

MARS Fieldwork

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KUMBALAWÉ PROJECT

Choirs for children from deprived immigrant families, in Banyoles



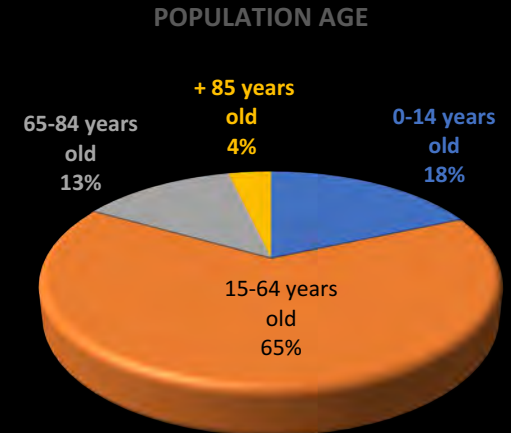
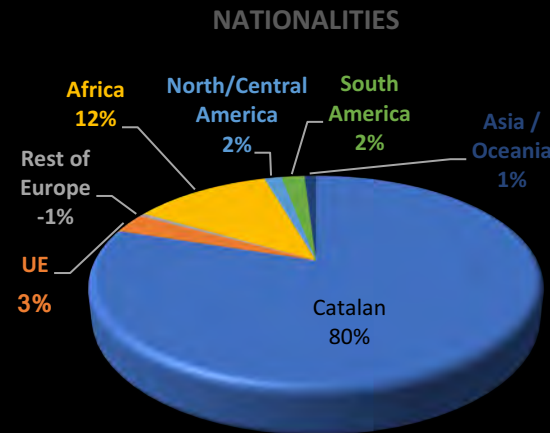
CONTEXT: Banyoles (Catalonia)

- 19500 inhabitants (registered).
- 20% of migrants (mainly from Africa), concentrated in 2 neighbourhoods.
- 18% of the inhabitants are 0-14 y/o..
- Artistic & leisure activities offered, but **little participation of immigrants**.
Reasons:

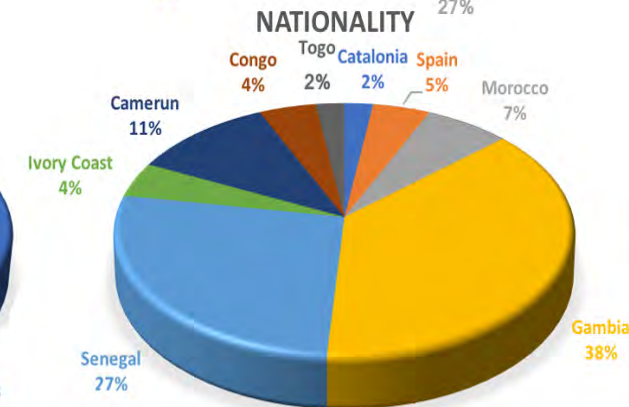
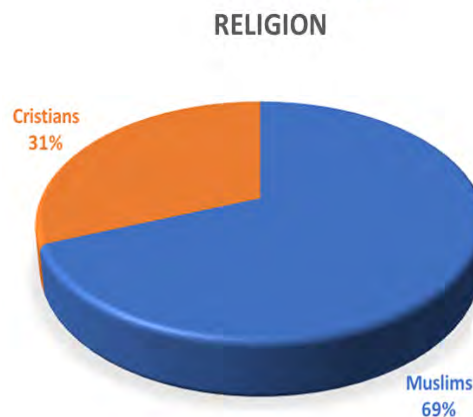
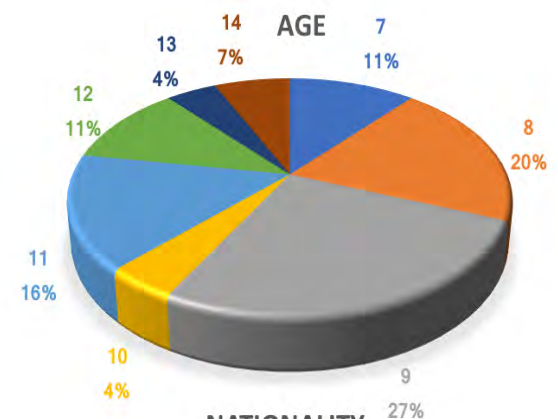
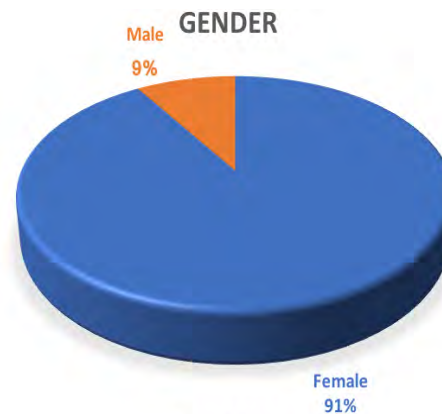
- Usually, high costs.
- Lack of habit of the community to go to the city's artistic center.

THE GROUP

- 45 infants and teenagers, 7 to 14 y/o.
- Different nationalities, mainly africans.
- Feminine gender and muslim religion predominate.
- From deprived immigrant families at risk of social exclusion (extreme precariousness).
- Families came from conflicts and war, extreme poverty, political persecution or illnesses.
- Some of them already born in Banyoles.
- Some attitudinal difficulties.
- Racism/confrontation between some families.



Data obtained from IDESCAT, Padró municipal d'habitants.



RISK FACTORS

- Uncertain situation → Stress in the family (+ intergenerational passage of stress)
- Lack of familiar support and adult references (sometimes)
- Excess of free time 'hanging around' → engagement in risky behaviours
- Racism inter-families/cultures/hierarquies
- Cultural duality (Catalan & African)
- Cultural segregation, ghettoization & marginalization
- Low access to leisure activities extra-school

PROTECTION FACTORS

- Diminish exposure to stress: Safe space & time
- Values, personal growth & work, adult references.
- Families support (2 generation approach)
+ Contact with specialized services
- Facilitate the participation in leisure/civic activities.
- Constancy and commitment, new objectives
- Art: Music as tool for personal expression and socialization within the group + concerts to visibilise the collective

MUSIC – A tool for Psychosocial Intervention

- Creates a positive and safe atmosphere, where an indirect change and a learning process can take place.
- Helps people (specially children) to achieve their full potential, improving in different areas:

Corporal

Physical equilibrium, motility, orientation and coordination.

Emotional

Improvement of self-esteem, self-fulfillment, psychological equilibrium, creativity, emotions recognition and expression. Empowerment and Resilience.

Cognitive

Improvement of learning and organizational skills, concentration & memory, solving-problems ability and complex reasoning, language comprehension.

Social

(Re)Establishment of interpersonal relationships, creates a sense of community, improvement of social and communication skills, and team-work capacity. Visibilises the deprived collective

Identity

Being in front of the public builds self-confidence.
Personal, groupal, and social identification, that motivates and stimulates.

OBJECTIVES

General (city level):

To **open musical training** & expression to children at risk of social exclusion.

To contribute to **neighbourhoods life**, promoting pride and sense of belonging.

To create to deprived families the **habit to go to the artistic nucleus** of the city & participate to civic activities, fostering integration.

To foster **coexistence** between nationalities.
+ Integration and social consciousness-raising.

METHODOLOGY

Music is a tool at the service of Psychosocial Support.

- Creation of 2 free-attendance choirs.

- Weekly rehearsals in 2 disadvantaged quarters (La Farga & Canaletes).

- Monthly intensive rehearsals in the music school.
- Performances in Banyoles + mass concert in "Palau de la Música Catalana" (one of the main musical nucleus in Catalonia).

- (Free) Attendance to theater plays and concerts in Banyoles.
- Active participation in other musical/theatre productions in Banyoles.
- Scholarships in the music school.

- Weekend Summer camp (between the singers).
Recreative activities & fostering coexistence.
- Concerts (between singers and locals)

OBJECTIVES

Artistic:

To improve **musical skills** (tuning, rhythm, musical knowledge and voice qualities).

To increase **body awareness** & to work creating coreographies on the basis of their own natural movements.

Psychosocial:

To strengthen an **expression channel & emotional equilibrium** through singing, dancing and musiking

To delve into catalan and their original culture reconciling their **personal identity**.

To foster **positive attitudes** for teamwork, cohesion, **coexistence**: Respect, cooperation and no competition, listening,

METHODOLOGY

- MUSIC + BODY EXPRESSION + PERSONAL GROWTH, starting from what they already know.
- Prepared staff: 2 Music teachers + collaboration with artistic specialists + children relatives.

- Collective participation in the creation of the arrangements and coreographies.
- Personal expression.

- Repertoire from different countries of origin + folk dances and percussions.

- Singing together + Collective *Attitudinal Agreement* + other recreational activities.

THE TEAM



LALI FIGUERAS.
Direction of La Farga choir, and internal communication with families. Active in scenic arts. Pedagogue and specialist in body expression.



MONTSE JAÉN.
Direction of Canaletes choir, Music teacher specialized in sensitization in early stages of childhood. Director of many children choirs.



MARIONA CALLÍS.
Coordination / management of Kumbalawé, external communication and relation with stakeholders. Active in scenic arts. 10 years experience with Cor Àkan (deprived immigrants choir)

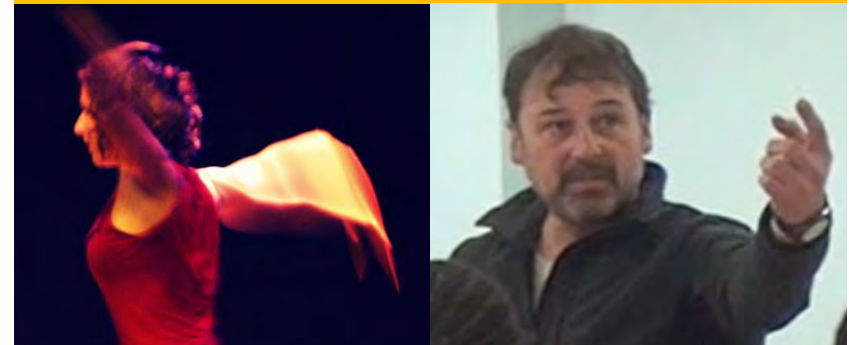
Collaborators



OMAR & IBA (Percussion teachers & musicians)

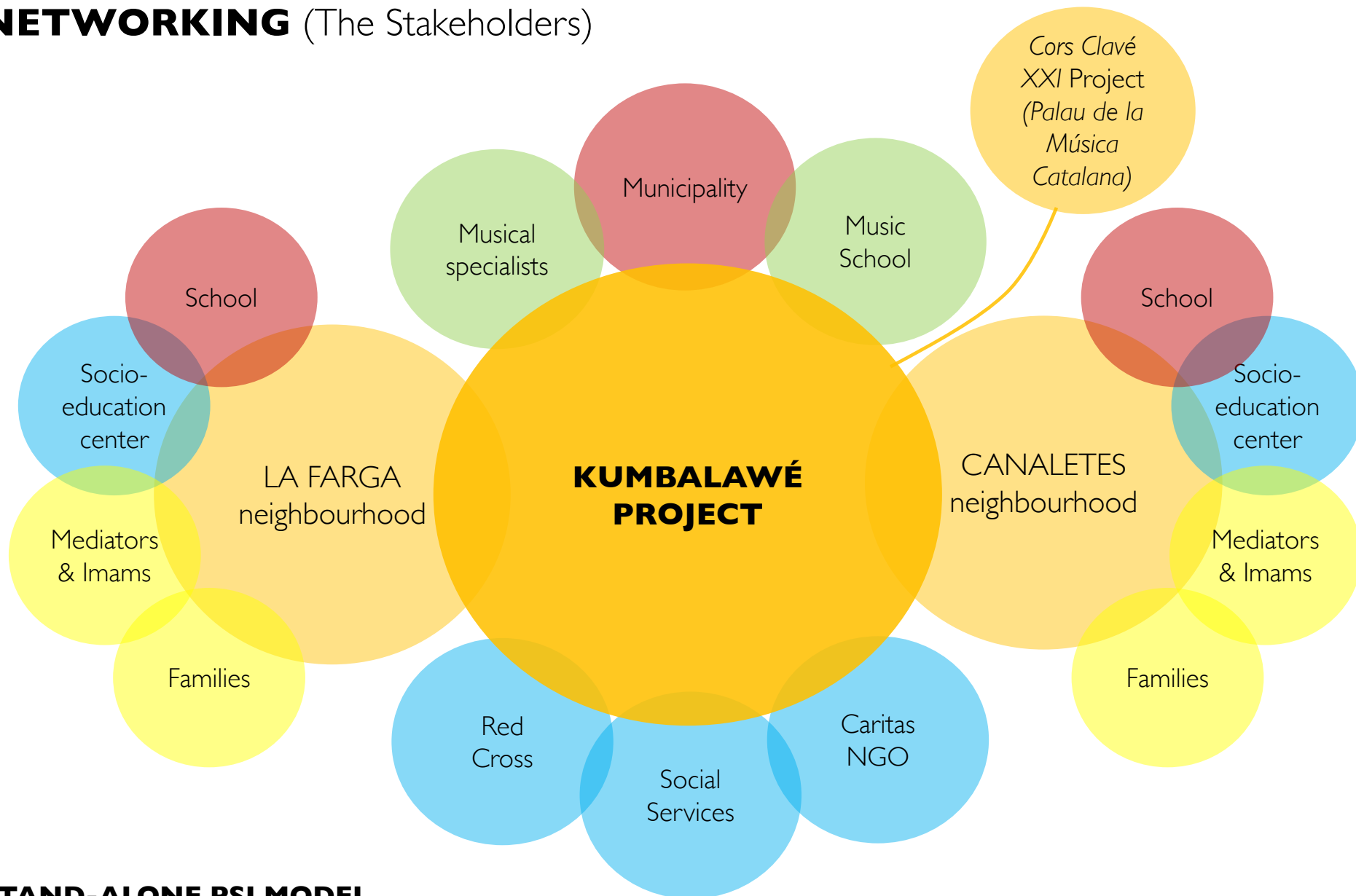


JORDI & FRAN (Musicians)



CLÀUDIA (Dance) JORDI (Voice technique)

NETWORKING (The Stakeholders)



STAND-ALONE PSI MODEL

- Collaboration with entities & municipality (space utilization, resources, information, monitoring children evolution in other areas).
- Basic needs and accompaniment are overall covered by other organizations (*in blue*).

STEPS BEFORE & DURING THE PROJECT

PROBLEM	Detection of lack of participation of deprived children in artistic activities in the city.	
NEEDS & RESOURCES ANALYSIS	<p>Global study to define:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neighbourhoods with more deprived population. - First draft of general needs of the target community. Model of PSI. - Possible networking (Stakeholders): Organizations which work with immigrants & deprived families, and Religious leaders (imams) & mediators. 	
MAKING FRIENDS	<p>With Stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification & selection of the most vulnerable children. - Needs & resources analysis. - Space-utilization agreement. 	<p>With the beneficiary families:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer the project and make a list of participants. - Survey to conclude Needs & Resources analysis. <p>With the Municipality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer the project. Ask for funding.
	Define Aims, Staff & collaborators, Activities, Evaluation method.	
DESIGN		
FIRST TRIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 sessions to know better the group, identify the challenges and verify the direction of the project. - Evaluation of the first phase & Whole course design (staff + stakeholders + beneficiaries). 	
METHODS for MONITORING & EVALUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematic monitoring during sessions + reviewing video recordings of some sessions. - Group dynamics activities to observe individual and groupal behaviour. - Periodic meetings with participants, individuals or in couples. - Periodic meetings with stakeholders, socioeducational centers educators and families. 	
INDICATORS	<p>Direct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Motivation and positive expression of the faces of the participants. - Improvement of personal attitudes and group cohesion. - Increase of musical / expression skills. 	<p>Indirect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rise of regularity of attendance in the rehearsals. - Increase of demand of the project (waiting list!). - Increment of interest for the project in the local population. - Growing of participation of immigrants in civic activities. - Satisfaction of the stakeholders.

LEARNING FROM PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE / ADAPTING THE PLANS

Economy:

- More economic problems than expected to start the project: 6 months delay and with a totally voluntary way.
- After 1 year: still fund issues. Recently: agreement with Municipality for continuous funding from 2018 on.

Rehearsal planing:

- More than 1 rehearsal a month in the Music school all together is recommendable.
- Adapting every day the activities planned to the needs, interests and dynamics of the group.

The target group:

- From an open-project idea, we had to put limit of participants, because of a high demand. (Waiting list!).
- Cultural diverse group idea: we started with mainly Gambians, due to racism between different cultures
→ meetings with imams and mediators to include some of the most vulnerable and less accepted families.

Staff and stakeholders:

- We detected some cases that could be helpful having a psychologist collaborating in the project.

Planing for 2018:

- ✓ Agreement with a psychologist as a consultant.
- ✓ Families from different origins suitable to participate in the project have been identified.
- ✓ 3 more of the most strongly deprived children will start in Kumbalawé.
- ✓ A new group will start, from 6 to 8 y/o.



GROUP DYNAMICS ISSUES

Beginning:

Racism between some families, cultures and hierarchies.

→ Dominance relationships (or even bullying).

→ Some children were rejected by other families, risking the project.

Currently:

Better group cohesion. Mitigating and transforming the conflicts into respect and coexistence.

“We can see some children that were confronted, now dancing and laughing together.”



ADDRESSING THE DIFFICULTIES. Strategy in 3 directions:

- 1. Attitudinal agreement** (*Within the group*): We wrote a document all the members together and we signed it. This has been a good method to speak about behaviour towards the other participants. Although some of them sometimes still demonstrate attitudinal issues, their motivation to be in the project is an incentive to put effort to ameliorate their behaviour.
- 2. Mediators** (*Within the community*): Some persons have a great influence in the community. We interviewed them to seek for advice and a path to arrive to some of the most deprived, and how to agree their inclusion in the project with some families that rejected them. Now we count on some Gambian more deprived families and some Moroccans.
- 3. Families tracking and support** (*Within the family*): We meet the families periodically to know about the evolution of the children out of the activity and to advise some of them how to be on the children side. (*2 generation approach*).

PERSONAL IMPACTS & REFLECTIONS

A project becoming a reality. It's the first time I'm working in a stable and long-term project imagined by myself from the beginning. It's gratifying to see how a first idea of a project becomes a reality. There are some obstacles in the road that may discourage you. I found some specially in the bureaucratic part. But I think although in some moments I have felt them deeply, I managed to get ahead. And now, when you can see the group, learning, singing, participating... it's exciting and it compensates the work done.

Improving attitudes. With 20 years singing and 10 years directing Cor Àkan (which inspired Kumbalawé Project), I have seen how music can affect positively improving personal life, recovering the person and fostering empowerment and resilience. But with Cor Àkan, working with traumatized and marginalized adults, I have witnessed behavioural problems only few times. In Kumbalawé project is something more common. And is not simply negotiate with them to improve it. In Kumbalawé project there is more "educational component" than in Àkan, and we have to solve the issues with the participants, but in this case also is important to foster intervention of they direct adult references, the families, because the participants are minors. We have designed a path to address this problems, and we chose to work on 3 different strategies (previous slide). We've seen that currently in Kumbalawé the facilitator has to be quite directive, leading to group cohesion, otherwise some members stablish strong-dominant relationships, specially in one of the two groups the facilitator's function to equilibrate the group personalities is more necessary. It is evident that the participants of Kumbalawé enjoy and they are very proud of being part of the project. And now, also some of the most complicated behavioral issues in the group are getting better. This is an important reward for all the staff.

Music and musical style. Music is a useful tool to work on personal growth, expression and group cohesion. With my experience I've learned that the most important thing is to work on motivation and enjoyment for music, and also personal expression and group cohesion, rather than musical skills in the beginning. It may come later. This function of music is independent on the musical style, and it's interesting to present different musical repertoire. This year we chose mixing catalan songs with african percussions and dances, having in mind the idea of reconcile their two main cultural identities and it worked very well. Next year we would like to work on different musical repertoire and try to include also melodic instrument classes apart from singing & percussions.

Their engagement and expression. The participants engage in the activities, and propose ideas to build our arrangements and specially coreographies. It's surprising most of them don't feel shy taking active part and speaking in front of all the group, very different compared to local children.

Management and coordination. This is the first time that I'm "behind the curtains" working only in some sessions directly with the children, but mainly in the coordination and management part. To increase time dedicated in paperwork means to decrease direct contact with the beneficiaries, something I have missed in some moments. I have had to learn (and I still have a lot to learn!) about bureaucracy and documentation, something new and very different from my role in Àkan and other projects. To be a coordinator is something very different compared to a facilitator. I've had to learn how to handle the team of facilitators, and adapt to this kind of 'vertical' organization. We think it is very important to assure the sustainability of the project. Funding is an important part of the possibility of sustainability. For me, this continuous working on writing-presenting the project without funding tires and it has been the worst part of starting a project from zero. But although some points of management can be felt as hard and boring (and sometimes it is!), I think it's fruitful to understand what this work is about and to rethink the project from other perspectives. Although the project is still young, we can see how it's growing and it will consolidate next year. And after many meetings with the Municipality, finally we have an agreement for continuous funding during next years. Consequently, when you have been struggling for something and finally you achieve it, and the work behind it is appreciated and recognized, you feel rewarded.

Working in a team. I think working together with a well-selected staff is one of the best parts in our work. I'm more used to work alone in Àkan, and sometimes you can feel fragile and doubt if your decisions are the best ones. The fact that the 2 other facilitators are used to work in schools, educational environments and with children is something very enriching for me. I consider with the team we are learning a lot, sharing ideas, contrasting and analysing/monitoring the evolution of the group and the individual members from different perspectives, helping us to detect deficiencies or weak points of the project. Also the relation with the stakeholders helps us to feel more secure in our path, in the beginning, defining the needs and resources, designing together the whole project and some of the activities, and during the project advising and solving issues, analyzing economical aspects and the project evolution. They know a lot the members of the community, specially the most vulnerable ones. Your team is one of your own protection factors.

GRAPHIC MATERIAL



ENJOYMENT + DISCIPLINE + PERSONAL EXPRESSION



MOROCCAN AND GAMBIAN GIRLS PLAYING.

In the neighbourhood it is difficult to integrate the Moroccans. It exists racism against them from the blacks.



TWO CHILDREN FROM CONFRONTED FAMILIES DANCING TOGETHER.

Some of the most vulnerable families and children are repudiated by others due to hierarchies and cultural differences (child on the right was rejected by the family of the other in the beginning of the project).

INTEGRATION & SHARING: PLAYING AND DANCING TOGETHER



KUMBALAWÉ IN PALAU DE LA MÚSICA (Cors Clavé XXI) – MASS CONCERT (June 2016)



Some friends and class mates of members of KUMBALAWÉ came to see one of the concerts, and were felicitating the singers.

RECEIVING THE FELICITATIONS OF THE AUDIENCE, FRIENDS & STAFF

VIDEO — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2lWxe1Wwkc>

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CONTACT

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