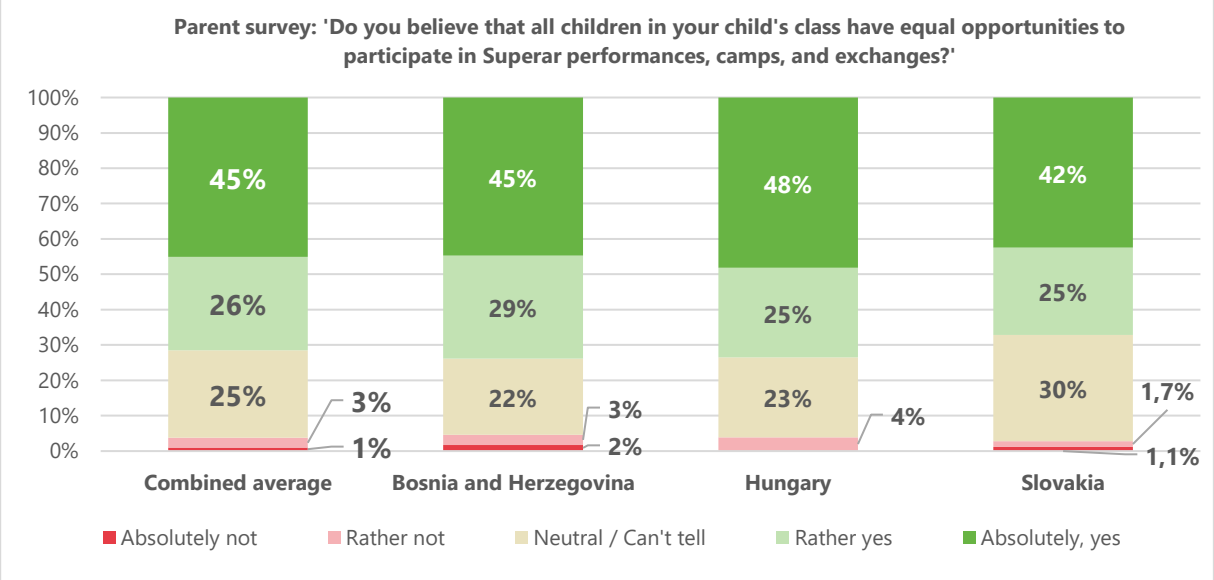
SUMMARY

Superar has been implemented in an equitable manner, ensuring broad access to participation, especially within mandatory curricular classes, where all students are included, reducing the risk of exclusion. The majority of parents (71%) feel that their children have equal opportunities to take part in performances, camps, and exchanges. Inclusivity is a key aspect of Superar's approach, particularly within curricular classes in each country.

Extracurricular classes also highlight equitable access, with Hungary and Bosnia and Herzegovina showing higher proportions of marginalised students participating compared to their non-marginalised peers (84% vs. 62% in Hungary, 33% vs. 24% in Bosnia and Herzegovina), while Slovakia reports a slightly lower rate of marginalised participation in the extracurricular setting (27% vs. 36%). Nevertheless, Superar management and tutors across all countries highlighted ongoing challenges in mobilising and ensuring the participation of young children in performances, as limited parental support continues to hinder involvement for many marginalised children.

The parent survey shows that **71% of respondents have a positive view on whether their children have equal opportunities to participate** in Superar performances, camps, and exchanges (see below).

Figure 18: Parental perceptions on equal opportunities for participation



Source: parent survey (N = 265 respondents out of 274), showing weighted % for each country and their arithmetic mean.

Based on the stakeholder interviews[46] and the parent survey, the programme has been **implemented in an equitable manner**, ensuring equal opportunities for children, including those from marginalised backgrounds. All countries demonstrated inclusivity within curricular classes, where participation is mandatory, thereby minimising discrimination and exclusion. A Hungarian respondent noted that *'yes, equality is ensured as the whole class participates in Superar,'* reinforcing the notion of inclusive participation within curricular settings. As one Superar management member from Bosnia and Herzegovina added, *'we make sure that our activities are adjusted to the individual capabilities of every child, especially children with developmental delays and difficulties,'* highlighting the programme's commitment to inclusivity in its implementation.

[46] 33 out of 34 relevant interview respondents expressed positive views.

The evaluation found **no indication that equity is more difficult to achieve in extracurricular settings**. In fact, the proportion of marginalised students is higher in extracurricular classes in both Hungary and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Slovakia, there is a slight difference, with 36% of marginalised students in curricular classes compared to 27% in extracurricular ones. As one tutor in Slovakia noted, *'Superar provides equal opportunities during curricular classes, but this is questionable in the afternoon choirs, as it depends not only on Superar but also on whether children have support from home.'*

Table 7: Differences in the share of marginalised students in curricular and extracurricular classes

Institution	Bosnia and Herzegovina		Hungary		Slovakia	
	Curricular	*Extracurricular*	*Curricular*	*Extracurricular*	*Curricular*	*Extracurricular*
Total number of students enrolled	**211**	**210**	**208**	**50**	**614**	**191**
Distribution of students across curricular and extracurricular classes	*50%*	*50%*	*81%*	*19%*	*76%*	*24%*
Anonymous estimate of marginalised young people	**51**	**70**	**129**	**42**	**224**	**52**
Distribution of marginalised students across curricular and extracurricular classes	*42%*	*58%*	*75%*	*25%*	*81%*	*19%*
Share of marginalised students in curricular and extracurricular classes	**24%**	**33%**	**62%**	**84%**	**36%**	**27%**
Share of marginalised students in total	**29%**		**66%**		**34%**	

Source: monitoring data (June 2024)

While the programme strives to offer equal opportunities for all **children to participate in performances**, Superar management members and tutors perceive challenges in this regard across all countries, often stemming from non-supportive family backgrounds. In Slovakia, the importance of support from Superar-affiliated schools is also emphasised, with one respondent stating, *'Not everyone can go to the performances... if the school does not provide assistance, then Superar cannot replace it [from its own resources].'* This limitation is acknowledged across all countries, highlighting the key role of support from both parents and schools to facilitate participation. In addition, tutors in Bosnia and Herzegovina underlined the need for additional resources to accommodate children with developmental challenges, while some parents in Hungary pointed to a limited number of accompanying teachers and tutors during performances as a barrier to their children's participation.

Despite these challenges, stakeholders in all countries agreed that within the selected curricular classes, **principles of equality were upheld**, with full participation where possible, and no discrimination observed.

The interviews with parents, tutors, and teachers[47] corroborates this finding, indicating that Superar **provides equal opportunities for children** in practice, including those from marginalised backgrounds.

However, as noted by some respondents, the practice of selectively involving certain classes based on the school's decisions introduces a form of inequality. This occurs despite the intention to consider the proportion of marginalised children in these selected classes. Superar works best, therefore, where every class can be part of the programme. As one respondent puts it, *'Yes, [equality is ensured], as the whole class participates in Superar, and there is one class in each grade.'* It was generally agreed that, within the chosen classes, **the principles of equality are upheld**, with no observed discrimination and full class participation in Superar activities.

[47] 11 out of 11 relevant interview respondents expressed positive views.

3.6 To what extent has the Superar programme contributed to the increase of Superar's capacity to effectively reach both direct and indirect beneficiaries?

SUMMARY

Based on the self-assessment of Superar management members and tutors, Superar has sufficient capacity to effectively reach both direct and indirect beneficiaries. The organisation's strong capacity to engage young people is highlighted by positive ratings from management, tutors, and schoolteachers. However, the current staff capacity, which is constrained by available financial resources, aligns with the current number of participants, limiting the potential for growth without additional support. Superar's ability to connect with parents is considered appropriate by tutors and local programme management, and each local Superar has demonstrated resilience and adaptability through proactive collaboration with the relevant schools and other affiliated institutions. Nonetheless, all local Superar organisations face obstacles in direct engagement of parents, particularly due to issues such as illiteracy, language barriers, and occasional lack of interest.

Established professional networks effectively facilitate Superar's recruitment of potential tutors and teacher candidates, with personal connections serving as an effective strategy across all three countries, although finding quality candidates remains a challenge. Financial constraints significantly influence Superar's outreach to schools and kindergartens, as management members emphasise the necessity for increased funding to expand relationships with educational partners. While Superar demonstrates promise in engaging with policymakers and education officials, the fluctuating political environment and lack of a systematic advocacy approach highlight the need for alternative strategies, including promoting the programme's benefits to policymakers, securing potential funding, and ensuring its alignment with educational priorities. Lastly, the international aspect of Superar is highly regarded by tutors, providing international opportunities for students, and enhancing the programme's impact through the collaboration of local Superar operations.

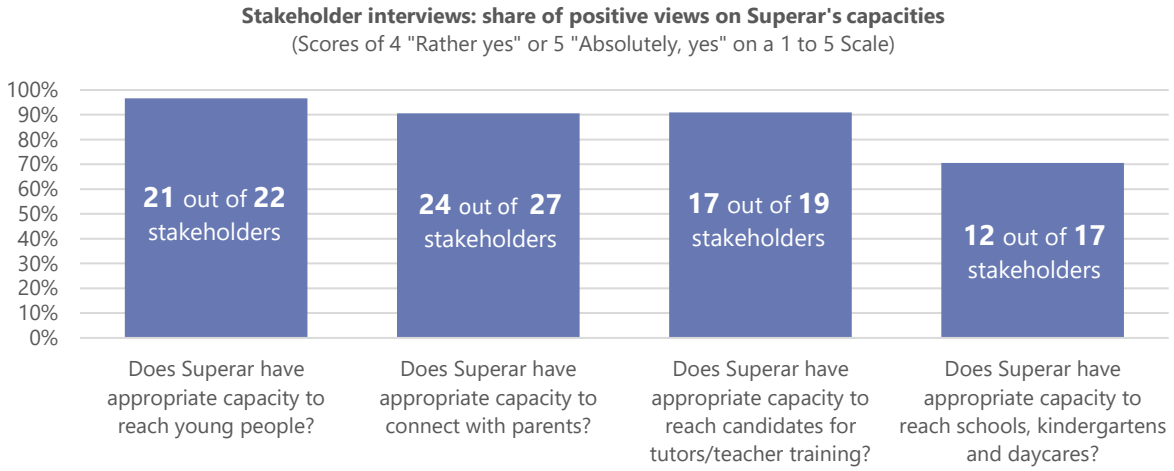
As noted earlier under Evaluation Question 1.2, **86% of parents find the way Superar is organised to be practical** for both them and their children. The consensus among interview respondents is that Superar's **delivery system functions effectively in practice**, with a unanimous positive reception[48]. The programme's adaptation and responsiveness to growth and infrastructure challenges are particularly highlighted in all countries.

First of all, it is important to note that the Superar operations across the three countries are at **different stages of organisational development**, reflecting the length of participation in the Superar programme and the complexity of their institutional portfolios. In Hungary, the focus of the management on specialisation to strengthen the team and formalise processes as the programme expands. As Superar management member noted, '*The formalisation of the programme delivery is still in progress... However, there is transparent communication about this among the team, and the programme is progressing smoothly,'* emphasising the proactive international and local approach to evolving Superar's operational model. In Slovakia, Superar operates with a more specialised and mature organisational structure, suited to managing multiple locations and serving over 800 students. Superar Bosnia and Herzegovina, while somewhat in between, has a structured organisation capable of handling current operations effectively. In both countries, the emphasis is more on stabilisation and identifying growth opportunities, rather than formalisation and specialisation.

Superar is widely perceived as having a **strong capacity to engage young people**, **connect with parents**, **attract candidates** for tutor and teacher training, and **reach schools and kindergartens**. These aspects were rated favourably by Superar management, tutors, and schoolteachers, as shown in the figure below. The results were similar across all countries with no significant variations.

[48] 38 out of 40 relevant interview respondents expressed positive views.

Figure 19: Stakeholder perceptions on Superar's capacities



Source: stakeholder interviews (N = 26 respondents out of 44), showing non-weighted percentages.

Superar's capacity to **reach young people** across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, and Slovakia is viewed positively overall, though current resources are largely matched to existing participant numbers, with limited scope for growth without additional support. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, an interviewed management member explained that while they are effectively serving the current number of children, expansion would require more tutors, especially as the extracurricular programme attracts more children with special needs. In Hungary, Superar is also perceived as successful in engaging with young people, with sufficient capacity and well-functioning methodologies in place to connect with the current volume of children. In Slovakia, the capacity of tutors to engage with children in a participatory manner is continually developed through various training sessions, monthly supervision, and individual mentoring, all facilitated by internal experts from the organisation's management. Introduced a few years ago, the supervision includes observation and feedback on classroom management techniques and interactions with pupils. Supervisors also serve as mentors or coaches, offering guidance and support as tutors cope with the challenges of their roles and pursue professional growth.

The 2024 'Educator Survey' reports that 87% of educators in the three countries believe Superar creates conditions to engage and include parents of the children and 75% report actual engagement and interest from parents in Superar activities[49]. Nevertheless, only 29% observe improvements in parental engagement with the school in general and their children's education.

According to the interviews, Superar's **ability to connect with parents** varies by country, influenced by local challenges and the effectiveness of their communication strategies. While local Superar organisations face considerable obstacles in direct engagement, particularly due to issues such as illiteracy, different native language or general lack of interest, each country has demonstrated resilience and adaptability through collaboration with Superar institutions, proactive communication and innovative methods of communication. For instance, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the use of Viber groups illustrates how digital communication can effectively bridge gaps, as a tutor noted, *'We have Viber groups with the parents of children in the extracurricular classes. We also create ad hoc Viber groups with parents before specific performances, and we strive to remain open and approachable.'* This approach fosters a sense of community among parents, allowing them to feel more connected to their children's activities. The support of schools has proven to be a key facilitator for parent engagement in all countries, indicating that schools act as important conduits for outreach, especially in communities where direct communication might be challenging. Superar's ongoing efforts to engage parents, particularly those

[49] Share of educators in the three countries indicating 'Agree' or 'Strongly agree' in relation to the statement. N = 87.

from marginalised backgrounds, are essential for ensuring that all families are effectively approached and mobilised, allowing them to feel included and valued in the Superar community.

Superar's ability to **connect with potential tutors and candidates for the teacher trainings** is significantly supported by its established professional networks in all three countries. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a management member noted, *'I am in constant contact with students, the future music teachers,'* illustrating the organisation's proactive approach in engaging with those who are already in the educational pipeline. This ongoing interaction is needed to identify and recruit talent that can sustain and expand Superar's initiatives. In Hungary and Slovakia, management and tutors both affirm the effectiveness of recruitment efforts and the recruitment process also benefits from leveraging personal networks, as highlighted by one tutor in Hungary: *'There have been periods when we actively interviewed and sought tutors, but it has always worked much better to inquire within personal networks and invite interested colleagues.'* With that in mind, as one respondent from Superar in Slovakia pointed out, *'quality people are hard to find'* and often *'special persons are needed, as these people are shaping the quality of the Superar programme.'*, stressing the need to recruit dedicated and skilled tutors who can uphold the programme's standards. Maintaining a motivated team of tutors is essential, however, for Superar's ongoing impact. While the perceived wages may be low, the commitment of tutors is important for the programme's success.

Superar's capacity to **reach out to schools and kindergartens** is perceived to be appropriate, however, it is significantly influenced by financial constraints, adaptability, and ongoing improvements within the programme. Across all three countries, stakeholders emphasised that funding limitations hinder the organisation's ability to expand its reach and maintain relationships with existing partners. As a management member in Bosnia and Herzegovina noted, *'we need more funding in order to accommodate all requests for cooperation,'* underlining the critical role of financial resources in sustaining Superar's initiatives. While the programme has been successful in engaging schools at all locations, the partial success in maintaining some of these relationships over a longer period of time highlights the ongoing challenge posed by both school management support and financial constraints. This emphasises the necessity for continued funding to build trust and foster collaboration with educational institutions.

Superar's capacity to **engage with policymakers and education officials** shows promise but also highlights several challenges and areas for improvement across all countries. There are notable success stories, such as in Slovakia, where a Superar expert contributed to the review of the national curriculum, demonstrating the potential to influence educational policy. Additionally, there remains opportunity for impact in Bosnia and Herzegovina; however, the fluctuating political environment complicates these efforts across all countries. Strategic networking is evident, as local Superar management members recognise their team's ability to utilise professional connections for advocacy. Proposals to organise events that foster dialogue with policymakers further illustrate this commitment.

The **international aspect of Superar is univocally praised** by local Superar tutors in all countries. One tutor in Slovakia noted that this *'provides opportunities for the kids to travel abroad'* and helps them connect with foreign peers through music, which parents find very appealing. Another tutor added that *'Superar is already a brand,'* enabling easier networking at both national and international levels, thereby enhancing the programme's overall impact. Support from the Austrian team was mentioned frequently, noting by a tutor in Hungary that '*their contributions in terms of methodology, performance guidance, and overall approach are highly valued.'* Another tutor highlighted the broader benefits of this international collaboration, stating, '*the Superar colleagues in Vienna are important for getting access to finance, central methodology developments, trainings, and in terms of knowledge transfer and knowledge sharing.'*

3.7 How well does the current monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework measure the effectiveness of the programme?

SUMMARY

The current monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework for Superar is centrally designed to measure programme effectiveness through a system of regularly collected indicators and assessment tools like the Educator Survey, the Self-Assessment 'Smiley Survey' for children, and the Observation Tool for music directors and tutors. Feedback indicates the framework is structured but still being finetuned. Stakeholders generally view the monitoring of children's improvements as effective, though some concerns about its appropriateness for measuring musical education were raised. The evaluation provided practical suggestions to enhance Superar's M&E system during its inception phase, particularly for the 'Smiley Survey' and the 'Educator Survey.'

The current M&E framework for Superar is designed centrally. It includes a set of tools and indicators aimed at measuring the programme's effectiveness across various dimensions, including participant enrolment, class activity, and outcome improvements. The tools utilised include an **Educator Survey** for tutors, a **Self-Assessment** 'Smiley Survey' for children, and an **Observation Tool** filled in by music directors and tutors.

Programme indicators cover three levels: Output, Activity, and Outcome, which are collected regularly in all countries, including Hungary. Indicators can be provided by the local Superar and are collected regularly across all participating countries in a standardised format.

Feedback from local Superar management and tutors indicates that while the M&E framework is structured and aimed at evaluating the programme's impact, its **effectiveness and practical implementation are still being assessed**. In Slovakia, a part-time M&E Internal Consultant acknowledged the challenges in measuring children's improvement but praised the framework as *'well-structured and honest,'* though recognising it as a *'work in progress'* due to varying challenges presented by different schools. Some concerns were raised by tutors regarding the appropriateness and effectiveness of the monitoring framework, particularly in measuring the effects of musical education, as the system may not fully align with the diverse learning contexts of participants.

Despite these challenges, most stakeholders found the framework's **overall approach to monitoring children's improvements to be appropriate and effective**[50], emphasising the importance of collecting regular feedback from various participants through school visits, interviews, and observations.

The evaluation provided practical suggestions to improve the M&E system of Superar during its inception phase, particularly regarding the 'Smiley Survey' and the 'Educator Survey.'

4. To what extent are the benefits of Superar extended into schools and education systems more broadly?

4.1 Has Superar been effective in broadening the number of schools and kindergartens exposed to the Superar methodology?

SUMMARY

Superar has been effective in gradually increasing its reach to schools and kindergartens across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, and Slovakia by employing strategies that align with local educational contexts while adhering to its overarching mission. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for instance, the institutional portfolio has been complemented by a community centre that has a wide reach to potential target groups and stakeholders, while its teacher training initiatives have attracted significant interest

[50] 14 of 16 relevant interview respondents expressed positive views.

from other schools. In Hungary, local management takes proactive steps to establish partnerships that align with school objectives, the national curriculum, and the priorities of the two relevant local educational districts, ensuring compliance and sustainability. Similarly, in Slovakia, Superar has implemented various strategies to expand its reach, including the development of accredited teacher training on innovative educational practices. Despite this effective expansion, common challenges persist, such as financial constraints and the need for supportive school management, along with potential political shifts that could impact Superar's operational capacity and growth prospects.

Based on stakeholder interviews[51] and monitoring data over time, Superar has **effectively broadened its reach to schools** during the previous years in all countries, demonstrating its ability to engage new institutions with its methodology. Each of the three countries has adopted **specific strategies for expansion that reflect local contexts** while aligning with Superar's overarching mission.

In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, for example, the organisation has not only implemented curricular and extracurricular programmes in various educational settings but has also integrated a community centre into its programme. This inclusion facilitates a more diverse approach to education and allows Superar to reach children from different backgrounds. Also, in autumn 2023, the local Superar conducted promotional workshops for teachers for the first time. Although the workshops were primarily aimed at teachers from the two elementary schools where Superar operates, teachers from other elementary schools in Canton Sarajevo also expressed interest and participated. Additionally, at the beginning of 2024, Superar provided training for music teachers from Serbia, specifically from the Music Art Project organisation, and showcased its entire programme during a study trip. In spring and summer 2024, three more promotional workshops were held: one for a non-Superar school and two follow-up workshops for Superar partner schools. Furthermore, Superar delivers lectures to students and professors at the Music Academy in Sarajevo at least once a year.

Hungary has seen the most recently added 'Budapest school' into its programme. Superar's management is proactive in seeking suitable schools and fostering supportive collaborations with school management. They put emphasis on the need to seamlessly align the goals and strategies of the school, the official national curriculum, and the priorities of the local education districts with Superar's approach and methodology. This careful approach has been key to establishing a foothold in new schools, ensuring that once Superar is introduced, it can secure lasting partnerships that benefit students and educators alike, without risking non-compliance.

In **Slovakia**, Superar has successfully broadened its methodology through various ways, including curricular and extracurricular activities across multiple locations and educational institutions. The organisation's focus on training teachers in innovative educational practices is noteworthy, as it has received official accreditation from the Ministry of Education, enhancing its legitimacy and reach within the educational sector. Engagement with future educators through dedicated projects, such as 'Teacher's College,' illustrates the local Superar's commitment to fostering a new generation of teachers equipped with the skills to implement its methodology effectively.

Across all three countries, common themes emerge regarding the **challenges to further expansion**. Stakeholders consistently highlight financial limitations as a key challenge affecting the ability to broaden outreach, particularly in light of increasing demand for Superar's programmes. Additionally, the support of school management is identified as essential for successful integration. The political environment also poses challenges in all countries, where changes in public education policies can directly impact Superar's ability to operate and expand.

[51] 18 out of 21 relevant interview respondents expressed positive views.

4.2 Is there any evidence that students in Superar schools who are not in Superar classes are impacted by the presence of Superar, either positively or negatively?

SUMMARY

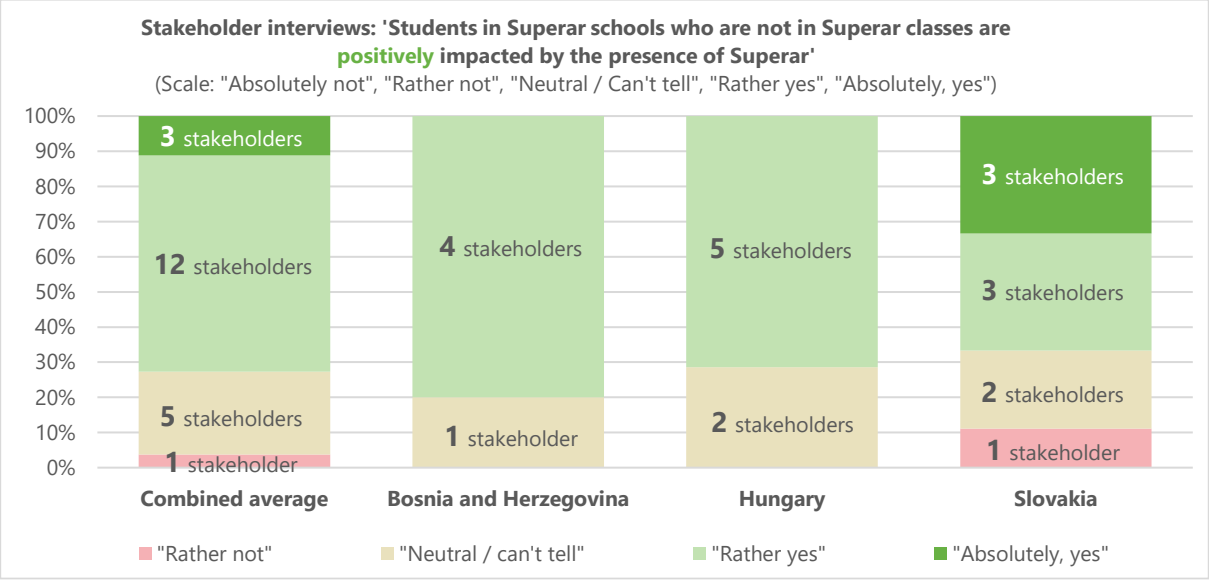
The presence of Superar within schools and kindergartens has a dual impact on students who are not enrolled in its classes, characterised by both positive and negative effects. Stakeholder interviews reveal that Superar's initiatives often inspire interest and enthusiasm for music and the arts among these students. However, some may also experience feelings of exclusion, envying their peers who are involved in the programme.

Based on the perceptions of tutors and non-Superar schoolteachers, Superar typically achieves a positive balance in this regard. This balance reflects anecdotal evidence and specific examples cited during interviews, with a majority of stakeholders emphasising the positive spillover effects, such as increased enthusiasm and a broader cultural impact, over the negative ones. Nonetheless, managing these contrasting impacts effectively remains an ongoing challenge.

The presence of Superar within Superar schools and kindergartens **has a dual impact on students who are not enrolled in its classes**, characterised by both positive and negative effects. This duality stems from the contrasting experiences these students have, as they are exposed to Superar's activities and performances. On the one hand, some students are inspired and motivated by the visibility of Superar's initiatives, while on the other, feelings of exclusion and inequality may arise when their classes are not involved in the programme.

Based on the stakeholder interviews (see figure below), Superar's presence in schools generates **notable positive externalities** for students who are not part of its classes, as it usually inspires interest and enthusiasm for music and the arts. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for instance, Superar performances encourage voluntary participation, with students attending extracurricular activities at the 'Children's House' community centre. A similar effect was described in Hungary, where a schoolteacher remarked, *'Superar students occasionally perform also within their schools, serving as a motivating experience for other students.'* In Slovakia, the programme's integration is described to foster a shared cultural experience among all students, with one management member noting, *'these children are always excited about the performance of Superar, and it inspires them.'* These engagement strategies contribute to a lively school culture, benefiting all students, regardless of their direct participation in the programme.

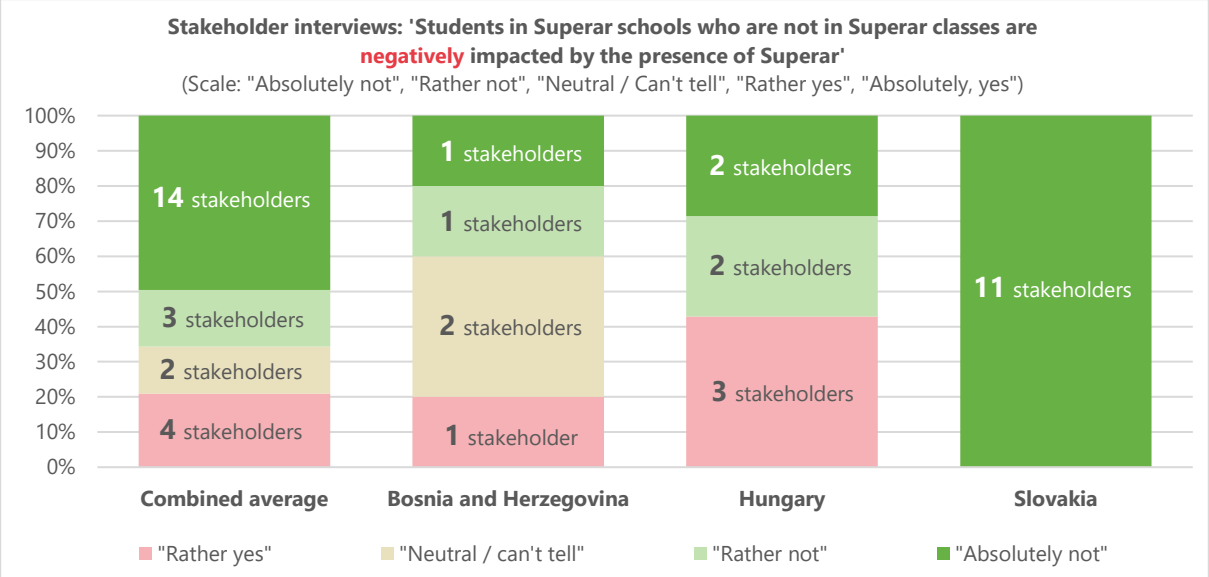
Figure 20: Stakeholder perceptions of the positive impacts of Superar on non-Superar students



Source: stakeholder interviews (N = 22 relevant respondents out of 34), showing non-weighted percentages.

According to the interviewees (see figure below), the presence of Superar can also **lead to negative externalities**, particularly feelings of exclusion among students not involved in its activities. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there have been instances where students in classes not selected for participation expressed dissatisfaction. Similarly, in Hungary, the negative effects were mentioned by a schoolteacher who stated that *'some children regret missing out on Superar.'* Nevertheless, in Slovakia, no negative impacts were reported, with most respondents acknowledging the absence of significant adverse effects on non-participating students, although they noted that some individuals simply lacked interest in music.

Figure 21: Stakeholder perceptions of the negative impacts of Superar on non-Superar students



Source: stakeholder interviews (N = 23 relevant respondents out of 34), showing non-weighted percentages.

Currently, despite the challenges associated with Superar's dual impact, the **programme generally achieves a positive balance**, benefiting not only those who participate directly but also the broader school community. The future challenge for Superar lies in effectively managing these contrasting impacts to foster an inclusive environment that minimises feelings of exclusion while maximising the programme's motivational benefits.

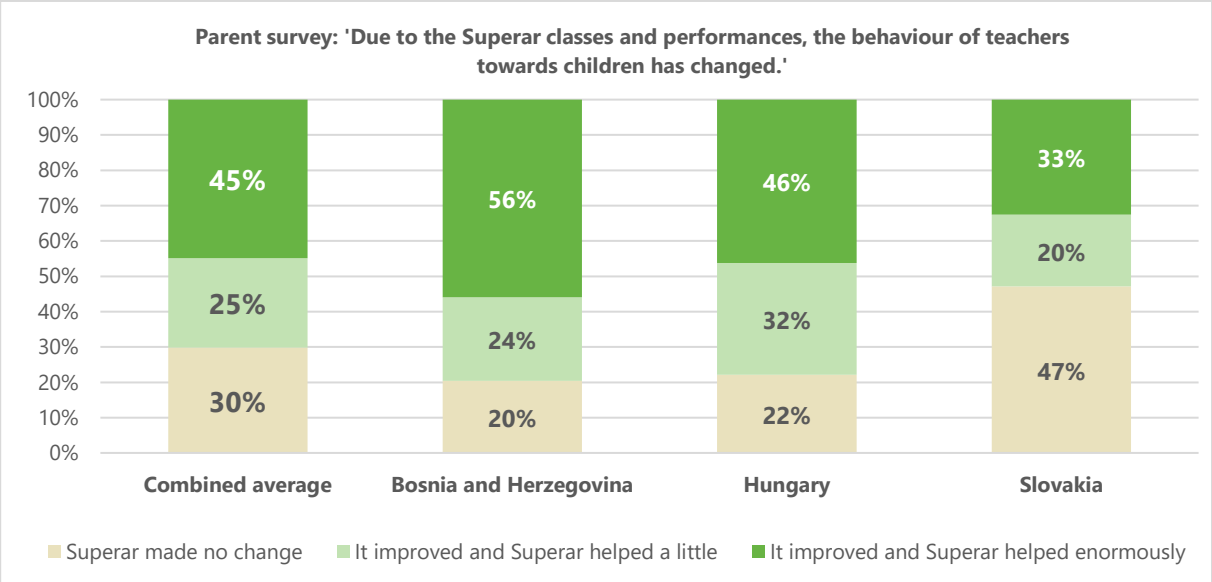
4.3 Is there any evidence that teachers in Superar schools who are not directly in contact with Superar tutors are impacted by the presence of Superar, either positively or negatively?

SUMMARY

Teachers in Superar schools who are not in direct contact with Superar tutors generally experience a positive impact from the programme's presence. Evidence shows that there has been a shift in teachers' behaviours from initial unfamiliarity with Superar to its greater acceptance and, eventually, active involvement (such as assisting with the organisation of, and participating) in Superar classes, performances, and events. This has fostered increased collaboration and engagement within the school community. The presence of Superar has even led to the spontaneous adoption of its teaching methodologies by some of non-Superar teachers (such as effective methods for silencing students, using silence, or employing clapping in their classrooms), enhancing the overall educational experience for all students. However, variations exist in the degree of impact across different countries, with some respondents noting that the influence is not universally felt, highlighting individual differences in teacher engagement and the unique contexts of each school. Overall, Superar's presence contributes to a more enriched educational environment, benefiting both participating and non-participating teachers.

According to the parent survey, **70% of parents observed changes in the behaviour of non-Superar schoolteachers** as a result of Superar classes and performances.

Figure 22: Parental perceptions of Superar's impact on the behaviour of non-Superar teachers

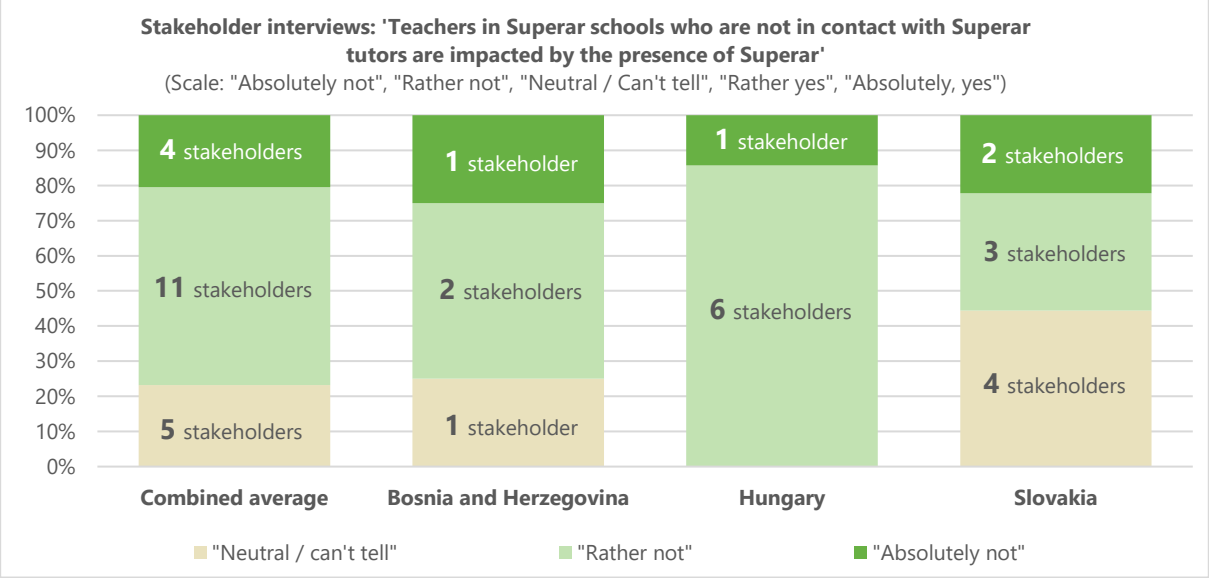


Source: parent survey (N = 167 respondents out of 274), showing weighted % for each country and their arithmetic mean.

Most of the interview participants, including three schoolteachers, agreed that the behaviour of non-Superar schoolteachers has positively evolved due to their exposure to Superar (see figure below). However, some participants observed less pronounced or no impact in this regard. The change in the schoolteachers' behaviour typically reflects a shift from initial unfamiliarity to broader acceptance and involvement.

Most of the interview participants agreed that the **behaviour of non-Superar schoolteachers has positively evolved** due to their exposure to Superar (see figure below); however, some observed either minimal impact or no change in this regard. Nevertheless, **all eight responding non-Superar schoolteachers** assessed that **they or their colleagues had changed** as a result of Superar. This change in the schoolteachers' behaviour typically reflects a shift from initial unfamiliarity to broader acceptance and involvement.

Figure 23: Stakeholder perceptions of the impacts of Superar on non-Superar schoolteachers



Source: stakeholder interviews (N = 28 relevant respondents out of 34), showing non-weighted percentages.

Interview participants generally agree that Superar **has positively impacted teachers' behaviours**, fostering greater engagement and collaboration within schools. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a tutor noted that all teachers at a school regularly interact in the Teachers' Lounge, where they exchange experiences, share teaching tools. As another tutor highlighted *'We influence the schoolteachers through their colleagues who work with us. […] teachers collaborate and share their experiences.'* This collaborative spirit is described in Hungary as well, where one tutor remarked, *'Now many teachers attend camps, follow the events, and support Superar, [compared to earlier years],'* illustrating the programme's growing acceptance and integration within the educational community. Similarly, in Slovakia, teachers, and teaching assistants, for instance, frequently attend performances and are often perceived to be inspired by the programme. As explained by Superar management members, Superar tutors are meant to be natural ambassadors of the programme at the schools who promote its methodology and invite the teachers for the 'innovation education' trainings provided by Superar.

As one tutor observed, *'everyone at school is influenced by Superar, they see each other, help each other; for example, teachers help organise concerts.'*

Another consistent observation is the **adoption of Superar-inspired teaching methods** by non-Superar teachers. As one schoolteacher in Hungary remarked, *'Certain [Superar] teaching methods, like creating a calm classroom atmosphere, have made their way into my everyday teaching.'* In Slovakia, tutors noted that teachers are increasingly inspired by the programme, with one stating, *'everyone at school is influenced by Superar; they see each other, help each other.'* This trend suggests that Superar's methodologies are permeating the wider teaching practices in schools, enhancing the overall educational experience for all students.

Despite the overall positive impact, there are variations in how deeply this influence is felt across the countries. For instance, while most respondents in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Hungary reported noticeable changes, Slovakian respondents acknowledged that **the impact is not universal**, as one schoolteacher remarked, *'Some teachers are impacted, and some are not... it is very individual.'* This draws the attention again to the importance of unique contextual factors regarding each school and individual when assessing the degree of influence Superar has on teachers.

4.4 Is there any evidence that the children in non-Superar schools have been impacted by the local adaptation of the Superar programme/methods, either positively or negatively?

SUMMARY

Children in non-Superar schools have been positively impacted by the local adaptation of the Superar programme, however, mostly indirectly and to a much lesser extent than those in Superar schools. While Bosnia and Herzegovina and Hungary currently lack a comprehensive training programme for teachers in non-Superar schools, Slovakia has seen teachers who participated in Superar training actively adopt its methods. Moreover, children from non-Superar schools have engaged in Superar activities; in Slovakia, for instance, children from surrounding villages attend the Superar choir, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina, extracurricular options like choir and violin classes are available to them. Additionally, Superar's public performances, some of them held in prestigious venues across, expose many children to the arts and foster an appreciation for music. Importantly, the influence of Superar extends to the siblings of participating students, with a significant majority of parents noting that involvement in Superar positively affects their siblings' attitudes and interests towards music.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina and Hungary, there is currently no comprehensive training programme for teachers from non-Superar affiliated schools, limiting the structured influence of Superar's methodologies in these settings. However, **in Slovakia, the teachers who participated in Superar training** are perceived to have actively adopted the programme's methods. A tutor in Slovakia, for instance, shared an example of *'a teacher from Bratislava who attended Superar training and is now continuing her music education, practicing the Superar methodology and recently bought musical instruments for her class.'*

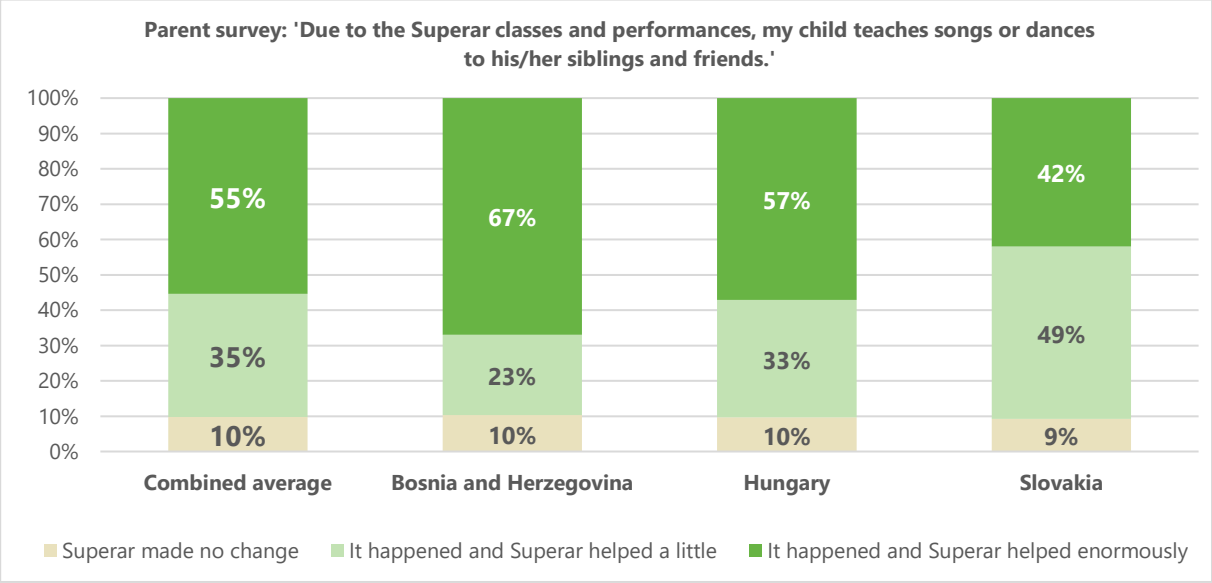
Despite the absence of a structured training programme for teachers in non-Superar schools, Superar tutors often **find alternative ways to promote the programme**, for instance in Hungary, *'There have been instances where a tutor, while teaching at another music school, promoted Superar by bringing Superar students to perform there and vice versa, which could have had an inspiring effect on them.'*

In both Slovakia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is **evidence of children from non-Superar schools engaging in Superar classes**, which reflects the programme's broader influence through its regular activities. In Slovakia, it is reported that in one of the schools *'children from six nearby villages attend the Superar choir,'* indicating an effective outreach beyond the immediate participants. Similarly, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was observed that Superar's extracurricular activities, such as choir and violin classes, are accessible to children from non-Superar schools, providing opportunities for them to benefit from Superar's music education initiatives.

Superar's public performances serve as an important channel for influencing children in non-Superar schools across all three countries. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the organisation hosts 30-40 public performances annually in collaboration with prestigious institutions, including the Sarajevo National Theatre in Sarajevo, Sarajevo Philharmonic, Sarajevo National Opera, or the Vienna Boys Choir. Similarly, in Hungary, performances at renowned venues like the Hungarian House of Music and the Palace of Arts engage numerous families, with significant events such as the Sziget Festival drawing tens of thousands of attendees and amplifying Superar's reach. These public displays not only entertain but also inspire children from non-Superar schools to appreciate the arts.

The **influence of Superar extends strongly to the siblings of its students**, as reported in all three countries. 90% of the surveyed parents, as indicated in the figure below, have indicated that the involvement of their children in Superar significantly affects the attitudes and interests of their siblings. This ripple effect was supported by anecdotal evidence from various stakeholders, highlighting how siblings often become inspired by the activities and successes of Superar participants (see evaluation question 3.3).

Figure 24: Parental perceptions of Superar's impact on the siblings of Superar students



Source: parent survey (N = 244 respondents out of 274), showing weighted % for each country and their arithmetic mean.

4.5 Is there any evidence that education policymakers in the different countries are aware of Superar, and/or have drawn inspiration from it, and/or are considering integrating Superar into their general education approach / national curricula? If they are theoretically interested in mainstreaming Superar, what are the potential barriers to its integration?

SUMMARY

Education policymakers across Slovakia, Hungary, and Bosnia and Herzegovina demonstrate varying degrees of awareness and engagement with Superar, reflecting both successes and barriers in its potential integration into national curricula. In Slovakia, Superar has made significant strides, influencing the reformed national arts curriculum and receiving government accreditation, which has increased its credibility among policymakers. Conversely, while Hungary has established efficient local partnerships allowing Superar to function as official music classes, the formal integration of music programmes into the national curriculum remains unlikely given current educational priorities. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, initial recognition through a Memorandum of Understanding by the Ministry of Education of Canton Sarajevo has not translated into substantial policy adoption at the curricular level. Nevertheless, the local programme has access to all relevant schools and is also permitted to supplement the cantonal curriculum with the Superar curriculum. The interviewed education experts in the three countries suggest strategies to handle these obstacles, emphasising the importance of building strategic partnerships, enhancing visibility through public performances, leveraging existing networks, showcasing impactful case studies, and employing storytelling to convey the benefits of Superar's methodologies.

Successes so far

Superar has achieved notable successes in engaging with education policymakers, with Slovakia emerging as a strong example of Superar's influence in national education reform. **In Slovakia, Superar's methodologies have significantly shaped the reformed national arts curriculum**, supported by the active involvement of a Superar methodologist as co-author. This accomplishment was highlighted by an expert who noted that this way, *'the basics have already been implemented [in the national curriculum].'* Furthermore, Slovakia's Ministry of Education has granted Superar official accreditation to **provide 'innovative education' training**, serving as a quality endorsement from the government that facilitates broader adoption. This national recognition places Slovakia in a favourable position for the potential integration of Superar into educational practices and strengthens Superar's credibility with policymakers. Superar's management considers that education policymakers are well aware of Superar.

In Hungary, Superar has developed meaningful local partnerships, securing working relationships with educational districts in Budapest, which allow Superar classes to operate as official singing lessons, even though they do not fully align with the national curriculum. As Superar's management observed, *'For now, a status quo is in place where, as long as Superar does not cost [for the educational districts] anything and brings them a good reputation, they do not interfere with the details'*.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, Superar has developed effective collaboration with educational institutions, marked by a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education. While the Music Academy in Sarajevo has shown interest in introducing the Superar educational approach to pre-service teachers through promotional workshops, the Superar International Curriculum is close to being finalised. Once completed, the Superar management plans to submit it to relevant institutions for review and potential collaboration in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Current limitations

Nevertheless, Superar's efforts to integrate its methodologies into national curricula and teachers training face notable barriers in each country, primarily due to changing policy priorities, political shifts, and inconsistent engagement from policymakers. The **frequent turnover of education officials and**

evolving political climates complicate Superar's ability to establish sustained support across Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, and Slovakia.

Education policymakers in **Bosnia and Herzegovina** have varying levels of awareness of Superar, with challenges hindering broader integration, but the programme is actively seeking partnerships and increased visibility to overcome these obstacles. Although a previous Memorandum of Understanding (which remains valid) signalled official recognition, the current authorities have not been sufficiently familiar with the Superar approach and curriculum, as it was only recently finalised internationally and had not previously been documented in this written form. For this reason, discussions about its inclusion in the national curriculum at the cantonal level or its integration into teacher training programs would not have been considered viable at this time without written documentation. Nevertheless, challenges such as bureaucratic hurdles remain, which potentially hinder broader integration into the national curriculum on Canton level or teacher training programmes. To overcome these barriers, Superar is exploring partnerships with educational institutions and advocating for increased visibility and recognition. By building strategic partnerships, leveraging existing networks, and sharing best practices with international partners, Superar can work towards a future where its approach is more widely adopted and integrated into mainstream education.

In **Hungary**, Superar operates with a 'status quo' approach, gaining tacit approval by staying cost-neutral for educational districts, yet the formal integration of music programmes into the national curriculum remains unlikely given current educational priorities.

Slovakia has made strides with some integration into its arts curriculum, but even here, Superar's leadership noted variability in policymakers' enthusiasm, often depending on the motivations and priorities of key decision-makers.

These examples underline the broader challenge of managing an inconsistent policy environment, where lasting change requires resilience, adaptability, and continuous advocacy.

Alternative strategies

To overcome these barriers, Superar's local management teams have identified alternative strategies for expanding their impact. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, collaboration with the University of Sarajevo's Music Academy and Faculty of Pedagogy offers a promising way to incorporate Superar methods into teacher training, potentially broadening its influence into non-affiliated schools over time. In **Hungary**, Superar management focuses on maintaining a stable presence with relevant educational districts while expanding its network among prestigious cultural and educational institutions to achieve an indirect impact. Meanwhile, in **Slovakia**, the management team is concentrating on network-building and brand establishment; as the managing director noted, *'Superar Slovakia is one of the ten NGOs recommended by the former Minister of Education for collaboration.'*

Suggestions from educational experts underline the importance of building strategic partnerships with research organisations and nonprofits to enhance Superar's credibility, increasing advocacy through public performances and media, and leveraging international models to support local adaptation. Pilot projects and storytelling, with evidence of Superar's positive outcomes, are recommended to help policymakers understand the programme's value. As Superar looks towards sustainable expansion, these strategies provide a roadmap for integrating its methods and philosophies into broader educational frameworks, even within constrained policy environments.

Suggestions from education experts

Education experts across the Superar countries provided several actionable suggestions to enhance the programme's influence and potential for integration into national education systems. Key recommendations include:

- **Further build strategic partnerships**: experts across all three countries generally recommend that, rather than directly approaching high-ranking education officials, Superar should focus on collaborating with educational research institutions, non-profits, and private sector partners to

strengthen its credibility and reach. These partnerships could offer additional support, resources, and visibility, positioning Superar as a key player in educational innovation. Working alongside organisations already engaged in educational reform could also indirectly foster connections with policymakers, increasing the likelihood of broader adoption.

- **Enhance visibility through public performances and advocacy**: several interviewed experts suggest that Superar utilise its unique strength in music performances by continuing to organise high-profile public events. These events, paired with media outreach and targeted advocacy campaigns, could showcase the tangible benefits of Superar to a broad audience, including policymakers. As seen in all three countries, hosting performances in prestigious venues captures the attention of not only parents and educators but also decisionmakers who attend or hear about these events through media coverage (e.g. Sziget Festival).
- **Gradually broaden existing networks with policymakers and educators**: utilising established connections with influential policymakers, educational leaders, and community advocates could be instrumental in fostering supportive dialogues, taking a gradual approach in integrating Superar's methodology into the national curriculum. Superar can benefit by engaging these stakeholders as advocates or even ambassadors of the programme, showcasing successful pilot projects and specific success stories from partner schools to illustrate the potential impact on educational quality and student engagement.
- **Showcase case studies and pursue international collaboration**: experts emphasise that sharing case studies illustrating Superar's impact across diverse cultural and educational contexts can provide convincing evidence of its broader relevance. Case studies that show how Superar's methods integrate with or enhance existing educational practices can attract interest from education professionals and highlight its adaptability.
- **Use storytelling to demonstrate Superar's impact**: experts suggest that storytelling (using testimonials, student achievements, and school success stories) can make Superar's benefits more relatable and memorable to policymakers. By emphasising individual success stories or tangible impacts on students and teachers, Superar can convey its value in ways that data alone may not capture.

5. Is there evidence that the Superar programme is likely to have any wider benefits or effects beyond those explicitly planned in advance?

SUMMARY

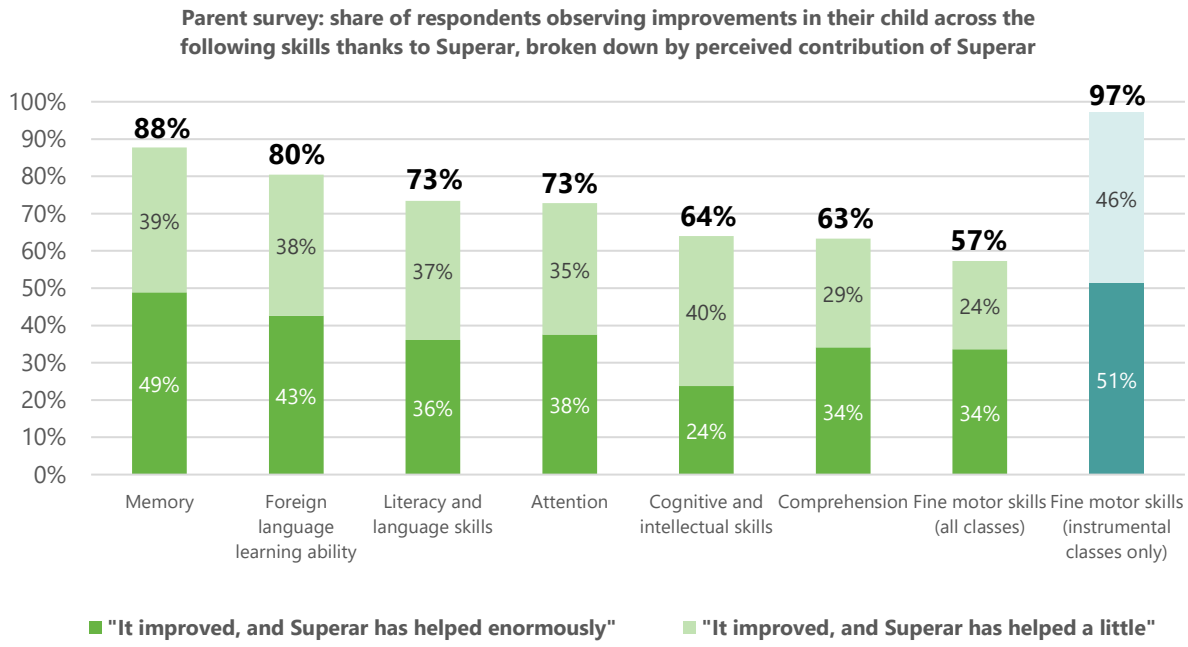
Superar is likely to have wider benefits and further effects beyond its explicitly planned outcomes. Specifically, 88% of parents reported enhancements in memory, largely attributed to the programme's focus on memorising song lyrics in multiple languages. Additionally, 80% of parents noted improvements in their children's ability to learn foreign languages, with feedback highlighting how musical activities facilitate language acquisition. Improvements in general language skills and attention were also observed, with 73% of parents acknowledging positive developments in both areas. Fine motor skills showed a remarkable 97% improvement rate among students in instrumental classes. Furthermore, 74% of parents indicated that their children were inspired to consider further musical education, reflecting the programme's broader impact on fostering passion and ambition in young learners.

Overall, Superar not only meets its educational goals but also fosters important life skills and aspirations among children, particularly in socio-economically disadvantaged contexts. Although the literature review suggests that far-transfer effects on cognitive and intellectual skills or academic achievement are generally limited, Superar programme has a high-frequency class schedule, includes regular performances in its curriculum and operates in schools serving a significant proportion of marginalised children. This context may contribute to a more pronounced impact compared to other programmes.

Nevertheless, while Superar creates an environment conducive to cognitive growth, the effects on learning may be less immediate or pronounced than those seen in musical and certain socio-emotional competencies, often reflecting a slower trajectory of development.

Based on a literature review and an analysis of programme documents, the evaluators selected seven competencies considered as wider benefits or further unintentional effects to assess in detail. The parent survey highlights the **programme's effectiveness across all these areas**, with notable impacts on memory, ability to learn foreign languages, general language skills and attention emerging as the most significant. The figure below shows the survey results for each competence, highlighting the assessment of fine motor skills by all respondents (**green** column) and by respondents from instrumental classes only (**blue** column).

Figure 25: Parental perceptions of Superar's impact on other skills



Source: parent survey (N = 255 respondents out of 274), showing the arithmetic mean of weighted country percentages.

As noted in the literature review (Section 3), contrary to popular belief, research suggests that far-transfer effects, particularly concerning cognitive and intellectual skills or academic achievement, are unlikely to be significant. A key distinguishing feature of the Superar programme is its **high-frequency class schedule**, which includes multiple classes per week and the **integration of regular performances into the curriculum**. Additionally, the programme operates in schools and socio-economically disadvantaged environments, reaching a significant proportion of children from vulnerable backgrounds. This aspect generally enhances the effectiveness of musical education programmes and increases the likelihood of impacts not only on socio-economic competencies but also on unrelated skills.

Parents rated the impact of Superar on **memory skills** the highest among its various benefits, with 88% acknowledging noticeable improvements in their children, a finding supported by stakeholder interviews[52]. Focus group participants similarly ranked memory enhancement as the top wider benefit in Slovakia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, while it was identified as the third most important in Hungary. Across all three countries, a common trend emerged: the emphasis on memorising song lyrics in various languages significantly contributes to children's memory development. For instance, a tutor in

[52] 32 out of 33 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in this skill that resulted from Superar's contribution.

Bosnia and Herzegovina noted, *'The children practice memory all the time and have improved significantly,'* while in Hungary, parents observed that this process of memorisation *'undoubtedly contributes to the long-term development of the children's memory in general.'* A Slovakian schoolteacher remarked that *'[memory skill] is essential for learning the repertoire,'* stressing the programme's focus on engaging methods that enhance memory skills.

80% of parents identified an improvement in their children's **ability to learn foreign languages**, as a significant impact of the Superar programme, a finding corroborated by stakeholder interviews[53] and ranked highly by focus group participants, particularly second in both Slovakia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and fourth in Hungary. A common pattern across the feedback is Superar's emphasis on developing a repertoire of various native and foreign-language songs, along with its focus on proper pronunciation through singing, which facilitates foreign language acquisition in regular school settings. For instance, a parent from Bosnia and Herzegovina noted regarding Superar's impact, *'My child is doing well with foreign languages... I would like to believe they are doing better than before,'* while a focus group participant observed, *'The children sing in numerous languages... They remember the words through associations linked to specific body movements,'* highlighting how learning foreign languages can be particularly effective for younger students. Similarly, in Hungary, parents reported that exposure to a diverse repertoire of foreign songs enhances language skills and engagement, underlining the programme's effectiveness in promoting foreign language proficiency through musical activities.

73% of parents reported that the Superar programme contributed to improvements in their children's **general language skills**[54], a finding also concluded based on the stakeholder interviews[55]. A common argument across the three countries is Superar's emphasis on pronunciation and articulation, which significantly enhances overall language development. This argument is supported by various examples from interviews with schoolteachers and tutors, and evaluators also noted a strong focus on articulation during class observations across the three countries.

73% of parents observed a positive contribution from Superar in developing their children's **attention skills**, a finding strongly supported by interviews[56]. Focus group participants rated the impact of Superar on attention skills highly. In Hungary, this impact was ranked first, in Slovakia, attention skills were recognised as one of the programme's most significant effects, while the impact was slightly less pronounced in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A similar argument emerged across all three countries, highlighting Superar's emphasis on maintaining intensive engagement through varied activities that mix musical exercises with discussions, games, and movements around the classroom. A tutor in Bosnia and Herzegovina specifically noted that *'children must keep their attention throughout the teaching class,'* which is in line with a Hungarian tutor's observation that *'the children need to pay attention almost constantly during the classes.'* The latter emphasised how the programme fosters sustained focus during high-energy sessions. In Slovakia, participants noted that *'attention is essential in the Superar methodology,'* emphasising intentional strategies employed during performances that require children to handle various external stimuli. The high level of engagement and energy observed in the classes was also noted by evaluators during their observations, despite the potential distortion caused by their presence in the classroom.

While 63% of parents observed contributions from Superar to their children's **cognitive and intellectual skills** and 57% noted improvements in **comprehension**, these areas were ranked lower in terms of impact by focus group participants, typically placed fifth and seventh among the seven evaluated skills. While interviewees also evaluated these effects less straightforward[57], they have revealed numerous

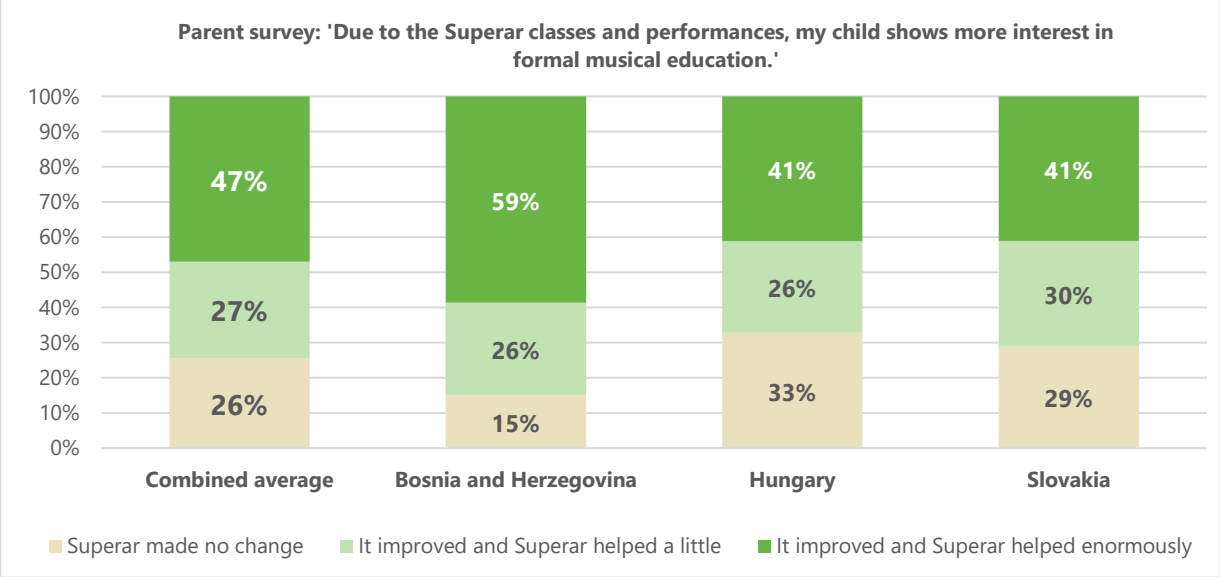
[53] 18 out of 20 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in this skill that resulted from Superar's contribution.
[54] Literacy being less relevant in the case of Superar.
[55] 25 out of 30 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in this skill that resulted from Superar's contribution.
[56] 30 out of 31 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in this skill that resulted from Superar's contribution.
[57] 18 out 30 and 25 out of 30 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in these skills, respectively, that resulted from Superar's contribution.

positive examples, indicating that while the effects may not be as pronounced or immediate as in other competencies, they still hold significance. As a general conclusion the structured, discussion-based approach of the Superar programme seems to create a conducive environment for cognitive growth, however, with a slower trajectory compared to other skills. For instance, a Superar management member in Bosnia and Herzegovina emphasised that *'all lessons are followed by discussion to check understanding and comprehension,'* highlighting the programme's commitment on reflective thinking. In Hungary, a focus group added that while cognitive and comprehension skills may not see immediate impacts, they are positively influenced by the programme's approach. As summarised during the discussions *'the effects in these areas are evident, but they are not as direct or immediate as those observed in other competencies.'* In Slovakia, similar observations were made, with focus group participants noting that while cognitive and intellectual skills showed a less pronounced impact, the potential for growth remains. These findings are consistent with the findings of the 2024 'Educator survey'[58], and the literature review.

The development of **fine motor skills** is evident among all students participating in guitar classes in Hungary and violin classes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with 97% of parents observing improvements in these skills attributed to Superar, in line with insights gathered from relevant stakeholder interviews[59]. While improvements are also noted more generally in choir and music classes, the impact is less pronounced, with only 57% of parents reporting benefits in this area overall, combining all types of classes. For instance, in Hungary, children enhance their fine motor skills during choir sessions through activities such as playing the xylophone, smaller percussion instruments, and occasionally the piano. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, similar improvements are observed in choir sessions through various in-class activities and games. As one interviewed tutor remarked, *'fine motor skills are practised in choir, as children make music with their fingers and generally use their bodies as instruments.'*

Additionally, 74% of parents reported that their children have been inspired by their experiences with Superar to **consider pursuing further musical education**.

Figure 26: Parental perceptions of Superar's impact on considering formal musical education



Source: parent survey (N = 231 respondents out of 274), showing weighted % for each country and their arithmetic mean.

[58] 56% of educators in the three countries reported either slight or significant improvements in the learning abilities in the classes/groups they teach. N = 87.
[59] 9 out of 9 relevant interview respondents noted significant development in this skill that resulted from Superar's contribution during instrumental classes.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, a member of the Superar management explained, '*An interest in formal education does not always translate into actual educational achievement, but the **mere expression of interest is an impact in itself**.'* In Bosnia and Herzegovina, several children have continued with formal music education; in the 2023/2024 school year, 18 to 19 children enrolled in formal music programmes, bringing the total to around 60 over time. Superar plays a decisive role in this process, as these children must pass an entrance exam to gain admission, and state music schools have limited capacities, for instance, the music schools in Novo Sarajevo only enrol 50 new students each year. Moreover, there are territorial differences in enrolment. As one interviewed tutor noted*, 'The school in Kovačići is near the Music School, which is why more children from Kovačići enrol than those from Džemaludin Čaušević.'*

In Hungary, the impact of Superar is also evident, as interviewees provided numerous examples of children inspired to continue their musical journeys. Several students acquired guitars as a direct result of their engagement with Superar's instrumental classes. One student expressed a significant aspiration towards formal music education, motivating them to attend a conservatory. In another case, a Ukrainian refugee child, motivated by their Superar experience, developed a keen interest in the guitar and showcased remarkable musical aptitude, leading them to contemplate formal music education at specialised institutions such as the Ferenc Snétberger Foundation's school for talented Roma youths. Furthermore, another child, inspired by the programme, expressed interest in learning the violin, even though it is not one of the instruments offered by Superar.

In Slovakia, the influence of Superar is similarly strong. One tutor remarked, *'Superar serves as inspiration; without it, children would not discover their musical potential.'* A parent shared their child's enthusiasm: *'My child enjoys working with conductors and is gaining a better understanding of the world of music. She even wants to add violin to her studies at the Music Art school.'* Overall, a tutor estimated that approximately 3% of the children can actually enrol in a Music Art school. These insights reflect the significant impact Superar has on **fostering a passion for music in children**, encouraging them to identify further educational opportunities in the field.

6. Are there any insights from stakeholders that would allow the programme to be implemented more effectively and equitably?

SUMMARY

Stakeholders across the three evaluated countries offered insights to enhance the effective and equitable implementation of the Superar programme. Regarding recommendations for increasing effectiveness for the target group, increasing parental engagement was identified as the top priority in each country, emphasising the need for effective connections among parents, children, and Superar. It is expected that, most importantly, engaged parents will be more likely to create the necessary conditions, both logistical and emotional, for their children to participate in performances, extracurricular classes, or even take part in Superar events themselves. Additionally, participants highlighted the importance of increasing performance opportunities for students, advocating for partnerships with renowned artists to increase the programme's profile. The standardisation of tutor training was also deemed important, while ensuring flexibility in programme implementation and allowing tutors to maintain their creativity and individuality in delivering the curriculum.

In terms of increasing the reach of Superar, there was strong support in each country for enhancing the involvement of non-Superar schoolteachers, which could create a positive spillover effect and enrich the educational environment. Pursuing more partnerships and advocacy initiatives was deemed essential for influencing educational policies, while strengthening internal capacities was recognised as foundational for sustainable expansion. Lastly, the concept of developing 'light partnerships' with schools was discussed as a scalable model for disseminating Superar methodologies, enabling broader integration without significant resource demands.

Seven common suggestions emerged across the three evaluated countries that were closely related to programme effectiveness, three related to the delivery of outcome for its target group, and four related to the further expansion of the Superar programme. These common suggestions were discussed and assessed in local focus group sessions.

6.1 Increasing effectiveness for the target group

The conclusion of the focus group on the common suggestions is as follows.

1. Across all three countries, there is a strong consensus that **increasing parental engagement is the most important priority** for enhancing the effectiveness of the Superar programme. Participants emphasised the importance of reaching parents more efficiently through appropriate communication channels (both electronic and in-person), delivering Superar's messages effectively, and fostering stronger connections and interactions between parents, children, the schools, and Superar. This effort should align with the schools' initiatives to engage parents and should be conducted in close collaboration with them. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, participants highlighted the potential benefits of building on existing practices, such as using Viber channels for parent communication, while cautioning that excessive involvement could sometimes hinder a child's independence. In Hungary, there was a call for more direct engagement, including increasing parents' higher exposure to performances and enhancing attendance rates. Specific suggestions included organising special classes that involve parents and better utilising existing official communication channels[60] and social media platforms to facilitate ongoing dialogue. In Slovakia, participants stressed the necessity of effective communication, noting the importance of direct interactions to prevent misinterpretations. For instance, at the Lozorno location, officials are currently using the school's official platform, EduPage, to invite specific parents to assist with performance logistics, thereby ensuring clearer calls to action.
2. **Increasing performance opportunities** for students emerged as the second most prioritised recommendation at the level of the three countries. While participants widely acknowledged the positive benefits, the cost-effectiveness of this approach was viewed as somewhat lower than the previous recommendation due to the high financial demands and logistical challenges associated with organising performances. In Hungary, there was a consensus that performances are essential for enhancing children's development, showcasing their skills and fostering a sense of achievement and community pride. Participants advocated for expanding partnerships with renowned artists and providing more travel opportunities to increase the programme's profile. They cited successful events, such as the recent performance at the Hungarian House of Music and the annual Sziget Festival, with one parent suggesting, *'Try to bring as many famous musicians as possible to the performances and Superar events who can serve as role models for the kids.'* In Slovakia, focus group participants agreed with these findings, with one noting, *'High-profile performances are impressive for both children and parents, as they create memorable experiences.'* In Bosnia and Herzegovina, participants also highlighted the potential of expanding children's exposure to high-profile events and partnering with established artists to motivate students and connect Superar with the wider community. Although some participants felt that performances only moderately addressed children's basic developmental needs, they collectively recognised that such events could instil a sense of pride and accomplishment not only in the children but also in their families and communities.
3. The recommendation to **standardise tutor training and supervision** received general support from focus group participants, although responses varied across the three countries. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, participants unanimously recognised the need for a standardised and recurring training system to enhance programme sustainability and facilitate skill transfer to new

[60] Currently, neither parents nor teachers find the official communication platform, 'KRÉTA,' user-friendly, which hinders effective communication and engagement within the educational community through this channel.

instructors. They emphasised the importance of consistent coaching and a blend of internal and external supervision to maintain high teaching standards, with one participant noting that *'external supervision can be very beneficial, as it brings a different dimension to the process.'* In Hungary, while some acknowledged the potential benefits of standardisation, most participants stressed that it should not limit tutors' creative freedom and individuality. They argued that *'Superar's strength comes from the diversity and creativity of its tutors,'* suggesting a preference for flexible training frameworks that establish foundational principles without overly rigid protocols. In Slovakia, participants valued high-quality training, particularly through international opportunities, but some questioned the relevance of standardisation in their context, expressing similar views to those mentioned in the Hungarian focus group discussion.

6.2 Expanding the reach of Superar

The conclusion of the focus group on the common suggestions is as follows.

1. In relation to expanding the reach of Superar, the recommendation to further **enhance the involvement of non-Superar schoolteachers** emerged as the most favoured option at the level of the three countries. Participants widely agreed that engaging non-Superar teachers is essential to create a positive spillover effect, allowing Superar's methodologies to extend beyond the immediate programme. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, focus group members highlighted the value of involving teachers from non-art subjects such as math and technical education, noting that these educators have attended training sessions with Superar instructors and found applicable strategies for their own classrooms. In Hungary, participants shared similar views, emphasising that encouraging non-Superar teachers to participate in performances and training not only boosts their commitment but also enriches the overall educational environment. One participant remarked, *'Involving non-Superar teachers in our activities creates a more integrated educational environment, benefitting both our students and the broader school community.'* Similarly, in Slovakia, the focus group underlined the importance of engaging non-Superar teachers in various activities, such as performances and open classes, to contribute to a deeper understanding of Superar's methodologies and benefits. This strategy is key to embedding Superar's influence within school culture and fostering broader support for its objectives.
2. **Pursuing more partnerships and advocacy initiatives** emerged as a key strategy for expanding Superar's reach, with Hungary ranking this recommendation as its top priority. Participants across all three countries acknowledged the importance of collaborating with organisations that promote free and inclusive education to enhance visibility and influence educational policies. In Hungary, participants emphasised that strong partnerships with civil society organisations would not only improve Superar's profile but also create a supportive network for its mission. They suggested organising advocacy campaigns and conferences to engage government entities and relevant stakeholders, which could significantly broaden the programme's accessibility within Hungary's specific policy environment. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, participants also recognise the great potential of partnerships with relevant ministries and advocacy initiatives to shape educational policies and extend Superar's reach. However, there was a consensus that developing these partnerships should follow the enhancement of internal capacities to ensure sustainable engagement with external stakeholders. In Slovakia, there was a similar support for developing broader partnerships and advocacy initiatives. Participants highlighted the value of collaborating with organisations focused on inclusive education and engaging with government bodies. They acknowledged that such initiatives would require significant resources but could lead to meaningful policy changes and greater long-term integration of Superar within the national educational environment.
3. **Strengthening internal capacities** also emerged as an important recommendation among focus group participants, who recognised its importance as a foundational step for continuously expanding Superar's reach and enhancing programme sustainability. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, participants ranked this suggestion second among the four discussed options, emphasising that developing the skills and resources of the Superar team is essential for

effective collaboration with national bodies and managing a broader operational scope. One participant even highlighted the necessity of prioritising internal growth before pursuing larger partnerships. Similarly, in Hungary, participants acknowledged that while Superar currently possesses adequate capacity to engage with new schools and kindergartens, there is a pressing need to bolster local capabilities for effective collaboration with national governments and music industry stakeholders, stressing the importance of specialisation and formalisation of these roles. In Slovakia, the group agreed with the importance of strengthening internal capacities within Superar to manage and sustain potential expansion effectively, however, participants agreed it would require substantial resources and noted that other, more immediate strategies should be prioritised first. Issues related to cost-effectiveness compared to other options was also mentioned in the other two countries.

4. The concept of **developing 'light' partnerships**[61] with schools emerged as a promising strategy across all three countries, aimed at disseminating Superar methodologies without requiring significant resources. Participants recognised the potential value of establishing, for instance, 'Superar-friendly schools,' where institutions commit to shared values and integrate Superar's methods at a basic level. This model provides a scalable pathway for schools interested in becoming fully integrated with Superar. In Slovakia, this idea was particularly well-received, with participants noting that such partnerships align seamlessly with Superar's existing goals. For instance, in Detva, local schools have allowed non-Superar students to join choir activities, fostering community engagement and sharing experiences. As one participant remarked, *'Light partnerships are already happening organically, and results are visible, so it makes sense to build on this momentum.'* The Slovakian focus group viewed this approach as cost-effective and scalable, with trained teachers positioned to support these partnerships. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, participants also saw this idea as a practical strategy for spreading Superar methodologies, viewing it as a moderate yet scalable model that could introduce Superar principles broadly while offering a pathway for future integration. This model could enable more students to participate in Superar training. In Hungary, while participants recognised the concept's potential, they expressed concerns regarding feasibility within a centralised education system. Nonetheless, they acknowledged that testing light partnerships in former Superar institutions or with tutors who previously worked with Superar could yield useful insights. Despite receiving the least support among the options, the idea was considered a viable option worth exploring as a preliminary step towards broader integration and scale-up.

In addition to these overarching suggestions, the interviewed education expert offered insights on enhancing **Superar's impact on the education system and teacher training**, which are summarised earlier under evaluation question 4.5.

5.3 Sustainability

7. Is the Superar programme on path to sustaining the benefits to its beneficiaries?

SUMMARY

The Superar programme appears to be on a promising path to sustaining its benefits, though its impact varies based on the length of participation, individual commitment, and institutional support. Survey data indicate that the majority of parents believe the programme's long-term benefits, particularly in musical

[61] The recommendation to develop **'light' partnerships** was defined as follows: creating a partnership model with schools (e.g. 'Superar friendly schools') that entails no direct on-site Superar classes but rather involves an agreement on shared values and the dissemination of Superar methodologies. This approach promotes the widespread adoption of the methodology, potentially leading to the schools transitioning to full-status Superar institutions in the future.

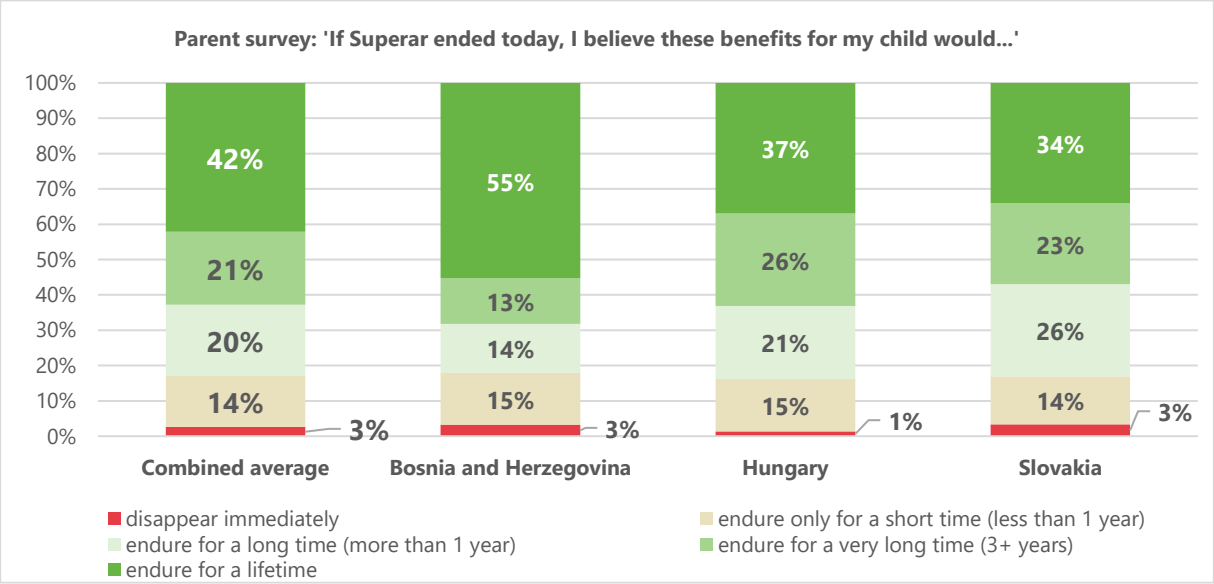
competence, self-confidence, and social skills, will endure, with over 60% expecting positive effects to last a lifetime or for many years. While these are perceptions rather than pre-post comparisons, such positive expectations are promising and may signal long-term impact, potentially setting Superar apart from some of the other music education programmes discussed in the literature.

Tutors generally share this optimism, especially for children engaged in the programme from an early age, highlighting the programme's intensity and the empowering experience of performances as factors that reinforce its long-term impact. However, the programme's ability to sustain engagement through adolescence remains uncertain, as external factors, such as educational transitions and the quality of future music education, play significant roles.

Within schools and kindergartens, Superar's impact shows potential for lasting integration, particularly where the programme has been active for multiple years and local teachers are supported through continuous training and mentoring. Yet, the programme's effectiveness within schools depends on the alignment with school leadership priorities and teachers' commitment, with concerns about the added pressures from recent educational reforms, for instance, in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Based on parents' perceptions in the three countries on average, **42% believe that the benefits of Superar will last a lifetime**, while **21% feel that the benefits will endure for a very long time**, more than three years. Additionally, 20% consider the benefits to last for at least a year (see figure below). These responses indicate that parents generally view the changes induced by Superar as sustainable. Interviews with parents revealed that this sustainability is particularly relevant in case of musical competences, self-confidence, social skills and, in general, music as a unifying force. As one of them expressed in Hungary, '*Superar is a lifelong impactful programme, I am sure that especially the musical benefits will accompany [my child] throughout his life.'*

Figure 27: Parental perceptions on the sustainability of Superar's impact



Source: parent survey (N = 262 respondents out of 274), showing weighted % for each country and their arithmetic mean.

The interviewed tutors generally believe that the **achievements made by children through Superar will mostly persist in the long run**[62]. A tutor in Hungary expressed that *'the programme is truly sustainable when the experiences endure... the joyful feeling of being on stage and receiving applause can have a lasting impact, boosting self-confidence, fostering a love for music, and nurturing a desire for*

[62] 17 out 23 relevant interview respondents (all of them being tutors and schoolteachers) noted that in 3 years' time, the children will sustain the achievements either 'fully' or 'mostly' (the remaining respondent indicating 'to some extent').

singing and spending time together.' This tutor emphasised that the programme's intensity is a key factor in its lasting impact. However, a Superar management member in Slovakia highlighted the role of external factors, noting that *'it's very individual, depending on many aspects, such as how long they were with Superar and whether they enrol in a music school afterwards.'* There were also concerns about the effects of adolescence, a period that could challenge ongoing engagement with the programme. Tutors in Bosnia and Herzegovina similarly expressed optimism about the lasting impact on children, particularly for those who join at an early age. However, a tutor in Bosnia and Herzegovina pointed out that the continuity of musical skills depends heavily on the approach taken by future music educators.

As discussed further in evaluation question 3.4, the **length of a child's participation is a significant factor in sustaining impact**. As one Slovakian tutor noted, *'the longer they are in Superar, the more they gain from it and know how to retain it.'*

As a general conclusion from the interviews[63] across the three countries, the **sustainability of Superar's impact within schools and kindergartens**, and **among their teachers is less certain**, and depends largely on individual commitment, duration of engagement, and institutional support. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, teachers with longer involvement in Superar are more likely to integrate its methodologies, though recent educational reforms have created additional pressures that can hinder consistent application. In Hungary, some interviewees noted a positive shift in school culture, suggesting potential for long-term change. One schoolteacher remarked that even after five years, the teamwork fostered by Superar could persist, while another observed Superar methods 'leaking' into subjects like mathematics, indicating that integration is possible if it becomes '**ingrained in school culture.'** Similarly in Slovakia, deeper impacts are expected in locations with prolonged Superar presence, such as Detva, where the programme has operated for a decade. Superar's shift towards training and mentoring local teachers has fostered a community of practice that encourages lasting change; however, the extent of this impact still varies depending on school leadership and the engagement level of individual teachers.

8. Are there any insights from stakeholders or relevant good practices from the literature that could offer suggestions on enhancing the financial sustainability of the programme?

SUMMARY

The financial sustainability of the local Superar programme is currently regarded by Superar management members as adequate, leading tutors, Superar management, and schoolteachers to propose various strategies to improve financial stability. Key suggestions include diversifying funding sources to lessen reliance on major donors, building partnerships with local and corporate entities, and establishing a regional fundraising team to streamline fundraising efforts. Additionally, enhancing staff capabilities in financial management and grant writing, engaging the community through awareness campaigns for local donations, and leveraging public performances and training sessions as fundraising opportunities are recommended, along with a few country-specific initiatives.

The financial and non-financial inputs of the local Superar programme have been introduced in Section 2.2.

[63] 8 out 19 relevant interview respondents (all of them being tutors and schoolteachers) noted that in 3 years' time, the children will sustain the achievements either 'fully' or 'mostly' (the remaining respondent indicating 'to some extent').

The financial sustainability of the local Superar programme has been assessed by tutors and teachers as moderate[64]. To further improve financial stability, the interviewed tutors, Superar management and some of the schoolteachers have offered some recommendations:

- **Diversify funding sources**: in general, both Hungarian and Slovakian respondents recommended to improve the diversity of the funding ecosystem to decrease their dependence on the largest donors through securing funds from various sources. These can include partnerships with private sector entities, funding agreements with international donors and organisations, as well as exploring various local and EU funding (where relevant, a good practice being the cooperation of Superar Slovakia and Hungary on an Erasmus+ application), in-kind donations, tax donations (like the eligibility for 1% tax donation of Superar in Hungary), and innovative methods like crowdfunding.
- **Build local and corporate partnerships**: in connection to the first recommendation, respondents suggested to strengthen connections with local companies and larger corporate partners, both within each country and internationally, to create a more stable funding network. Engaging with reliable private sector partners beyond existing collaborations, like the Sziget Festival in Hungary, could help build consistent financial support.
- **Establish a regional fundraising team**: as suggested by respondents from both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Hungary, it might be beneficial to create a dedicated regional team to focus on fundraising, international sponsorships, and financing activities, which would increase the efficiency of these activities, while allowing tutors to concentrate on educational responsibilities without the burden of financial management, which often falls out of their core competences.
- **Increase financial and grant writing capacities**: in connection to the previous recommendations, a few interviewed stakeholders suggested to provide training for selected Superar staff in finance and grant writing to enhance their abilities to secure financial support independently in local and EU grants.
- **Strengthen community engagement for local donations**: an interviewee from Superar in Bosnia and Herzegovina suggested to run awareness campaigns that highlight Superar's impact, encouraging local contributions to Superar. Success stories could be documented and shared widely to attract interest from potential donors.
- **Utilise performances as fundraising opportunities**: stakeholders from both Slovakia and Hungary recommended leveraging Superar's public performances as fundraising opportunities. By inviting attendees to contribute or setting up ticketed events, Superar can create an additional income stream while engaging audiences in supporting its mission. However, they cautioned against becoming overly reliant on this revenue source, as it could divert focus from the programme's main objectives.
- **Utilise trainings as further financial incomes**: similarly to paid trainings developed in Slovakia, local Superar offices might consider providing trainings in selected topics to the wider teacher community.
- **Continuously engage government for funding**: as seen by interviewees from Superar Slovakia, it is necessary to pursue stronger relationships with government bodies. This approach, particularly relevant in Slovakia, could provide reliable financial support, although potential challenges from shifts in policy should be considered.
- **Securing Porticus as a funder**: specifically in Hungary, gaining financial support from Porticus would be a major milestone, significantly boosting its long-term financial sustainability through

[64] 7 out of 22 relevant interview respondents expressed positive views, while 15 of them expressed neutral views, and none of them expressing negative views.

international assistance. This could also serve as a strong foundation for scaling up the programme, expanding into new schools, kindergartens, and institutions in rural areas.

These strategies aim to broaden Superar's financial foundation, ensuring a more stable and sustainable future for the programme and its beneficiaries across all participating countries.

6 Annexes

6.1 Key terms used in the report

The evaluation uses the following terminology:

- **Direct beneficiaries**: participants of Superar classes (children and young adults), participants of teacher trainings, in-service & pre-service teachers. Sometimes we refer to beneficiary students as '**Children**', which includes all final beneficiaries of Superar, who may be of adult age as well.
- **Indirect beneficiaries**: schoolteachers (including school directors), parents and siblings of children, other school children (all children in the respective education system), general public in areas underserved by cultural offers.
- **Parents**: individuals who have parental authority and responsibility over the children, including biological parents, legal guardians, or individuals who exercise parental rights and duties.
- **Superar management**: Managing Directors, Musical or Artistic Directors, Pedagogical Director, M&E and other non-tutor personnel.
- **Superar tutors**: Superar teachers on Superar payroll (including teaching musicians, choir leaders etc.)
- **Schoolteachers**: non-Superar teachers, including:
  - **Non-Superar music teachers**: teacher employed by the school (non-Superar).
  - **Superar trained teachers**: trained non-Superar teachers by Superar.
  - **School directors**: heads of schools.
  - **Heads of class**: heads of classes.
  - **(Classroom or school) teachers**: other non-Superar teachers, other pedagogical staff.
  - **Other pedagogical staff**: e.g. pedagogues, school psychologist.

Class types

- Choirs (including music classes); and
- Instrumental classes.

Scheduling types

- Curricular Superar classes (delivered by Superar tutors);
- Extracurricular Superar classes (delivered by Superar tutors);

Target groups

- Kindergarten (below the age of 6);
- Elementary school first stage (6-10 years);
- Elementary school second stage (11-14/15 years); and
- Post-elementary school (14/15 – 24 years).

6.2 Evaluation design: Contribution Analysis

This evaluation was designed with the following key considerations:

- **Documenting intervention logics as a baseline**: the evaluation had to capture the intended impacts of the Superar programme by establishing a baseline and understanding the specific impact chains of the intervention. By considering the timing of the evaluation, both immediate effects and lessons learned can be documented for future programme implementation.
- **Accounting for exogenous influences**: the evaluation design had to recognise and account for external factors that can influence the impacts of the Superar programme. These exogenous factors had to be explicitly considered and empirically examined as integral parts of the evaluation to understand their influence on the programme's impact chain.
- **Triangulation of methods to identify programme-specific effects**: given the diverse effects of the programme's activities, employing a combination of different methodological approaches and triangulation was necessary. Triangulation involves integrating multiple perspectives and data sources to deepen understanding, validate findings, and reduce bias.
- **Learning about implementation**: an essential aspect of the evaluation was to provide practical and feasible recommendations for improving the future implementation of the Superar programme. By examining the implementation process, the evaluation was expected to generate actionable insights to enhance programme delivery.

Based on these objectives, the evaluation applied a theory-based evaluation design, specifically using '**Contribution Analysis**' as proposed by (Mayne, Contribution Analysis: Coming of Age?, 2012). Contribution Analysis, as a specific variant of the theory-based evaluation, focuses on *'causal relationships and explanatory conclusions between observed changes and specific interventions'* (European Commission - DG REGIO, 2013).

At the centre of this approach are '**Theories of Change**,' which provide a more comprehensive framework for understanding the logic of the intervention. (Leeuw, 2012) defines a theory of change as follows: *'[A theory of change is a framework] to describe the set of assumptions that explain both the mini-steps that lead to the long-term goal and the connections between policy or programme activities and outcomes that occur at each step of the way.'* A good Theory of Change needs to be plausible, achievable, so that it can be achieved in a single step and be verifiable (Kramer & Kaszap, 2017).

The rationale behind using Contribution Analysis for the evaluation of the Superar programme lies in its ability to deconstruct complex causal chains into manageable sub-steps, integrate assumptions and external factors within a Theory of Change framework, and empirically test them using various sources of evidence. This approach offers several advantages, including:

- **Clarifying the causal package**: Contribution Analysis allowed for the identification of the specific 'causal package' in which the Superar activities are embedded. It helped determine which other support programmes or external factors could influence the observed effects alongside Superar. By understanding these interactions, the evaluation could provide a more comprehensive assessment of the programme's impact.
- **Identifying interactions between components**: Contribution Analysis facilitated the identification and examination of the interactions between different components within the causal package. This analysis helped uncover how various activities within the programme, contributed to the observed outcomes and enabled a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which the programme achieved its intended results.
- **Assessing the necessity and sufficiency of Superar activities**: through Contribution Analysis, the evaluation could assess the extent to which the Superar activities were necessary and/or sufficient for producing the observed effects. By isolating and examining the contribution of these activities, the evaluation can determine their specific role in achieving the outcomes and discern their unique value within the broader causal package.

- **Specifying the likely contribution of activities**: Contribution Analysis enabled the evaluation to quantify and specify the likely contribution of the Superar activities to the observed outcomes. It helped disentangle the effects attributable to the programme from those influenced by other factors. This analysis provided insights into the programme's effectiveness and helped identify the specific ways in which the activities contribute to the desired outcomes.

Contribution Analysis had the advantage of combining elements of process and impact evaluations, which aligned well with the desired objectives outlined in the Terms of Reference, including understanding what works, what does not work, and why.

In the evaluation's evaluation framework, Theories of Change comprise **five essential elements**:

1. **Intended changes**: the overall mission and objective that the programme pursues. In the context of this evaluation, the intended changes encompass enhancing participants' general skills in the long run, increasing their likelihood of progressing to secondary schools, improving their economic self-sufficiency, developing better social skills, and fostering increased involvement in local communities.
2. **The intermediate steps leading to the intended change**: these are the sequential stages that lead to the intended changes. They include the programme inputs (such as financial and non-financial donations, the capacity of Superar music directors, and the developed Superar methodology), all programme activities, outputs, results, and impacts of the programme.
3. **Indirect and wider benefits**: these are additional economic and social benefits that arise from the programme but may not have been initially planned by programme designers. For example, one of these benefits could be the enhanced parental engagement with schools resulting from the Superar programme or the enrolment of a student in formal musical education as a result of Superar participation.
4. **Assumptions and external factors**: these are factors and circumstances that are not directly part of the programme's causal chain but significantly influence the achievement of the intended changes. Examples of assumptions and external factors in the Superar programme include the assumption that school curricula can be updated with the Superar methodology while complying with education policies, or the assumption that the targeted children in schools will exhibit engagement and interest.
5. **Causal relationships**: these are the connections that link the different elements of the Theory of Change together. Causal relationships are crucial to establish a strong causal package, ensuring that the claim on the contribution of the programme to the observed outcomes is plausible. In our approach, causal relationships can take three forms: **'Cause'** (where 'A' is a fundamental, main cause of 'B' and is necessary for 'B' to occur), **'Pre-condition'** (where 'A' is a necessary condition for 'B' but not its primary cause), or **'Supporting factor'** (where 'A' contributes to 'B' but is not a cause or pre-condition).

In addition to evaluating the elements of the Theory of Change, it is important to consider **alternative explanations** for the observed changes. These alternative explanations may involve theories other than those articulated in the Theory of Change but could still provide plausible reasons for the observed outcomes.

The evaluation faced the challenge of **unravelling the causal packages** within the Superar programme and answering the fundamental question: *'Has the intervention made a difference?'* (Stern, et al., 2012) highlight important methodological requirements for the underlying assumptions in addressing this challenge.

Table 8: Methodological requirements for assumptions in theory-based evaluations

Key question	Related questions	Underlying assumption	Suitable designs
Has the intervention made a difference?	What causes are necessary or sufficient for the effect?	There are several relevant causes that need to be disentangled.	Experiments (not relevant in this case).

Key question	Related questions	Underlying assumption	Suitable designs
	Was the intervention needed to produce the effect? Would these impacts have happened anyhow?	Interventions are just one part of the causal package.	Theory-Based Evaluation, e.g. **Contribution Analysis** Case-based designs, e.g. qualitative comparative analysis

Source: (Kramer & Kaszap, 2017); based on (Stern, et al., 2012).

Finally, the application of a Theory of Change approach, as outlined by (Weiss, 1997), requires clarification on how to analyse *'contribution'* in the evaluation. According to Weiss, if the evaluation can demonstrate the **series of micro-steps** that lead from inputs to outcomes, causal attribution becomes feasible. Additionally, (Leeuw, 2012) suggests that a theory-based evaluation can facilitate **comparisons** instead of focusing solely on the micro-steps of the specific intervention.

6.3 Survey demographics

The survey was distributed to all parents of Superar children at the ten Superar affiliated institutions in the focus of the evaluation. A total of 308 responses were received, of which 274 were sufficiently completed, while 34 were discarded.

The evaluation examined whether there were significant differences between the sample and the actual population of Superar students across the following dimensions using the chi-square test: school; class type (choir or instrumental); scheduling type (curricular or extracurricular), and gender of the Superar student (boy or girl).

The analysis indicated that the sample needed to be weighted for schools and schedule type of the classes to ensure representativeness. Consequently, the **final sample is both weighted and representative**.

The following tables present the number of responses for each significant demographic category, including the number of respondents, share of respondents, and the weighted share of respondents by country.

Table 9: Representativeness of survey responses by category in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Category	Superar location	Number of survey respondents	Response proportion (%)	Weighted response proportion	*Actual proportion of Superar students (%)*
SCHOOL	Children's House	58	34%	33%	*33%*
	Elementary School "Džemaludin Čaušević"	16	9%	19%	*19%*
	Elementary School "Kovačići"	66	39%	32%	*32%*
	Kindergarten "Holy Family"	29	17%	17%	*17%*
	TOTAL	**169**	**100%**	**100%**	***100%***
CLASS TYPE	Choir	152	90%	90%	*88%*
	Musical instrument	17	10%	10%	*12%*
	TOTAL	**169**	**100%**	**100%**	***100%***
SCHEDUL-ING TYPE	Curricular	82	49%	50%	*50%*
	Extra-curricular	87	51%	50%	*50%*
	TOTAL	**169**	**100%**	**100%**	***100%***
GENDER OF CHILD	Boy	62	37%	40%	*39%*
	Girl	97	57%	60%	*61%*
	TOTAL	**159**	**94%**	**100%**	***100%***

Source: Devea Partners (2024)

Table 10: Representativeness of survey responses by category in Hungary

Category	Superar location	Number of survey respondents	Response proportion (%)	Weighted response proportion (%)	*Actual proportion of Superar students (%)*
SCHOOL	Elementary School "Bem József"	25	61%	30%	*30%*
	Elementary School "Losonci Square"	11	27%	52%	*52%*
	Elementary School & Kindergarten "Wesley János"	5	12%	19%	*19%*
	TOTAL	**41**	**100%**	**100%**	***100%***
CLASS TYPE	Choir	38	93%	92%	*92%*
	Musical instrument	3	7%	8%	*8%*
	TOTAL	**41**	**100%**	**100%**	***100%***
SCHEDUL-ING TYPE	Curricular	37	90%	89%	*89%*
	Extra-curricular	4	10%	11%	*11%*
	TOTAL	**41**	**100%**	**100%**	***100%***
GENDER OF CHILD	Boy	17	43%	47%	*53%*
	Girl	23	58%	53%	*47%*
	TOTAL	**41**	**100%**	**100%**	***100%***

Source: Devea Partners (2024)

Table 11: Representativeness of survey responses by category in Slovakia

Category	Superar location	Number of survey respondents	Response proportion (%)	Weighted response proportion (%)	*Actual proportion of Superar students (%)*
SCHOOL	Church Elementary and Secondary School 'Narnia'	14	22%	8%	*8%*
	Elementary School 'Lozorno'	37	58%	44%	*44%*
	Elementary School 'Alexandra Vagača'	13	20%	47%	*47%*
	TOTAL	**64**	**100%**	**100%**	***100%***
CLASS TYPE	Choir	64	100%	100%	*100%*
	Musical instrument	0	0%	0%	*0%*
	TOTAL	**64**	**100%**	**100%**	***100%***
SCHEDUL-ING TYPE	Curricular	17	27%	66%	*66%*
	Extra-curricular	47	73%	34%	*34%*
	TOTAL	**64**	**100%**	**100%**	***100%***
GENDER OF CHILD	Boy	17	43%	33%	*47%*
	Girl	23	58%	67%	*53%*
	TOTAL	**40**	**100%**	**100%**	***100%***

Source: Devea Partners (2024)

6.4 Interview demographics

The interview sample **was not intended to be representative** due to the limited number of total responses. Instead, the focus was on involving a diverse range of stakeholders connected to Superar, aiming to elicit their varied perspectives on the programme. Methodologically, the evaluation sought to uncover **individual contribution stories** that either corroborate or challenge the Theory of Change and the overall contribution narrative. The following table presents the demographics of the interview participants by country.

Table 12: Distribution of interviewees by category in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Category	Superar location	Number of tutors and teachers	Number of parents	Number of children (photovoice)	*Actual proportion of Superar students (%)*
SCHOOL	Children's House	2	1		*33%*
	Elementary School "Džemaludin Čaušević"	2		3	*19%*
	Elementary School "Kovačići"	3			*32%*
	Kindergarten "Holy Family"				*17%*
	TOTAL	**7**	**1**	**3**	***100%***
CLASS TYPE	Choir	7	1	3	*88%*
	Musical instrument				*12%*
	TOTAL	**7**	**1**	**3**	***100%***
SCHEDUL-ING TYPE	Curricular	5		3	*50%*
	Extra-curricular	2	1		*50%*
	TOTAL	**7**	**1**	**3**	***100%***
GENDER OF CHILD	Boy	n/a		1	*39%*
	Girl	n/a	1	2	*61%*
	TOTAL	**n/a**	**1**	**3**	***100%***

Source: Devea Partners (2024), excluding interviews with donating partners and education policy experts. Note that one respondent in the 'tutors and teachers' category could not be assigned to any Superar institutions, while another respondent had teaching experience in three institutions.

Table 13: Distribution of interviewees by category in Hungary

Category	Superar location	Number of tutors and teachers	Number of parents	Number of children (photovoice)	*Actual proportion of Superar students (%)*
SCHOOL	Elementary School "Bem József"	3	2	2	*30%*
	Elementary School "Losonci Square"	2	2	2	*52%*
	Elementary School & Kindergarten "Wesley János"	2	0	0	*19%*
	TOTAL	**7**	**4**	**4**	***100%***
CLASS TYPE	Choir	6	4	4	*92%*
	Musical instrument	1	0	0	*8%*
	TOTAL	**7**	**4**	**4**	***100%***
SCHEDUL-ING TYPE	Curricular	6	4	4	*89%*
	Extra-curricular	1	0	0	*11%*
	TOTAL	**7**	**4**	**4**	***100%***
GENDER OF CHILD	Boy	n/a	2	3	*53%*
	Girl	n/a	2	1	*47%*
	TOTAL	**n/a**	**4**	**4**	***100%***

Source: Devea Partners (2024), excluding interviews with donating partners and education policy experts

Table 14: Distribution of interviewees by category in Slovakia

Category	Superar location	Number of relevant tutors and teachers	Number of parents	Number of children (photovoice)	*Actual proportion of Superar students (%)*
SCHOOL	Church Elementary and Secondary School 'Narnia'	1	1	1	*8%*
	Elementary School 'Lozorno'	3	1	1	*44%*
	Elementary School 'Alexandra Vagača'	3	1	1	*47%*
	TOTAL	**7**	**3**	**3**	***100%***
CLASS TYPE	Choir	8	3	3	*100%*
	Musical instrument	0	0	0	*0%*
	TOTAL	**8**	**3**	**3**	***100%***
SCHEDUL-ING TYPE	Curricular	8	3	3	*66%*
	Extra-curricular				*34%*
	TOTAL	**8**	**3**	**3**	***100%***
GENDER OF CHILD	Boy	n/a	1	1	*47%*
	Girl	n/a	2	2	*53%*
	TOTAL	**n/a**	**3**	**3**	***100%***

Source: Devea Partners (2024), excluding interviews with donating partners and education policy experts

6.5 Limitations of the evaluation

The mixed-methods approach employed in this evaluation has provided sufficient qualitative and quantitative evidence, resulting in a detailed understanding of Superar's impact on children, their schools, and their communities. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge some limitations that readers should consider.

General limitations applicable to all evaluated countries

- **Non-representative interview data**: while the online survey successfully captured a representative sample of parents of children enrolled in Superar classes, the qualitative interviews focused on a diverse range of stakeholders rather than achieving representative coverage. These interviews serve to illustrate individual cases and experiences, providing rich narratives, but should not be generalised to represent the broader stakeholder community.
- **Potential bias in parental survey responses**: the reliability of survey responses from parents may be affected by the uncontrolled nature of this data collection method, which could introduce biases or inaccuracies. Challenges such as low digital literacy among some parents may have influenced the final survey sample.
- **Subjectivity in qualitative data regarding interviews and photovoice sessions**: the qualitative insights gathered from interviews and photovoice sessions are invaluable, yet they reflect personal experiences and perceptions, introducing a level of subjectivity. While these narratives enrich the evaluation, readers should be mindful that they represent individual viewpoints rather than universal conclusions.

Limitations applicable to Bosnia and Herzegovina

- **Superar in Bosnia and Herzegovina is still in the early stages of teacher training activities.** So far, three training courses in the form of promotional workshops have been held in autumn 2023, two in spring 2024 and another two in August 2024, in addition to previous promotional workshops for pre-service teachers at the Music Academy in Sarajevo.

Limitations applicable to Hungary

- **Limited engagement with high-ranking education officials**: engaging high-ranking education officials in the central government has proven to be a challenge. While meaningful conversations with these individuals have not taken place, the evaluation rather focused on interviewing education experts, ensuring a detailed understanding of the local educational environment and its potential implications for Superar.
- **Evaluation of training programmes is not yet relevant**: to date, Superar Hungary has not carried out a comprehensive training programme to teacher from non-Superar affiliated schools. Nevertheless, Superar Hungary has started to develop and deliver training programmes for kindergarten teachers. Consequently, the evaluation is unable to fully assess this aspect of the Theory of Change and answer the relevant evaluation questions.
- **Special case of the elementary school 'Wesley János'**: as of September 2024, the 'Wesley János' school was unable to commence its school year. While this situation did not impact the robustness of the evaluation's findings, it is essential to consider this for future assessments and interpretations of the evaluation's findings and conclusions.

Limitations applicable to Slovakia

- **Evolving political environment**: the changing policy environment in Slovakia presents a potential risk to the successful influence that has been achieved thus far in education policy and teacher training, suggesting that future developments may impact these advancements.

6.6 List of the reviewed literature

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6.7 Abstracts of the referenced articles

Hereby we present the abstracts of the referenced articles related to the transfer effects of music training[65].

(Alemán, et al., 2017) *'Many studies have explored the links between music and children's outcomes; however, study designs have not been sufficiently rigorous to support causal findings. This study aims to assess the effects of a large-scale music program on children's developmental functioning in the context of high rates of exposure to violence. The paper describes the results of an experimental evaluation of Venezuela's National System of Youth and Children's Orchestras. The curriculum of the program, better known as 'El Sistema,' emphasizes social interactions through group instruction and group performances. The randomized control trial was conducted in 16 music centers between May 2012 and November 2013. In total, 2914 children ages 6–14 participated in the experiment, with approximately half receiving an offer of admission to the program in September 2012 and half in September 2013. The treatment group children participated for one semester more than the control group children. After 1 year, full-sample ITT estimates indicate* ***improved self-control*** *(by 0.10 standard deviations) and* ***reduced behavioral difficulties*** *(by 0.08 standard deviations), both significant at 10% after controlling for multiple hypothesis testing. There were no full-sample effects on other domains. Sub-sample effects are larger among (1) children with less-educated mothers and (2) boys, especially those exposed to violence at baseline. In the latter subgroup, we find lower levels of aggressive behavior. We find that the program improved self-control and reduced behavioral difficulties, with the effects concentrated among subgroups of vulnerable children. The results suggest the importance of devising mechanisms to target resources to the most vulnerable children.'*

(Baker, Bull, & Taylor, 2018) *'Within the growing field of publications on El Sistema and Sistema-inspired programmes around the world, a marked divide can be observed between the findings of critical academic studies and commissioned evaluations. Using evaluations of El Sistema in Venezuela and Aotearoa New Zealand as our principal case studies, we argue that this gulf can be explained at least partly by methodological problems in the way that some evaluations are carried out. We conclude that many Sistema evaluations display an alignment with advocacy rather than explorative research, and that the foundation for El Sistema's claims of social transformation is thus weak.'*

(Barbaroux, Dittinger, & Besson, 2019)*: this study aimed at evaluating the impact of a classic music training program (Démos) on several aspects of the cognitive development of children from low socio-economic backgrounds. We were specifically interested in general intelligence, phonological awareness and reading abilities, and in other cognitive abilities that may be improved by music training such as auditory and visual attention, working and short-term memory and visuomotor precision. We used a longitudinal approach with children presented with standardized tests before the start and after 18 months of music training. To test for pre-to-post training improvements while discarding maturation and developmental effects, raw scores for each child and for each test were normalized relative to their age group. Results showed that Démos music training improved musicality scores, total IQ and Symbol Search scores as well as concentration abilities and reading precision. In line with previous results, these findings demonstrate the positive impact of an ecologically valid music training program on the cognitive development of children from low socio-economic backgrounds and strongly encourage the broader implementation of such programs in disadvantaged school-settings.*

(Barnett & Ceci S. J., 2002): *'Despite a century's worth of research, arguments surrounding the question of whether far transfer occurs have made little progress toward resolution. The authors argue the reason for this confusion is a failure to specify various dimensions along which transfer can occur, resulting in comparisons of 'apples and oranges.' They provide a framework that describes 9 relevant dimensions and show that the literature can productively be classified along these dimensions, with each study situated at the intersection of various dimensions. Estimation of a single effect size for far*

[65] The abstracts of the literature provided below are direct quotes, and we have retained the original language, spelling, and punctuation used in each source, which may reflect US English conventions.

transfer is misguided in view of this complexity. The past 100 years of research shows that evidence for transfer under some conditions is substantial, but critical conditions for many key questions are untested.'

(Bhide, Power, & Goswami, 2013): *'There is growing evidence that children with **reading** difficulties show impaired auditory rhythm perception and impairments in musical beat perception tasks. Rhythmic musical interventions with poorer readers may thus improve rhythmic entrainment and consequently improve reading and phonological skills. Here we compare the effects of a musical intervention for poor readers with a software intervention of known efficacy based on rhyme training and phoneme-grapheme learning. The research question was whether the musical intervention would produce gains of comparable effect sizes to the phoneme-grapheme intervention for children who were falling behind in **reading** development. Broadly, the two interventions had similar benefits for **literacy**, with large effect sizes.'*

(Bigand & Tillmann, 2021): ***'**Far transfer rarely occurs, and a recent meta-analysis suggests that music is no exception. The overall effect of musical training on **cognition** was claimed to be null when considering studies with active control groups or implemented randomization procedures (Sala & Gobet, Memory & Cognition, 48: 1429–1441, 2020). Using the authors' data file and program (https://osf.io/rquye), we did not confirm the effect of randomization, and we demonstrated that their conclusion is based in part on the failure to differentiate near and far transfer, with near transfer effect sizes being selectively excluded for the musical training group studies, but not for the active control group studies. Reanalyzing their data file resulted in a significant effect size (g = .234), and also provided new evidence that far-transfer effects of musical training can challenge near-transfer effects of linguistic training. Music is a recreational activity that may be special in allowing for small but statistically significant far-transfer effects.'*

(Bolden, Corcoran, & Butler, 2021): '*Dominant discourses promote El Sistema and Sistema-inspired music education programmes as positively transforming young lives through social inclusion and musical excellence. However, critics have raised concerns that the El Sistema model has little support from objective, evidence-based research. To address this issue, the authors conducted a review of peer-reviewed articles published in English between 2010 and 2020, in order to bring together descriptions and findings of research examining El Sistema and Sistema-inspired programmes. Following a scoping review method, the authors identified 30 relevant articles for detailed review. The reported studies were identified to address programme impacts (including musical growth, academic achievement, cognitive development, and social-emotional development) and programme design (e.g., pedagogical approaches, curricular focus, and programme challenges). Reported research methods included randomised control trials, longitudinal randomised studies, qualitative interview studies, a quasi-experimental pre-post design study, and ethnographic studies. Overall, the results of this scoping review strongly suggest that Sistema-inspired music education programmes have great potential for positively impacting students, particularly in terms of musical and social-emotional development, with less convincing but nevertheless reasonable evidence of increased academic achievement and cognitive development. The authors conclude that realising the potential of El Sistema and Sistema-inspired programming requires context- and student-specific teaching, curricula, and community support.'*

(Choi, Lee, & Lee, 2010) *'We investigated the effects of group music intervention on aggression and self-esteem in children with highly aggressive behavior. Forty-eight children were allocated to either a music intervention group or an untreated control group. The music intervention group received 50 min of music intervention twice weekly for 15 consecutive weeks. The outcome measures were Child Behavior Checklist Aggression Problems Scale (Parents), Child Aggression Assessment Inventory (Teachers) and Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale. After 15 weeks, the music intervention group showed significant reduction of aggression and improvement of self-esteem compared with the control group. All outcome measures were significantly lower in the music intervention group than prior to treatment, while there was no change in the control group. These findings suggest that music can reduce **aggressive behavior** and improve **self-esteem** in children with highly aggressive behavior. Music intervention is an easily accessible therapy for children and as such may be an effective intervention for aggressive*

behavior. Further more, objective and replicable measures are required from a randomized controlled trial with a larger sample size and active comparable control.'

(Cooper, 2020): *'The utility of music training in schools has received much attention in the United States. The purported positive cognitive benefits of music training for schoolchildren is one facet which has historically been used to advocate for the existence of public school music programs. The purpose of this study was to conduct a random-effects meta-analysis to measure the overall mean effects of music training on* ***cognitive measures*** *in schoolchildren. Results showed small to medium overall effects (N = 5,612, k = 100, g = .28, p < .001, 95% confidence interval [CI] [.21, .34]). When compared to active control groups, music training yielded more improvement on a range of cognitive measurements (g = .21, p < .0001). While some studies did result in large effect sizes, significant moderators related to methodological quality rendered the overall findings non-significant (g = .08, p = .19, 95% CI [–.04, .20]). Additional moderator analysis showed no clear advantage in one area of cognitive function. Results did not differ by geographical locale or type of music intervention. Overall, results suggested music training may be a positive* ***cognitive*** *intervention for schoolchildren; however, advantages as to the utility of music training compared to other cognitive interventions were less empirically supported.'*

(Costa-Giomi, Effects of Three Years of Piano Instruction on Children's Academic Achievement, School Performance and Self-Esteem, 2004): *'This study of the effects of three years of piano instruction is based on a sample of 117 fourth-grade children attending public schools in Montreal. The children had never participated in formal music instruction, did not have a piano at home, and their annual family income was below $40,000 Can. Children in the experimental group (n= 63) received individual piano lessons weekly for three years and were given an acoustic piano at no cost to their families. Children in the control group (n= 54) did not participate in formal music instruction. Participants were administered tests of* ***self-esteem, academic achievement, cognitive abilities, musical abilities****, and* ***motor proficiency*** *at the beginning of the project and throughout the three years of piano instruction. The results indicated that piano instruction had a positive effect on children's* ***self-esteem*** *and* ***school music marks*** *but did not affect their academic achievement in* ***math*** *and* ***language*** *as measured by standardized tests and school report cards.'*

(Costa-Giomi, 2006): *The fine motor abilities of children who participated in two years of piano instruction and those who had never received formal music training were compared before and after the instruction. A significant improvement in fine motor skills was found only for the children who received the lessons, and a significant difference in the speed of response was found between the two groups at the end of the two years of instruction. The innumerable opportunities to assess, refine, and time their motor responses to specific stimuli during musical practice and the availability of constant evaluative feedback (i.e., sound) may allow musicians to improve the accuracy and speed of perceiving and responding to relevant stimuli.*

(Gooding, 2011) *'Three separate studies were conducted in school, residential and after-school care settings to test the effectiveness of a music therapy-based social skills intervention program on improving* ***social competence*** *in children and adolescents. A total of 45 children (n = 12; n = 13; n = 20) aged 6–17 years with social skills deficits participated in a group-based five session intervention program. The same curriculum, adapted to be age appropriate, was used at all 3 sites. Specific deficits within the social skills areas of peer relations and self-management skills were targeted. Active interventions like music performance, movement to music and improvisation were used. Cognitive-behavioral techniques like modeling, feedback, transfer training and problem solving were also incorporated. Data on social functioning were collected before, during, and after the music therapy intervention from participants, appropriate adult personnel and via behavioral observations. Results indicated that significant improvements in* ***social functioning*** *were found in (a) school participant pre and post self-ratings, (b) researcher pre and post ratings of school participants, (c) case manager's pre and post treatment ratings for the residential participants, (d) after-school care participants' pre and post self-ratings, and (e) behavioral observations at all three settings. Additional changes, although not significant, were noted in teacher ratings, residential participant self- and peer ratings, and after-school case manager ratings. Results from these studies suggest that the music therapy intervention was effective in improving* ***social competence*** *in children and* ***adolescents with social deficits****. More*

research is warranted to provide additional guidance about the use of music therapy interventions to improve social functioning.'

(Gordon, Fehd, & McCandliss, 2015): *'Children's engagement in music practice is associated with enhancements in literacy-related language skills, as demonstrated by multiple reports of correlation across these two domains. Training studies have tested whether engaging in music training directly transfers benefit to children's* ***literacy skill*** *development. Results of such studies, however, are mixed. Interpretation of these mixed results is made more complex by the fact that a wide range of literacy-related outcome measures are used across these studies. Here, we address these challenges via a meta-analytic approach. A comprehensive literature review of peer-reviewed music training studies was built around key criteria needed to test the direct transfer hypothesis, including: (a) inclusion of music training vs. control groups; (b) inclusion of pre- vs. post-comparison measures, and (c) indication that reading instruction was held constant across groups. Thirteen studies were identified (n = 901). Two classes of outcome measures emerged with sufficient overlap to support meta-analysis:* ***phonological awareness*** *and* ***reading fluency****. Hours of training, age, and type of control intervention were examined as potential moderators. Results supported the hypothesis that music training leads to gains in* ***phonological awareness*** *skills. The effect isolated by contrasting gains in music training vs. gains in control was small relative to the large variance in these skills (d = 0.2). Interestingly, analyses revealed that transfer effects for* ***rhyming skills*** *tended to grow stronger with increased hours of training. In contrast, no significant aggregate transfer effect emerged for* ***reading fluency*** *measures, despite some studies reporting large training effects. The potential influence of other study design factors were considered, including intervention design, IQ, and SES. Results are discussed in the context of emerging findings that music training may enhance* ***literacy development*** *via changes in brain mechanisms that support both music and language cognition.'*

(Hallam, 2010): *This paper reviews the empirical evidence relating to the effects of active engagement with music on the* ***intellectual****,* ***social*** *and* ***personal*** *development of children and young people. It draws on research using the most advanced technologies to study the brain, in addition to quantitative and qualitative psychological and educational studies. It explains how musical skills may transfer to other activities if the processes involved are* ***similar****. It explores the evidence relating to the impact of musical skills on* ***language*** *development,* ***literacy****,* ***numeracy****, measures of* ***intelligence****, general* ***attainment****,* ***creativity****,* ***fine motor*** *co-ordination,* ***concentration****,* ***self-confidence****,* ***emotional sensitivity****,* ***social skills****,* ***team work****,* ***self-discipline****, and* ***relaxation****. It suggests that the positive effects of engagement with music on personal and social development only occur if it is an* ***enjoyable and rewarding experience****. This has implications for the quality of the teaching.*

(Holochwost, et al., 2021) *'Growth mindset is an important aspect of children's socioemotional development and is subject to change due to environmental influence. Orchestral music education may function as a fertile context in which to promote growth mindset; however, this education is not widely available to children facing economic hardship. This study examined whether participation in a program of orchestral music education was associated with higher levels of overall growth mindset and greater change in levels of musical growth mindset among children placed at risk by poverty. After at least 2 years of orchestral participation, students reported significantly higher levels of overall* ***growth mindset*** *than their peers; participating students also reported statistically significant increases in* ***musical growth mindset*** *regardless of the number of years that they were enrolled in orchestral music education. These findings have implications for future research into specific pedagogical practices that may promote growth mindset in the context of orchestral music education and more generally for future studies of the extra-musical benefits of high-quality music education.'*

(Kaviani, Mirbaha, Pournaseh, & Sagan, 2014): *'The impact of music on human cognition has a distinguished history as a research topic in psychology. The focus of the present study was on investigating the effects of music instruction on the* ***cognitive development*** *of preschool children. From a sample of 154 preschool children of Tehran kindergartens, 60 children aged between 5 and 6 were randomly assigned to two groups, one receiving music lessons and the other (matched for sex, age and mother's educational level) not taking part in any music classes. Children were tested before the start of the course of music lessons and at its end with 4 subtests of the Tehran-Stanford-Binet Intelligence*

*Scale (TSB). The experimental group participated in twelve 75-min weekly music lessons. Statistical analysis showed significant **IQ increase** in participants receiving music lessons, specifically on the TSB **verbal reasoning** and **short-term memory** subtests. The numerical and visual/abstract reasoning abilities did not differ for the two groups after lessons. These data support studies that found similar skills enhancements in preschool children, despite vast differences in the setting in which the instruction occurred. These findings appear to be consistent with some neuroimaging and neurological observations which are discussed in the paper.'*

(Mehr, Schachner, Katz, & Spelke, 2013): *'Young children regularly engage in musical activities, but the effects of early music education on children's **cognitive development** are unknown. While some studies have found associations between musical training in childhood and later nonmusical cognitive outcomes, few randomized controlled trials (RCTs) have been employed to assess causal effects of music lessons on child cognition and no clear pattern of results has emerged. We conducted two RCTs with preschool children investigating the cognitive effects of a brief series of music classes, as compared to a similar but non-musical form of arts instruction (visual arts classes, Experiment 1) or to a no-treatment control (Experiment 2). Consistent with typical preschool arts enrichment programs, parents attended classes with their children, participating in a variety of developmentally appropriate arts activities. After six weeks of class, we assessed children's skills in four distinct **cognitive areas** in which older arts-trained students have been reported to excel: **spatial-navigational reasoning**, **visual form analysis**, **numerical discrimination**, and **receptive vocabulary**. We initially found that children from the music class showed greater spatial-navigational ability than did children from the visual arts class, while children from the visual arts class showed greater visual form analysis ability than children from the music class (Experiment 1). However, a partial replication attempt comparing music training to a no-treatment control failed to confirm these findings (Experiment 2), and the combined results of the two experiments were negative: overall, children provided with music classes performed no better than those with visual arts or no classes on any assessment. Our findings underscore the need for replication in RCTs, and suggest caution in interpreting the positive findings from past studies of cognitive effects of music instruction.'*

(Moreno, 2009) *'Evidence has suggested that music can improve behavioural performance in several domains, including intelligence. Scientists have also discovered that music can modify the brain at both functional and structural levels. Such neural changes can impact several domains, but one domain seems to be particularly influenced by music—namely, language. Music and language seem to share special features that allow music to improve and shape **language processing**. This review will first discuss neuroimaging findings related to music training or musical expertise. Then, the influence of music on language processing outcomes will be considered. Finally, we will look into several future directions at the theoretical level, focusing on the relationship between music and language. Also, it will be argued that there are plausible applications for such findings, in particular when considering music as a rehabilitation tool.'*

(Moreno, et al., 2011): *Researchers have designed training methods that can be used to improve mental health and to test the efficacy of education programs. However, few studies have demonstrated broad transfer from such training to performance on untrained **cognitive** activities. Here we report the effects of two interactive computerized training programs developed for preschool children: one for music and one for visual art. After only 20 days of training, only children in the music group exhibited enhanced performance on a measure of **verbal intelligence**, with 90% of the sample showing this improvement. These improvements in verbal intelligence were positively correlated with changes in functional brain plasticity during an executive-function task. Our findings demonstrate that transfer of a high-level cognitive skill is possible in early childhood.*

(Rickard, Bambrick, & Gill, 2012): *'Previous studies demonstrate that private music training has benefits which may transfer to other domains, including **verbal memory**, **intelligence** and **self-esteem**. The current paper reports on the impact of an increase in school-based music training on a range of **cognitive** and **psychosocial** measures for 10–13-year-olds in two independent studies. In the first study, the benefits of increased frequency of classroom-based music classes were compared with classroom-based drama and art lessons in secondary school students (N = 127). The second study*

compared the effects of introducing a new classroom-based music programme with a new drama programme for primary school students (N = 100). Assessments were obtained at baseline and approximately six months after implementation of each programme. In contrast to previous research on the effects of private music tuition, no convincing benefits of school music classes were apparent. Trends of interest were observed in ***non-verbal intelligence****,* ***aggression scores*** *and* ***verbal memory****, which require further investigation. The findings suggest that the benefits of music instruction previously reported may be limited to private or externally-based music tuition, or socio-economically disadvantaged schools. The intrinsic value of music education for enjoyment and learning should therefore remain central to the justification of music education in the national school curriculum.'*

(Roden, Kreutz, & Bongard, 2012): *this study examined the effects of a school-based instrumental training program on the development of verbal and visual memory skills in primary school children. Participants either took part in a music program with weekly 45 min sessions of instrumental lessons in small groups at school, or they received extended natural science training. A third group of children did not receive additional training. Each child completed verbal and visual memory tests three times over a period of 18 months. Significant Group by Time interactions were found in the measures of* ***verbal memory****. Children in the music group showed greater improvements than children in the control groups after controlling for children's socio-economic background, age, and IQ. No differences between groups were found in the* ***visual memory tests****. These findings are consistent with and extend previous research by suggesting that children receiving music training may benefit from improvements in their verbal memory skills.*

(Sala & Gobet, 2017a): *'Chess masters and expert musicians appear to be, on average, more intelligent than the general population. Some researchers have thus claimed that playing chess or learning music enhances children's* ***cognitive abilities*** *and* ***academic attainment****. We here present two meta-analyses assessing the effect of chess and music instruction on children's cognitive and academic skills. A third meta-analysis evaluated the effects of working* ***memory*** *training — a cognitive skill correlated with music and chess expertise — on the same variables. The results show small to moderate effects. However, the effect sizes are inversely related to the quality of the experimental design (e.g., presence of active control groups). This pattern of results casts serious doubts on the effectiveness of chess, music, and working memory training. We discuss the theoretical and practical implications of these findings; extend the debate to other types of training such as spatial training, brain training, and video games; and conclude that far transfer of learning rarely occurs.'*

(Sala & Gobet, 2017b): *'Music training has been recently claimed to enhance children and young adolescents'* ***cognitive*** *and* ***academic skills****. However, substantive research on transfer of skills suggests that far-transfer - i.e., the transfer of skills between two areas only loosely related to each other - occurs rarely. In this meta-analysis, we examined the available experimental evidence regarding the impact of music training on children and young adolescents' cognitive and academic skills. The results of the random-effects models showed (a) a small overall effect size; (b) slightly greater effect sizes with regard to* ***intelligence*** *and* ***memory-related*** *outcomes; and (c) an inverse relation between the size of the effects and the methodological quality of the study design. These results suggest that music training does not reliably enhance children and young adolescents' cognitive or academic skills, and that previous positive findings were probably due to confounding variables.'*

(Sala & Gobet, 2019): *'****General cognitive ability*** *(GCA) has been consistently found to correlate with performance in cognitive tasks and complex activities such as playing music, board games, and video games. In the past two decades, researchers have thus extensively investigated the effects of engaging in cognitive-training programs and intellectually demanding activities on GCA. The results have been mixed. Several independent researchers have noticed that the between-study variability can be accounted for by the quality of the experimental design and statistical artifacts. Those studies including large samples and active control groups often report no training-related effects. These findings show that practicing cognitive-training programs or intellectually demanding activities do not enhance GCA or any cognitive skill. At best, such interventions boost one's performance in tasks similar to the trained task. Due to potential theoretical and societal implications, cognitive training has been one of the most influential topics in psychology and neuroscience. The assumption behind cognitive training is that one's*

general cognitive ability can be enhanced by practicing cognitive tasks or intellectually demanding activities. The hundreds of studies published so far have provided mixed findings and systematic reviews have reached inconsistent conclusions. To resolve these discrepancies, we carried out several meta-analytic reviews. The results are highly consistent across all the reviewed domains: minimal effect on domain-general cognitive skills. Crucially, the observed between-study variability is accounted for by design quality and statistical artefacts. The cognitive-training program of research has showed no appreciable benefits, and other more plausible practices to enhance cognitive performance should be pursued.'

(Sala & Gobet, 2020): *'Music training has repeatedly been claimed to positively impact children's cognitive skills and academic achievement (**literacy** and **mathematics**). This claim relies on the assumption that engaging in intellectually demanding activities fosters particular domain-general **cognitive** skills, or even **general intelligence**. The present meta-analytic review (N = 6,984, k = 254, m = 54) shows that this belief is incorrect. Once the quality of study design is controlled for, the overall effect of music training programs is null and highly consistent across studies. Results of Bayesian analyses employing distributional assumptions (informative priors) derived from previous research in cognitive training corroborate these conclusions. Small statistically significant overall effects are obtained only in those studies implementing no random allocation of participants and employing non-active controls. Interestingly, music training is ineffective regardless of the type of outcome measure (e.g., **verbal**, **non-verbal**, **speed-related**, etc.), participants' age, and duration of training. Furthermore, we note that, beyond meta-analysis of experimental studies, a considerable amount of cross-sectional evidence indicates that engagement in music has no impact on people's **non-music cognitive skills** or **academic achievement**. We conclude that researchers' optimism about the benefits of music training is empirically unjustified and stems from misinterpretation of the empirical data and, possibly, confirmation bias.'*

(Sala, et al., 2019): *'Theory building in science requires replication and integration of findings regarding a particular research question. Second-order meta-analysis (i.e., a meta-analysis of meta-analyses) offers a powerful tool for achieving this aim, and we use this technique to illuminate the controversial field of **cognitive training**. Recent replication attempts and large meta-analytic investigations have shown that the benefits of cognitive-training programs hardly go beyond the trained task and similar tasks. However, it is yet to be established whether the effects differ across cognitive-training programs and populations (children, adults, and older adults). We addressed this issue by using second-order meta-analysis. In Models 1 (k = 99) and 2 (k = 119), we investigated the impact of working-memory training on near-transfer (i.e., **memory**) and far-transfer (e.g., **reasoning**, **speed**, and **language**) measures, respectively, and whether it is mediated by the type of population. Model 3 (k = 233) extended Model 2 by adding six meta-analyses assessing the far-transfer effects of other cognitive-training programs (video-games, music, chess, and exergames). Model 1 showed that working-memory training does induce near transfer, and that the size of this effect is moderated by the type of population. By contrast, Models 2 and 3 highlighted that far-transfer effects are small or null. Crucially, when placebo effects and publication bias were controlled for, the overall effect size and true variance equaled zero. That is, no impact on far-transfer measures was observed regardless of the type of population and cognitive-training program. The lack of generalization of skills acquired by training is thus an invariant of human cognition.'*

(Schellenberg, 2006) *'In Study 1 (N = 147), duration of music lessons was correlated positively with IQ and with academic ability among 6- to 11-year-olds, even when potential confounding variables (i.e., family income, parents' education, involvement in nonmusical activities) were held constant. In Study 2 (N = 150), similar but weaker associations between playing music in childhood and intellectual functioning were evident among undergraduates. In both studies, there was no evidence that musical involvement had stronger associations with some aspects of **cognitive ability** (e.g., mathematical, spatial-temporal, verbal) than with others. These results indicate that formal exposure to music in childhood is associated positively with **IQ** and with **academic performance** and that such associations are small but general and long lasting.'*

(Schellenberg, Music and Nonmusical Abilities, 2016): *'Reports that exposure to music causes benefits in nonmusical domains have received widespread attention in the mainstream media. Such reports have also influenced public policy. The so-called 'Mozart effect' actually refers to two relatively distinct phenomena. One concerns short-term increases in **spatial** abilities that are said to occur from listening to music composed by Mozart. The other refers to the possibility that formal training in music yields nonmusical benefits. A review of the relevant findings indicates that the short-term effect is small and unreliable. Moreover, when it is evident, it can be explained by between-condition differences in the listener's mood or levels of cognitive arousal. By contrast, the effect of music lessons on nonmusical aspects of **cognitive development** is still an open question. Several studies have reported positive associations between formal music lessons and abilities in nonmusical (e.g., **linguistic**, **mathematical**, and **spatial**) domains. Nonetheless, compelling evidence for a causal link remains elusive.'*

(Schellenberg, Corrigall, Dys, & Malti, 2015)*: 'We investigated if group music training in childhood is associated with prosocial skills. Children in 3rd or 4th grade who attended 10 months of music lessons taught in groups were compared to a control group of children matched for socio-economic status. All children were administered tests of prosocial skills near the beginning and end of the 10-month period. Compared to the control group, children in the music group had larger increases in **sympathy** and **prosocial** behavior, but this effect was limited to children who had poor prosocial skills before the lessons began. The effect was evident even when the lessons were compulsory, which minimized the role of self-selection. The results suggest that group music training facilitates the development of prosocial skills.'*

(Veerman, Denessen, & Zhao, 2021) *'**Social cohesion** in schools refers to positive interpersonal relations between students, a sense of belonging of all students and group solidarity. Social cohesion is a multidimensional construct, and educators policymakers and researchers may focus on specific domains within this concept, guided by their personal conception of social cohesion. With this non-systematic review we provide examples of how social cohesion is conceptualized and measured in various ways by those who study social cohesion in education and how these measures relate to the multidimensional construct of social cohesion. Seven components of three social cohesion dimensions are considered. This review presents an overview of five social cohesion instruments and shows that these instruments include specific combinations of dimensions, components, perspectives and social entities at which they are targeted. Based on these examples of the measurement of social cohesion in education, this study provides a heuristic for considerate use of instruments to measure social cohesion.'*

(Welch, Himonides, Saunders, Papageorgi, & Sarazin, 2014): *'There is a growing body of neurological, cognitive, and social psychological research to suggest the possibility of positive transfer effects from structured musical engagement. In particular, there is evidence to suggest that engagement in musical activities may impact on **social inclusion** (sense of self and of being socially integrated). Tackling social exclusion and promoting social inclusion are common concerns internationally, such as in the UK and the EC, and there are many diverse Government ministries and agencies globally that see the arts in general and music in particular as a key means by which social needs can be addressed. As part of a wider evaluation of a national, Government-sponsored music education initiative for Primary-aged children in England ('Sing Up'), opportunity was taken by the authors, at the request of the funders, to assess any possible relationship between (a) children's developing singing behavior and development and (b) their social inclusion (sense of self and of being socially integrated). Subsequently, it was possible to match data from n = 6087 participants, drawn from the final 3 years of data collection (2008–2011), in terms of each child's individually assessed singing ability (based on their singing behavior of two well-known songs to create a 'normalized singing score') and their written responses to a specially-designed questionnaire that included a set of statements related to children's sense of being socially included to which the children indicated their level of agreement on a seven-point Likert scale. Data analyses suggested that the higher the normalized singing development rating, the more positive the child's **self-concept** and **sense of being socially included**, irrespective of singer age, sex and ethnicity.'*

(Wu & Lu, 2021) *'Music not only regulates mood but also promotes the development and maintenance of empathy and social understanding. Since empathy is crucial for well-being and indispensable in social life, it is necessary to develop strategies to improve empathy and prosocial behaviors. To fulfill this aim, researchers have extensively investigated the effect of intensive musical training on the development of empathy. Here, we first summarize evidence showing the powerful influence of musical training on the development of empathy and then discuss psychological mechanisms responsible for those observations. The conclusions drawn from most previous studies were mainly based on behavioral measurements, while the neural basis of musical training in the development of the empathic brain is still unclear. Fortunately, brain imaging research has contributed greatly to our understanding of the neural underpinnings associated with musical training and its possible connection to the development of the empathic brain. One of the most distinctive signatures of musical training is structural and functional changes of multiple brain regions, and such changes might be related to some of the **empathic** behaviors observed in musically trained children. Therefore, intensive musical training in childhood may increase levels of empathy, and applied research is required to optimize the training strategy before implementing music education in empathy regulation. Moreover, future longitudinal studies are needed to better understand neural mechanisms underlying the causal effect of musical training on empathy development. These findings have important implications for understanding the development of the empathic brain and for improving prosocial behaviors.'*

(Zapata & Hargreaves, 2017) *'This article presents some of the results of a research project undertaken in a school located in a **deprived neighbourhood** of Bogotá, the capital of Colombia. The project investigated the effects of musical experiences on 6- to 8-year-olds' social and musical development by means of a mixed-methods approach involving the children, their parents and teachers. The project comprised three studies, and this article reports the results of the first, an experimental intervention study which was carried out with two groups of 52 children. The experimental group followed an 18-week music programme of singing workshops involving Colombian traditional songs and musical improvisation, whereas the control group had no such musical programme. Harter's (1999) Perceived Competence Scale for Children was administered before and after the 18-week singing programme to assess its effects on the children's self-esteem. Analysis revealed that musical activities had a significant impact on children's **self-esteem**, and especially upon its cognitive component. These results are of crucial importance in the context of forced displacement in the Colombian population as a result of violence.'*

6.8 Definition of far-transfer

(Barnett & Ceci S. J., 2002) take six contextual dimensions of the skill transfer into account to differentiate between near-transfer and far transfer. Their original categorisation regarding context is as follows:

Figure 28: Taxonomy for far transfer (Context)

B Context: When and where transferred from and to

	Near ←				→ Far
Knowledge domain	Mouse vs. rat	Biology vs. botany	Biology vs. economics	Science vs. history	Science vs. art
Physical context	Same room at school	Different room at school	School vs. research lab	School vs. home	School vs. the beach
Temporal context	Same session	Next day	Weeks later	Months later	Years later
Functional context	Both clearly academic	Both academic but one nonevaluative	Academic vs. filling in tax forms	Academic vs. informal questionnaire	Academic vs. at play
Social context	Both individual	Individual vs. pair	Individual vs. small group	Individual vs. large group	Individual vs. society
Modality	Both written, same format	Both written, multiple choice vs. essay	Book learning vs. oral exam	Lecture vs. wine tasting	Lecture vs. wood carving

Source: (Barnett & Ceci S. J., 2002)

This can be translated to the context of the present evaluation as follows:

- **Knowledge domain**: similar domains (e.g., music & music) or distant domains (e.g., music & mathematics).
- **Physical context**: same location (e.g., same room at the school) or distant locations (e.g., the school & excursion/performance).
- **Temporal context**: during the same session or years later.
- **Functional context**: similar function (e.g., academic) or distant function (e.g., playing).
- **Social context**: similar social context (e.g., both individual) or different social context (e.g., individual versus a large group)
- **Modality**: similar modality (e.g., both lecture) or different modality (e.g., lecture versus physical activity).

6.9 Taxonomy and definition of skills used for the literature review

This is the description of the skills that we used to carry out the literature review. Some examples from the literature measuring the transfer effects of music training related to the specific skill or achievement are referenced in footnotes.

Group A: SKILLS

1. Cognitive and intellectual skills

- **Memory**[66]: enhancing memory skills, including short-term memory, long-term memory, and memory recall.
- **General intelligence**[67]: the child's general cognitive ability and mental capacity to reason, problem-solve, and learn from experiences, which influences their overall cognitive performance across various domains.
- **Mathematical reasoning**[68]: strengthening the understanding and application of mathematical concepts, such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.
- **Spatial-navigational reasoning**[69]: understanding the relationships between objects in space, visualising how objects or elements move and interact within a given environment, and using this spatial understanding to solve problems or navigate through physical spaces effectively.
- **Abstract reasoning**[70]: the capacity to grasp and manipulate abstract concepts, which is often crucial in fields like mathematics and science.
- **Creativity**: nurturing the ability to generate multiple ideas and solutions to problems, encouraging creativity through drawing, painting, and other forms of artistic expression, fostering imaginative storytelling and role-playing activities.
- **Other intellectual skills**: skills related to other cognitive abilities, such as logical reasoning, critical thinking, problem-solving, information literacy, quantitative literacy, attention to detail.

2. Motor skills[71]

- **Perceptual skills**: developing sensory perception, including visual and auditory processing, to understand the environment better.
- **Fine motor skills**: refining precise hand-eye coordination through activities such as drawing, colouring, cutting, and writing.
- **Gross motor skills**: enhancing physical coordination and balance through activities like running, jumping, hopping, and skipping.

[66] (Rickard, Bambrick, & Gill, 2012) identified trends of interest in the field of non-verbal intelligence and verbal memory. (Roden, Kreutz, & Bongard, 2012) have also identified positive impacts in the field of verbal memory, as opposed to visual memory. (Kaviani, Mirbaha, Pournaseh, & Sagan, 2014) found significant effects regarding short-term memory.
[67] (Kaviani, Mirbaha, Pournaseh, & Sagan, 2014) found significant IQ increase in participants receiving music lessons, as well as (Schellenberg, Long-term positive associations between music lessons and IQ, 2006)
[68] Neither (Mehr, Schachner, Katz, & Spelke, 2013), nor (Kaviani, Mirbaha, Pournaseh, & Sagan, 2014), nor (Costa-Giomi, 2004), nor (Rickard, Bambrick, & Gill, 2012) have found any significant effect regarding mathematical reasoning.
[69] Neither (Rickard, Bambrick, & Gill, 2012), nor (Mehr, Schachner, Katz, & Spelke, 2013) have found any significant effect regarding this skill.
[70] (Kaviani, Mirbaha, Pournaseh, & Sagan, 2014) have not found any significant effects regarding abstract reasoning.
[71] (Costa-Giomi, 2006) has found significant improvement in fine motor skills for the children who received the music lessons.

3. Literacy and language skills[72]

- **Writing skills**[73]: developing writing abilities, including sentence structure, grammar, and creative writing.
- **Phonological skills and speech clarity**[74]: the ability to recognise and manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) that make up words in a spoken language, the ability to articulate and pronounce sounds, words, and sentences.
- **Vocabulary**[75]: enriching the range of words and expressions used in communication.
- **Reading fluency and comprehension**[76]: enhancing reading skills, including accuracy, speed, and comprehension.
- **Listening skills and verbal reasoning**[77]: the ability to understand, analyse, and draw logical conclusions based on verbal information and language.

4. Social and emotional skills[78]

- **Relationship skills**: forming positive relationships, encouraging positive interactions with peers and adults, promoting cooperation, active listening, constructive ways to resolve conflicts and handle disagreements.
- **Social awareness and empathy**[79]: cultivating the capacity to understand and consider others' perspectives and feelings.
- **Self-awareness and self-esteem**[80]**:** a person's overall evaluation of their own worth, emotions and values, as well as own strengths and challenges.
- **Responsible decision-making**: making ethical, constructive choices about personal and social behaviour.
- **Self-management**[81]: fostering self-discipline, emotional regulation, and impulse control, supporting the understanding and management of emotions, including recognising feelings and coping strategies.
- **Growth mindset**: belief that one's abilities and intelligence can be developed through dedication, effort, and learning, rather than being fixed traits, and the ability to bounce back from setbacks, mistakes, and challenges.

5. Musical skills

- **Singing**: focuses on vocal skills, including pitch accuracy, breath control, and tone quality.

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[72] (Costa-Giomi, 2004) has not found any positive effects for language skills. (Moreno, et al., 2011) identified positive impacts regarding verbal intelligence.
[73] (Rickard, Bambrick, & Gill, 2012) have not found any positive effects for writing skills.
[74] (Bhide, Power, & Goswami, 2013) found a large effect size for musical intervention. (Rickard, Bambrick, & Gill, 2012), however, found no convincing benefits of school music classes. Nevertheless, they conclude that *'the benefits of music instruction previously reported may be limited to private or externally-based music tuition, or* ***socio-economically disadvantaged schools'***.
[75] (Mehr, Schachner, Katz, & Spelke, 2013) have not found any significant effect regarding this skill.
[76] (Rickard, Bambrick, & Gill, 2012) have found significant positive effects regarding reading.
[77] (Kaviani, Mirbaha, Pournaseh, & Sagan, 2014) and (Moreno, 2009) found significant effects regarding verbal reasoning.
[78] Skills aligned with SEL survey framework. (Rickard, Bambrick, & Gill, 2012) have not found any significant effects regarding social skills. (Gooding, 2011) has, however, identified positive effects related to social competences, (Welch, Himonides, Saunders, Papageorgi, & Sarazin, 2014) concluded significant effects related to the children's self-concept and sense of being socially included, and (Schellenberg, Corrigall, Dys, & Malti, 2015) have also found positive effects related to sympathy and prosocial behaviours, but '*this effect was limited to* ***children who had poor prosocial skills*** *before the lessons began.'*
[79] (Wu & Lu, 2021) and (Greenberg, Rentfrow, & Baron-Cohen, 2015) found corroborating evidence in this respect.
[80] (Costa-Giomi, 2004), (Zapata & Hargreaves, 2017) and (Choi, Lee, & Lee, 2010) identified positive effects regarding the children's self-esteem, while (Rickard, Bambrick, & Gill, 2012) found none.
[81] Positive effects were found regarding reducing aggression by (Choi, Lee, & Lee, 2010).

- **Rhythm and timing**: the child's capacity to maintain a steady beat and accurately follow musical rhythms.
- **Pitch perception**: the child's ability to discern different pitches and tones in music.
- **Instrument proficiency**: the ability to play one or more musical instruments with skill and accuracy.
- **Music notation**: includes understanding and reading musical notation, such as sheet music and musical symbols.
- **Music theory**: involves comprehension of basic music theory concepts, including scales, chords, and key signatures.
- **Music interpretation**: encourages expressive and emotive musical performance, conveying the intended mood and character of the music.
- **Musical creativity**: involves the child's capacity to improvise, compose, and create music using their musical knowledge and skills.
- **Music appreciation**: the child's ability to listen to and enjoy various genres of music, developing an appreciation for the art form.

Group B: PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

6. General attainment[82]

- **Academic progress:** monitoring and supporting overall academic achievement and learning progress. Specific attention given to progressing to secondary school.
- **Study skills**: Introducing effective study habits and time management techniques.

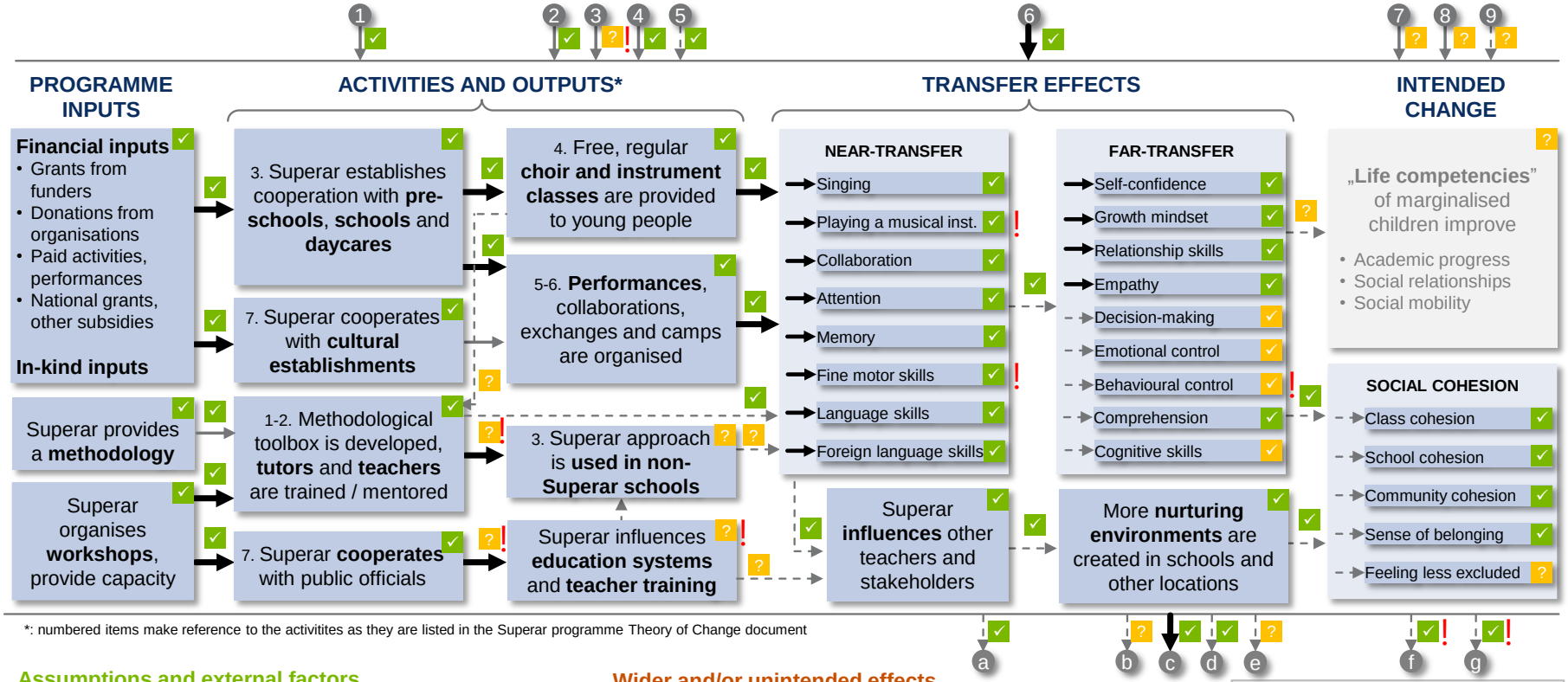
7. Personal well-being

- **Physical health[83]:** includes overall physical fitness, and health-related habits (e.g., nutrition, exercise).
- **Mental health:** focuses on the child's cognitive and emotional well-being.
- **Sense of belonging[84]**: the child's sense of belonging and connection within their family, the child's involvement and connection to their community, school, and broader social networks.
- **Self-sufficiency**: developing the child's ability to perform tasks and make decisions on their own, promoting autonomy, taking responsibility for their actions and tasks, working towards personal goals, promoting a sense of achievement and self-reliance.

6.10 Detailed assessment of the Theory of Change

[82] Neither (Costa-Giomi, 2004), nor (Sala & Gobet, 2017b), (Sala & Gobet, 2017b), (Sala & Gobet, 2020) found any effects regarding general academic attainment (apart from school music marks). (Schellenberg, 2006) found small effects.
[83] (Henderson, Cain, Istvandity, & Lakhani, 2016) in their meta study found no significant effect.
[84] (Welch, Himonides, Saunders, Papageorgi, & Sarazin, 2014) concluded significant effects related to the children's self-concept and sense of being socially included.

Figure 29: Summary assessment of the Theory of Change of Superar across the three countries



Assumptions and external factors

1. Tutor and teacher candidates are available and open to participate
2. Schools are open to collaboration and adapting new approaches
3. Policy-makers are open to adapting new approaches
4. Availability of necessary infrastructure (place, instruments)
5. Face-to-face teaching is possible without restrictions
6. Engagement and interest from the children & parental support
7. Children recieve quality education and equal opportunities
8. Open society, supportive and positive environmental influence
9. Other programmes/subsidies contribute to the intended change

Wider and/or unintended effects

a. Talent discovery and nurturing
b. Change in the perceptions and/or behaviours of parents
c. Indirect effect in siblings and friends of Superar children
d. Interest in formal musical education
e. Improved competence metrics and overall reputation of the participating schools
f. The general public benefits in areas underserved by cultural offers
g. Promotion of cultural diversity

Legend

CAUSE: *A* is one of the main, fundamental causes of *B*) ('**must have**')

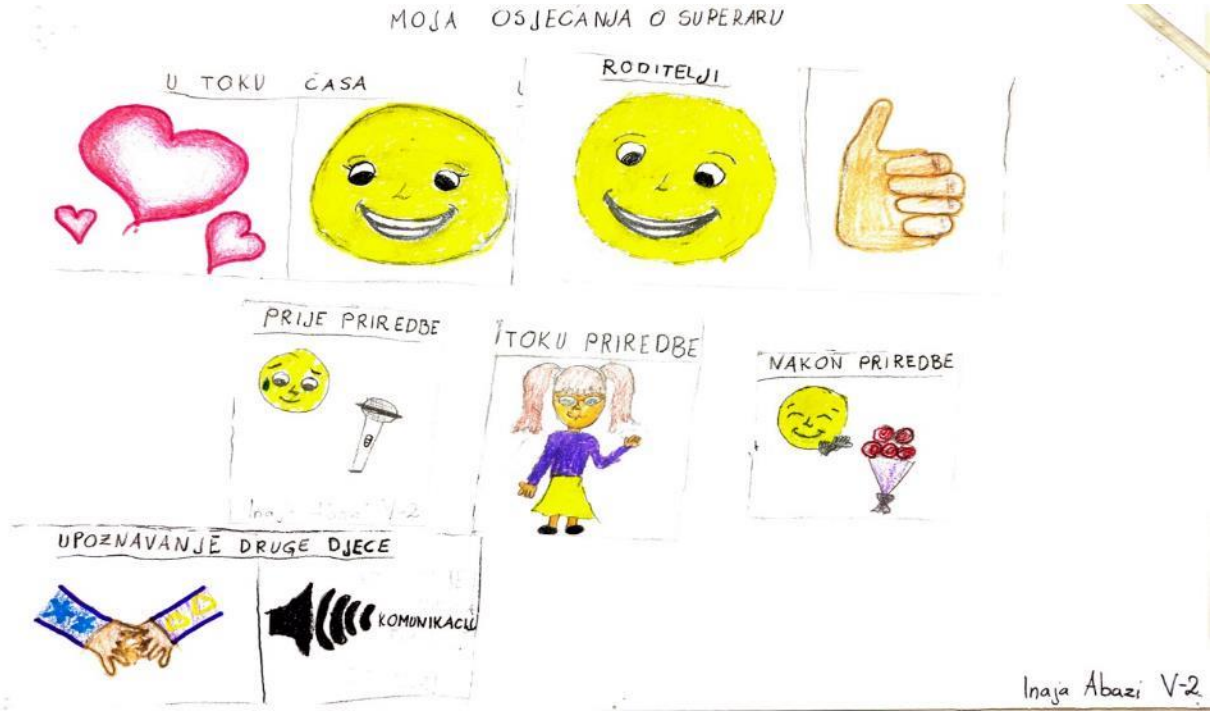
PRE-CONDITION: A is a necessary pre-condition of B, but not the main cause of that (lacking of which prevents B)

SUPPORTING FACTOR: A is contributing to B, but is neither a cause nor a pre-condition of that ('**nice to have**')

Source: Devea Partners (2024), based on various primary and secondar data sources

6.11 Outcomes of the photovoice sessions

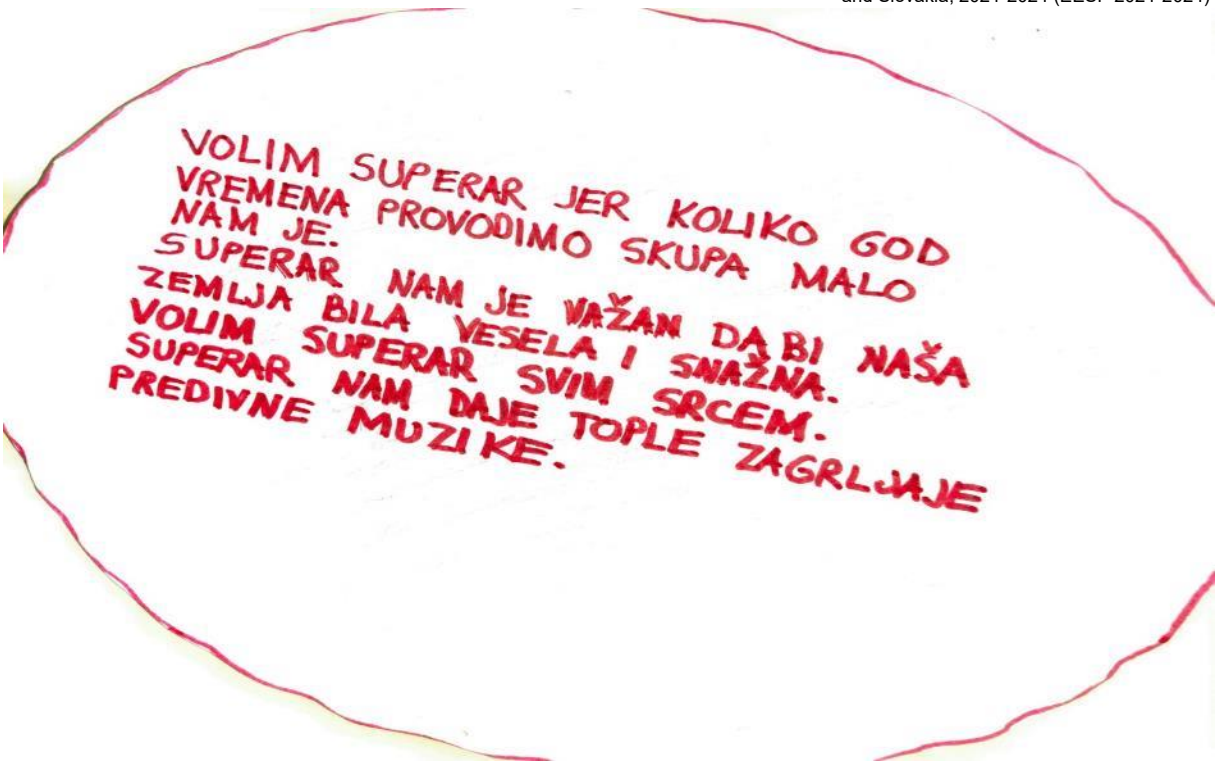
6.11.1 Outcome of Photovoice session #1 in Bosnia and Herzegovina



What is the title of the drawing?	**'My feelings about Superar'**
What is the story of the drawing?	'The first part describes my feeling during the class. You can see that I love Superar classes. Then, my parents think that it is great. Before a performance, I sometimes feel nervous. During the performances, I want to give my very best. I love the most when there's dancing involved. After the show, I feel proud, and everyone congratulates me. Sometimes, they even give me flowers. At these events, I meet kids from other schools. I really like that part; we quickly become friends and get to hang out regularly.'
How does it make you feel?	'I am happy and proud to be part of Superar.'
Why did you choose this topic?	'The drawing describes my feelings for Superar.'

6.11.2 Outcome of Photovoice session #2 in Bosnia and Herzegovina

What is the title of the drawing?	**'This is what I feel about Superar'**
What is the story of the drawing?	'Superar is all about music, making friends, hanging out, and playing instruments. We even have concerts! Before a concert, I get a bit nervous, but once it starts, everything is always super fun. I really love singing with Superar.'
How does it make you feel?	'It makes me feel proud. Also, my parents are proud of me.'
Why did you choose this topic?	n/a

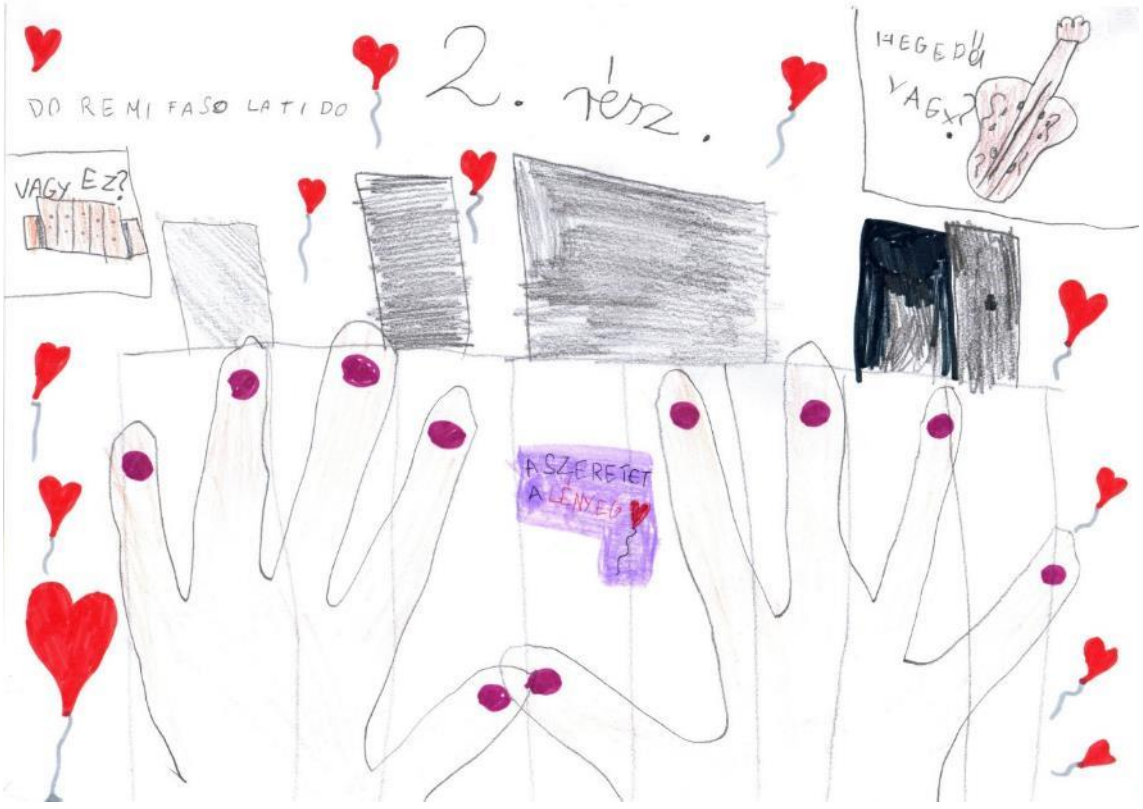


What is the title of the drawing?	**'My poem about Superar.'**
What is the story of the drawing?	'I love Superar because no matter how much time we spend together, it is never enough. Superar is important to us so that our country can be happy and strong. I love Superar with all my heart. Superar gives us warm hugs of beautiful music.'
How does it make you feel?	'I love Superar, and I feel very proud because I sing there.'
Why did you choose this topic?	'I made a poem because what we do in Superar is important.'

6.11.3 Outcome of Photovoice session #3 in Bosnia and Herzegovina

What is the title of the chosen photo?	**'My Superar photos'**
What is the story of the chosen photo?	'These photos are made during our performances in Tuzla and Sarajevo (National Theatre and Skenderija). You can see that I was playful and singing. I enjoyed it very much.'
How does it make you feel?	'I am proud for taking part in these performances.'
Why did you choose this topic?	'There is nothing negative about Superar. We all love it. Nobody is sad while performing. Some children are sometimes just nervous. I am never nervous while performing.'

6.11.4 Outcome of Photovoice session #1 in Hungary



What is the title of the drawing?	'The instrument choice'

What is the story of the drawing?	'The story unfolds in two parts, captured in my two drawings. So, there is this scene with a stage, a curtain, and my friend has to pick a musical instrument. In front the curtain, my friend Dia, who is from Ukraine but speaks Hungarian very well, is up there. She has to play 'Do re mi fa so la ti do' on the instrument of her choice. She can only choose one. Why? Because she signed up for it and dreams of being a maker of music instruments. There's a violin, a piano, and a tango harmonica. She doesn't know what a tango harmonica is like, as they do not use it during the classes. But she knows the piano from the Superar classes, and sometimes the class leader plays on the violin. It is a tough call for her because both instruments are cool. In the end, she goes for the piano. Now, onto part two. We zoom in on Dia's hands. She puts her hand on the piano, trying to play the 'Do re mi fa so la ti do' tune. Unfortunately, she messes up the 'do' the first time. But she gets another chance, rocks it the second time, and passes the test. She's like, 'I did it, that's it!' She has happy vibes, and she is grateful for getting a second chance.'
How does it make you feel?	'I feel happy and excited, I feel like I want to learn. I usually feel very good during the Superar classes. There are really great songs in Superar classes, both Hungarian and foreign ones. We always have a chat, sing, and play. It's an awesome combination!'
Why did you choose this topic?	'First, I didn't know what to draw, but then I closed my eyes, and this story came to my mind. Why? Because, in my opinion, the performance is the biggest magic of it all.'

6.11.5 Outcome of Photovoice session #2 in Hungary

What is the title of the drawing?	**'Christmas concert'**

What is the story of the drawing?	'I drew a picture of a real event, which is my favourite concert so far. In my drawing, there's a stage with lots of decorations. We are singing together at a Christmas concert with my best friends from class. It's not just us performing; there are kids from other schools too, and we all sing together. My parents came to watch, I am happy for that. But it's not just them; many people from the street stopped and watched us. We all smile because we're happy. Why? Because we can sing together, on a stage, with many people watching. With my friends, we're not nervous at all because we practiced a lot together in class, so singing goes well. At the end of the story, everyone applauds, which feels really good for all of us.'
How does it make you feel?	'Throughout the whole experience, I was happy, partly because of the singing and applause, and also because my family was there. Inside, I felt that it was really nice.'
Why did you choose this topic?	'I chose the theme of the Christmas concert because it's my best experience among all my Superar memories.'

6.11.6 Outcome of Photovoice session #3 in Hungary

What is the title of the drawing?	**'The Superar performances'**
What is the story of the drawing?	'My drawing features two large hearts on the top, one blue and one pink, representing boys and girls. It's filled with vibrant colours, showing that in Superar both boys and girls included. There's a modified Superar logo, with the many 'S' letters standing for Superar, and the many hearts standing for 'I love Superar.' There is a text 'SUPER' in the bottom, which represents 'Superar is super.' My drawing also captures the main stage of the Sziget Festival, highlighting an

	exceptional performance of his that took place there. I was part of the event, alongside classmates and others, all dressed in similar shirts, enjoying the unity that matching outfits brought. Everyone is depicted singing joyfully, the concert had a fantastic atmosphere. After the concert, our group went to the playground, continuing our enjoyable day.'
How does it make you feel?	'I felt the concert was incredible, initially feeling dizzy and nervous due to the excitement. The crowd was massive, with tens of thousands of people participating. My friends were there with me, and we had a great time playing and enjoying the event together.'
Why did you choose this topic?	'The reason for choosing this picture is that it represented the biggest and most challenging task among all the Superar duties and activities I was involved in.'

6.11.7 Outcome of Photovoice session #4 in Hungary

What is the title of the drawing?	**'The Sziget festival and the playground'**
What is the story of the drawing?	'In the picture, you can see that they were at Sziget with the Superar team, and we gave a concert. The whole day was fantastic. On the left side of the picture, there's a bench, and initially, we could sit there before moving over to the swings; this is visible in the middle. It was really fun to play on those. Then lunch arrived, we went back to the benches, and we had a very delicious meal. There are people in the picture: us and two Superar tutors. I drew them because I love them very much. There were more Superar tutors and many other children besides us, but I couldn't draw everyone. My best friend, Laci, was also there, with whom we played throughout the day and were very happy to have this opportunity. After

	singing the songs on the main stage, which was fantastic, we returned to the benches and then went home. The whole day was very good. I also wanted to draw the day at the 'Paloznaki Jazzpiknik', but it wouldn't fit into one picture. That was a very exciting day, too. We had to pack a suitcase, then went to a venue, explored the stage, rehearsed the songs, and then went back to the accommodation. The concert in the evening was great, and the next day we went down to Lake Balaton, the whole thing felt like a vacation, during the summer break. The audience at the performance was also fantastic. Laci, my best friend, was with me all day.'
How does it make you feel?	'I was very excited about the entire day, not only because of the concert but also because the whole day was very good, including, for example, the playground. My other feeling was of great joy for being able to spend the entire day with my best friend, it felt like a vacation.'
Why did you choose this topic?	'I chose the Sziget Festival theme because the whole day was great, including the concert, as there were lots of people and they applauded the songs. But it wasn't just the concert that was special; everything else too: going there, playing in the playground, having lunch together, and then playing again. The other event at the 'Paloznaki Jazzpiknik' was even better, but I couldn't draw that.'

6.11.8 Outcome of Photovoice session #1 in Slovakia

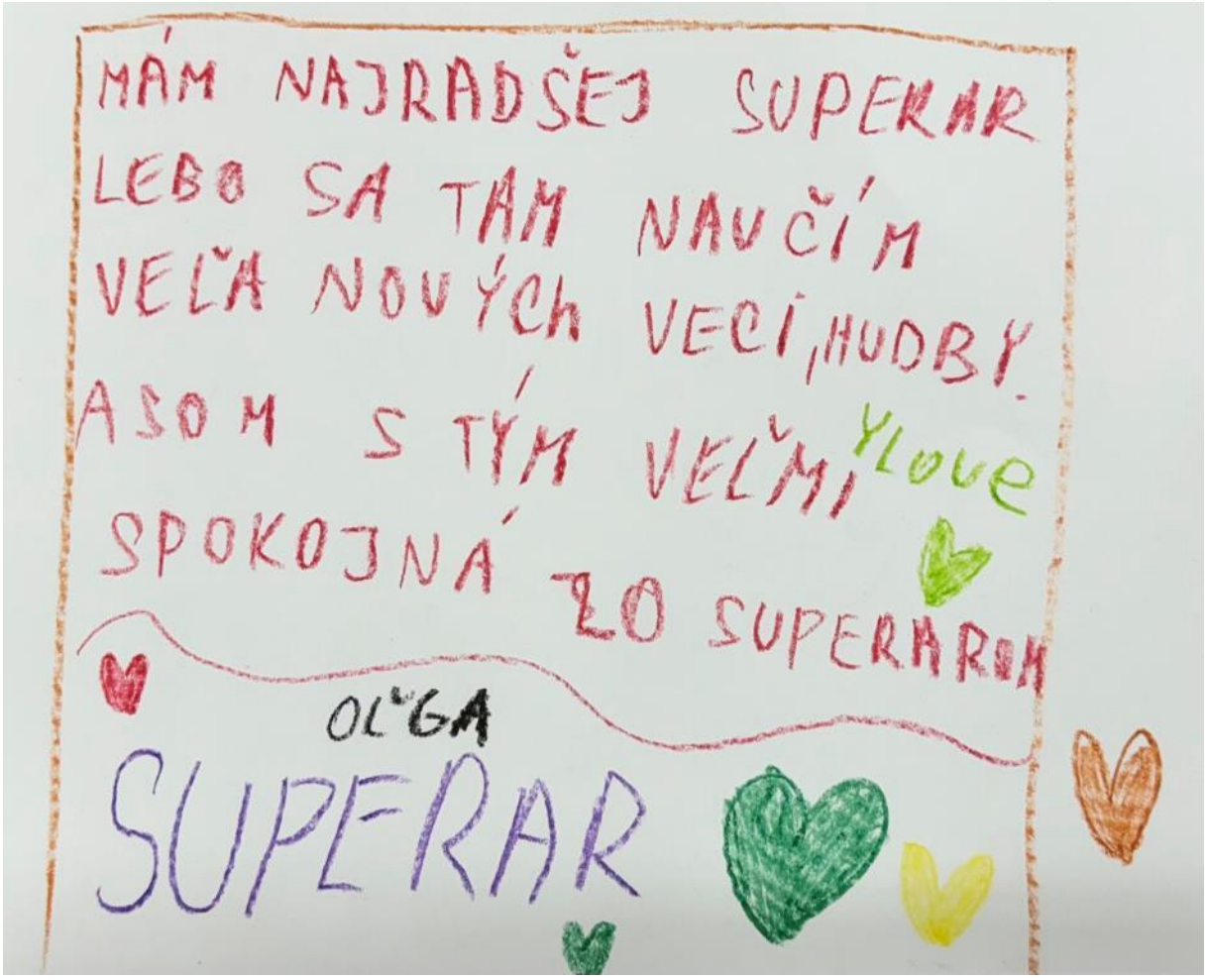
What is the title of the chosen photo?	**'Superar in a music museum'**

What is the story of the chosen photo?	'We are exploring the museum of music (I don't remember exactly the details of it) and around there was a nice park and there was a concert stage.'
How does it make you feel?	'It is the love for music – I have a lot of music also in my phone and now I'm learning to play guitar and harmonica.'
Why did you choose this topic?	'It's fully about music… and after the museum we were eating pizza in the park.'

What is the title of the chosen photo?	**'Sziget backstage'**
What is the story of the chosen photo?	'It's mix of Superar children from different countries that are entering the stage to rehearse.'
How does it make you feel?	'I think it's the biggest music festival in Europe. I love the Imagine Dragons band who were performing at the very same stage as we were.'
Why did you choose this topic?	'We were passing small playground that was open only to Superar and we were having informal rehearsal there, we were eating there, and we got branded Sziget presents: small backpacks & caps.'

6.11.9 Outcome of Photovoice session #2 in Slovakia

What is the title of the drawing?	**'Superar is super'**
What is the story of the drawing?	'The story is about me and the Superar tutor and how we are singing together and how she is teaching me how to sing better. There are lots of hearts because I like singing and I like Olga [the tutor] very much.'
How does it make you feel?	'Singing makes me happy.'
Why did you choose this topic?	'Because I like to sing with Olga [the tutor].'



What is the title of the drawing?	**'Olga'**
What is the story of the drawing?	'It's about my love for singing. I like the Superar the most, because I can learn there a lot of new things about music and that makes me satisfied with Superar. And to me Superar is represented by Olga.'
How does it make you feel?	'Happy and satisfied.'
Why did you choose this topic?	'Because I like Superar.'

6.11.10 Outcome of Photovoice session #3 in Slovakia

What is the title of the drawing?	**'Concerts with Superar'**
What is the story of the drawing?	'There's lot of traveling with Superar when the performances are being done. The drawing represents a lot how I feel about Superar. In the bus are the Superar kids and the other half are those helping ones: teachers and parents – there is also my mother (my father doesn't help but he comes to the performances). Nobody sings in the bus – the notes are there to know that it's Superar (also there is the Superar logo on the bus… but in the blue river that's only a stone similar to the Superar logo). There's a river around the bridge where is the bus, because I don't know how to draw a road.'
How does it make you feel?	'Happiness and joy – it's also represented by the colours of the bus. It's very lively inside and outside of the bus.'
Why did you choose this topic?	'It was difficult to choose something about Superar because everything is about people, and I don't know how to draw people. So, the bus was the best choice. If I should draw another picture, it would be from a performance – some simple drawing of people from far how they stand on the stage and sing.'