

Dialogue among Different Forms of Knowledge in the Music Education Component of the Professionalization Line of the “Creative Colombia” Project

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Abstract. This study aims to identify how the music education component in the well known Artist Professionalization Line of the “Creative Colombia” project established a dialogue among the different forms of knowledge the participating musicians came with to the program and knowledge belonging to the academic tradition of formal music education. To achieve this objective, the concept of knowledge dialogue was approached from three theoretical perspectives which shed light on some relevant aspects and provide conceptual tools to design proposals for guiding similar professionalization projects in the implementation of such dialogues. The perspectives in question are music appropriation, symmetry and justice as conditions for dialogue, and furthermore, popular forms of knowledge and exclusion in Latin America. Using content analysis as a methodological strategy, a sample was selected for this qualitative research project among music education programs in four Colombian universities that have implemented the artist professionalization line: Universidad de Nariño, Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, Universidad del Atlántico, and Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. Among the main conclusions drawn from this research project the following were found. First of all was the need to find better epistemological grounds from which a dialogue among different forms of knowledge may be developed in the context of the Creative Colombia Project. There is also evidence that some of the limitations in the implementation of dialogical scenarios may be associated with institutional university structures that have historically privileged, legitimized, and prioritized one single form of knowledge. As a result, other forms of knowledge which were developed outside of academia cannot be successfully integrated. Closing recommendations are addressed to different decision-making agents who participate in arts education processes in the higher-education context: the Ministries of Culture and Education, Universities, and those interacting in the classroom.

Keywords: Music education; informal learning; folk music; ethnomusicology; professionalization in the field of music.

[es] Diálogo de saberes en el Área de Música de la Línea de Profesionalización de Artistas del Proyecto Colombia Creativa

Resumen. El objetivo del presente estudio es establecer la forma en la que el área de música de la Línea de Profesionalización de artistas de reconocida trayectoria del Proyecto Colombia Creativa desarrolló un diálogo entre los saberes previos de los músicos que lo cursaron y aquellos saberes propios de la tradición académica de enseñanza musical. Para el cumplimiento de este objetivo se abordó el diálogo de saberes en música a partir de tres perspectivas teóricas que permitieron ahondar en algunas de sus dimensiones y brindar herramientas conceptuales para diseñar una propuesta orientadora sobre cómo proyectos de profesionalización similares pueden implementar dicho diálogo. Estas perspectivas son: apropiación de la música, simetría y justicia como condiciones para el diálogo y, por último, saberes populares y exclusión en América Latina. La investigación es cualitativa y utiliza como estrategia el análisis de contenido. La muestra seleccionada abarca los programas de formación musical de cuatro universidades que han implementado la Línea de Profesionalización de Artistas: Universidad de Nariño, Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, Universidad del Atlántico y Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas. Entre las principales conclusiones de la investigación se encuentra en primer lugar, la necesidad de sustentar más claramente los fundamentos epistemológicos desde los cuales se propone desarrollar el diálogo de saberes dentro de Colombia Creativa. También se evidencia que parte de las limitaciones en la implementación de espacios dialógicos está asociada a estructuras institucionales universitarias que históricamente han privilegiado, legitimado y jerarquizado una única forma de conocimiento y, por ello, dificultan la integración de saberes que se desarrollan al margen de la academia. Por su parte, las recomendaciones finales van dirigidas a los diferentes niveles de toma de decisiones en procesos de educación artística a nivel superior: Ministerios de Cultura y Educación, Universidades y aulas de clase.

Palabras clave: Educación musical; aprendizaje informal; música popular; etnomusicología; profesionalización en música.

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1. Introduction

The Creative Colombia Project, developed by the Colombian Ministry of Culture, has been implemented since 2009 in different cities in the country. Its purpose is to offer wider access to higher education in the Arts, prioritising an inclusive approach to students coming from regions where few or no higher-education programs in the field of music, dance, or theater are offered. The music component of the Artist Professionalization Line of the Project has been particularly recognised and supported. This works through an agreement between the Ministry of Culture and different public universities. Its target audience is musicians over 30 years of age, without a university degree, and with extensive experience as musicians or instructors. The program offers priority support to individuals coming from isolated regions of the country (Colombian Ministry of Culture, 2008).

The Creative Colombia Project validates and acknowledges the prior knowledge of participating musicians, offering them flexible curricula with an intensive, face-to-face methodology. In this way, they can obtain their professional degree in a period of two and a half years, i.e., half the time required in a traditional undergraduate program. As a result of getting a university degree, participating musicians and instructors find better job conditions, as well as improved social and economic status. This is particularly important for a sector of the population that has been historically excluded and neglected by the State, since they practice their trade in faraway regions and, in most cases, receive very low wages.

As part of its goals, Creative Colombia also promotes a dialogue between the popular, traditional forms of knowledge of those participating in the Project and the academic practices characteristic of higher-education programs. The latter are still heavily influenced by an educational model originating in European conservatories, which has little or no connection to the real conditions of the music sector in the country. This is perhaps the most innovative but also a challenging element of the proposal for the institutions that participate in the Project. As a result, a research project was developed to find answers to the most fundamental question concerning such a dialogue: In what ways have instructional processes of the Creative Colombia Project music component resulted in establishing a true dialogue between the prior knowledge that participating traditional and folk musicians bring to the table and the forms of knowledge that have characterized music education in an academic setting?

Studies specifically concerning the divide between traditional, popular forms of knowledge and institutionalized music education processes have been increasing in Colombia and Latin America in recent years (Santamaría, 2007; Arenas, 2009, 2016; Aharonián, 2011; Shifres y Gonnet, 2015; Ochoa, 2016; Carabetta, 2017). Nevertheless, little research has been conducted regarding the project (Universidad de Antioquia, 2010; Arenas, 2010; Londoño, 2013; Gélvez, 2016; Ruíz, 2017) despite the importance of Creative Colombia in the context of music education in the country.

2. Theoretical Framework

The main objective of this research project is to determine how the music education component of the Creative Colombia Artist Professionalization Line has established a dialogue between prior knowledge of participating musicians and the traditional forms of knowledge in academic contexts. The concept of knowledge dialogues is approached from theoretical perspectives that shed light on some of its features and offer conceptual tools for designing guidelines in implementing such a dialogue in the area of music education for projects similar to Creative Colombia. In the education context, many authors have explored the potential that dialogues offer in pedagogical scenarios. Authors such as Ghiso (2000), Bakhtin (1999), and Freire (2004) coincide in pointing out some basic conditions that make dialogues possible: an effective will of individuals to establish a dialogue; mutual acknowledgement as valid interlocutors; scenarios that make it possible; and finally, the existence of experiences to be shared.

Whether these basic conditions exist in the context of Creative Colombia is explored from three theoretical perspectives which illustrate how complex it is to establish a dialogue between the knowledge forms interacting in the project: music appropriation, symmetry and justice as conditions for a dialogue, and, finally, popular forms of knowledge and exclusion in Latin America. The first approach guides us in studying the implications of implementing educational processes in the field of music that effectively respond to the multiple cultural realities coexisting within each society. The second and third approaches relate to a broader issue of how those multiple voices and realities may take part in educational processes. They have proven to be fruitful in both accounting for the reasons resulting from their exclusion and finding possible ways to overcome and avoid exclusion.

The first approach, called “music appropriation,” acknowledges music not merely as a set of systems of sound organization, but above all, as a culturally and historically situated social factor. This acknowledgment has major implications for educational contexts: it implies that different forms of knowledge transfer is inherent in the different musical practices. Based on a dialogue between ethno-musicology and music education, this project seeks to account for the ways in which the kind of teaching and learning characteristic of empirical, popular forms of knowledge and institutionalized music education processes take place. Furthermore, it explores the question of whether there are points of convergence between the two.

The ongoing interaction between ethno-musicology and music education has been marked by essential conceptualizations that remain relevant today. Such is the case of authors such as Merriam (1964), Blacking (1973) and Nettl (1992). Authors such as Arroyo (2000), Queiroz (2004), Mendivil (2016) and Ochoa (2016) have taken up these conceptualizations and adapted them to the Latin American context.

The second perspective, referred to as symmetry and justice as conditions for a dialogue, allow for the analysis of the necessary general conditions for establishing a dialogue among human beings. It explores the way in which such conditions may be best developed in the specific context of educational environments. To this end, reference is made to the concept of communicative action, developed by Habermas (1987) and to Rawls’ (2006) and the conception of justice, understood in terms of fairness. The concept of consensus, as developed by both authors, is also addressed.

The third and final perspective, in which popular forms of artistic knowledge are explored in relation to exclusion in Latin America, is drawn from epistemological approaches coming from decoloniality studies. It offers an understanding of the processes that have historically led to the exclusion of empirical, popular artistic practices by the majority culture. Thus, the concept of zero-point hubris, developed by Castro-Gómez (2005), intimately connects to the concept of race and to the importance given to writing in knowledge construction, topics explored by authors such as Rama (1998) and Quijano (2000). This theoretical horizon also draws on the concept of an ecology of knowledges, developed by Santos (2010, 2017, 2019), through which these practices may be acknowledged and valorized and to find possible paths for establishing a dialogue can be established among them and the academic processes in music education.

3. Methodology

This research project draws on a hermeneutical approach and follows a qualitative methodology; both were found to be pertinent considering the problem statement and the proposed objectives. For Ruedas et al. (2009), more than providing generalizable results, a hermeneutical approach contributes to an in-depth understanding of the specificities of events, processes, and phenomena under study. More specifically, in relation to the present study, such an approach contributes to an in-depth understanding of the possibilities of establishing a dialogue among different forms of knowledge within the Creative Colombia project. It does not intend, however, to present its findings as necessarily applicable or transferable to other contexts within music education, nor does it claim that these findings may be generalized.

A strategy used for conducting our research was content analysis, described by Bardin (2002) as a set of methodological tools that are constantly being improved, applied to extremely diversified (contained and containing) discourses. The common factor of these techniques is a controlled hermeneutics based on deduction: inference (p.7). According to Ruíz (2004), the kind of interpretation required by content analysis allows language to produce new meanings in relation to the original, thus establishing connections between three language levels: surface, analytical, interpretive. These levels are closely articulated to the main technical stages used as part of this strategy, as shown in Table 1.

Table. 1. Content analysis levels.

Content analysis levels		
Level	Characteristic	Stage
Surface	Information description	Pre-analysis
Analytical	Classification, data organization and category construction	Coding
Interpretive	Understanding and meaning-construction	Interpretation

Ruiz (2004, p.46) and produced by this study.

Document analysis and interviews are among the data collection tools used. Four universities from different regions in the country were selected. These universities had previously implemented at least two cohorts of the Creative Colombia Project music component: Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Universidad de Nariño, and Universidad del Atlántico. Forty-one interviews were conducted among the staff that planned the project; this group also included administrators, faculty members, and alumni of the four universities.

Content analysis consisted of three stages: pre-analysis, coding, and interpretation. Specifically, the coding stage required the definition of thematic analysis units. These contributed to finding relevant information concerning different aspects of the dialogue among different forms of knowledge as it had taken place in Creative Colombia. Afterwards, using the ATLAS.ti software, these thematic units were coded in every document and interviews were analysed, resulting in 47 codes altogether. Once all the documents had been coded, including the 41 interviews as well reports from the Ministry of Culture about the Project, thematic categories were formulated, and the 47 resulting codes were grouped together, thus establishing relationships based on their similarity. As shown in Table 2, a total of five categories were generated.

Table. 2. Coding through content analysis.

Category	Description
General information (IG)	Information about Project instructors and graduates.
Prior knowledge (PS)	Initial motivations by the Ministry of Culture to implement the Project. Experience from participants interviewed before they were accepted or recruited to the Creative Colombia project was also considered.
Dialogical scenarios (ED)	Aspects related to the specific period during which participants were part of the Creative Colombia Project, as well as their perception of this period.
Effects (AC)	A description of the effects that took place after participants left the Project, as well as their perception of those effects.
Emerging categories (CE)	Themes and situations that were not initially contemplated, which later which later impacted the Creative Colombia Project.

Produced by this study.

4. Results

Once the coding and categorization process was completed, the data was analyzed through continuous cross-reference with structural aspects of our theoretical framework. Results were recorded in an analytical metatext, with the purpose of studying the significance of original data.

4.1. General Information

Of all the graduating participants, 52% were eligible for exemption from their student loans by different government agencies. This type of benefit proves that projects such as the one described here are possible if there is a political will to promote the Arts through the implementation of specific strategies by cultural or educational institutions.

Both the Project in general, and the benefits received by the students, as well as prioritized access given to those in faraway regions, are directly related to a form of affirmative action and the principle of difference as articulated by Rawls (2006). These initiatives seek to provide additional benefits to individuals who were underprivileged, due to their lack of a professional degree. 28,5% of participants interviewed play instruments used in folk music; the inclusion of these instruments in higher-education programs is relatively recent in Colombia. Some of them play more than one instrument and/or have worked in other areas of music, as music directors, arrangers, producers, luthiers, among others.

Only one person among the alumni currently works in a region outside of their place of origin. Those who participated in the Project mostly remained in their respective regions, thus serving as dynamizing agents in the context of musical and training processes. Furthermore, all participants interviewed live in urban areas, which shows similar results to the initial characterization of students in Creative Colombia for the year 2011 when only 4 percent of participating individuals lived in rural areas (Ministerio de Cultura y ACOFARTES, 2011, p.66).

4.2. Prior Knowledge

All the alumni interviewed had over ten years of experience when being admitted to the Project. In terms of their learning background, 20 percent began their musical training with their father figure. Others indicate that their musical inclination was due to the existence of musicians in their family. Music as part of a family tradition may be considered a social factor and proves there to be an existing link between the way a given environment perceives music and the possibility that children and young people decide to pursue this line of work. Both instructors and alumni indistinctively use the terms “popular,” “self-taught,” “empirical,” and “traditional” to describe their previous forms of learning. This reflects a certain degree of ambiguity in the way the terms are usually applied, and how blurred the lines separating these concepts may become.

All the participants proved to be highly motivated during their learning processes, which resulted in the exploration of further knowledge sources: some of them paid for lessons, others tried to find training methods, some learned with friends, some by ear, and/or participated in seminars, workshops, and courses. In spite of the few training institutions available, limited access to sheet music, a lack of trained instructors, etc., they were able to overcome any difficulties encountered due to being highly motivated to learn.

The alumni also describe a prior learning process that may be directly associated to practice, as they were part of music bands in which they also learned. As a result of their own interest, they became members of orchestras, ensembles, or formed their own bands. For them, there is no difference between learning music and playing music, as the two are conceived as part of the same process. This trend highlights the important role that social interaction plays in music education, as it is a process of learning from and with others.

In terms of the way instructors and administrators perceive the prior knowledge that their students bring with them, participants interviewed at the Universidad de Nariño explain that a great number of incoming students had a great deal of empirical knowledge, but their knowledge of music theory was almost non-existent. A similar situation is described at the Universidad del Atlántico, where students also proved to be proficient in their instrument playing, but had little knowledge of theory. Participants at the Universidad Distrital and Universidad Pedagógica were described as having the highest musical aptitude among those who participated in the Project. Participants from all the universities mention the fact that well-known musicians in the context of folk music participated as students in the Project. Another profile that was mentioned was that of musicians with some recognition in academic settings who, for different reasons, had never obtained a university degree.

From some of the answers provided by instructors in their interviews indicate the importance of redefining and finding more appropriate terms for existing musical practices. This is based on conceptualizations circulating in academia, even though it is acknowledged that incoming students do possess some degree of music appropriation. Moreover, Castro-Gómez (2007) reflects on the role of universities, not only as a privileged site of knowledge production, but as the institution in charge of drawing lines that separate legitimate from illegitimate knowledge (p. 83). As a result, in the context of the Creative Colombia Project, it was not enough for incoming students to have a significant degree of music appropriation, but it was also necessary to render this into the terms of traditional academic concepts.

4.3. Dialogical Settings

Since 2011 the Ministry of Culture has organized a series of Creative Colombia conferences (2011, 2014, 2015, 2016), aimed at creating settings where dialogues could be established and questions, experiences, and proposals concerning the development of the Project could be shared. Administrators, faculty members, students, and alumni coming from all the participating universities all over the country participated in these events. While universities to some extent tried to adapt the curricula of their traditional music education programs, it is evident that establishing a dialogue among different forms of knowledge was not a priority for their academic processes. This was reflected in that neither university administrators nor the faculty were familiar with the Ministry's initial proposal concerning the Project. As a result, it may be said that the decision of whether or not a dialogue was established as part of their courses was always in the hands of instructors. Moreover, this decision was always conditioned by their own systems of thought and how they (instructors) validated a form of knowledge, thereby making them amenable to including them in an academic setting.

Throughout the Project coursework, some settings were more favorable for the establishment of a dialogue than others. Specifically, the admission process itself resulted in the acknowledgment and validation of the students' prior knowledge, which was not necessarily related to music as seen in academic contexts. During the coursework, some instructors made room for processes where different forms of knowledge were included and composed part of the subject they were teaching. Curricular activities such as concerts and different venues for musical practice also favored dialogue. Finally, in part due to their own informal learning trajectories, students themselves generated impromptu music sessions with their peers.

One particularly relevant setting for the establishment of dialogue was that of the development of degree projects. These allowed students to explore their own experience related to music and teaching, as part of a highly demanding research process using theoretical and conceptual tools developed in academia. Similar results were also obtained with degree recitals. Through them, students showcased/demonstrated their musical versatility, which was further developed during their formal training process.

4.4. Effects

Because the Project depended heavily on the stipulated curriculum of undergraduate programs in all the universities, major structural innovations in the implementation of the Project through its different cohorts was not possible. As a result, contributions from the Project were perceived mostly among faculty members and alumni, rather than in terms of the academic or administrative structure of participating universities. For faculty members, the Project gave them the opportunity to see the nation's reality from a different perspective. It also helped them reassess their preconceived ideas about what musicians and music educators actually do in the different regions of the country.

It is noteworthy that all the participating universities eventually hired some of the Project alumni as instructors. In general, participating alumni acknowledge the fact that having obtained a university degree improved their job conditions and options. All of them are currently working as musicians and music educators.

4.5. Other Emerging Categories

A noticeable finding during this study was the few women participating in the Project as students, in spite of an explicit intention of offering a differential approach to promote inclusion and diversity. Another relevant aspect, to be considered from the perspective of whether new cohorts should be accepted at each university, is the negative perception of the Project by certain academic communities in some universities, which may indicate their resistance to embrace alternative forms of music knowledge. Such a perception could also be connected to the excessive duration of the Project, since it was initially intended to be a temporary measure and not exceed a three-year period. Nevertheless, the Project kept on going and even to this day new cohorts are being accepted.

Furthermore, the implementation of the Project was not exempt from the structural difficulties faced by educational institutions in Colombia. Among these, are the inadequate physical infrastructure in some university campuses, precarious transport and communication infrastructures in some of the regions, and violence-related phenomena that made it difficult for some students in faraway regions to participate.

5. Discussion

One of the possible risks entailed by data fragmentation, as required by content analysis, was described by Valbuena (2011) as losing the holistic perspective that studies from a social perspective require (p.222). Consequently, when using holistic approach, it is important to analyze findings in the context of educational, cultural, and even political processes from and within which the Creative Colombia Project emerged.

First of all, the Project needs to be assessed from a realistic perspective, acknowledging its innovative nature in the field of arts education in the country. This results in more questions and reflections than certainties, particularly regarding what it means to adopt a dialogical approach to music education. As a pioneering program, it has initiated relevant debates about possible pathways for overcoming the historical exclusion to which multiple forms of knowledge have been subjected in the context of academic training in the country. That innovative nature allows us to view the Project based on Habermas (1987) communicative action approach in its dual nature, as it is not only a result of the intention to improve the working conditions of artist, but also as an initiator of debates on possible pathways for overcoming the historical exclusion to which multiple forms of knowledge have been subjected in the context of academic training in the country.

Early on it could be seen that the Ministry of Culture (2011) actually developed theoretical guidelines to implement the Project, resulting in different times/stages when a dialogical process took place within the Creative Colombia Project. While these guidelines could indeed have contributed to its implementation in training programs at participating universities, program coordinators, instructors or alumni never became fully familiar with them. Even though there was no evidence that universities established concrete regulations for the implementation of dialogues as a guiding principle of pedagogical and artistic processes, there were in fact some specific moments as well as some specific activities during coursework, that do reflect an intention to establish such a dialogue.

The implementation of Creative Colombia proved that a dialogue among different forms of knowledge as a pedagogical strategy could take place in the classroom, provided that individual instructors decide to promote it as part of the subjects they teach. However, for such a dialogue to become a true methodological principle, one that could in fact orient pedagogical processes in music education, it needs to be supported by sound theoretical approaches. It should also be implemented as part of the curriculum, so that diverse musical practices may be incorporated into training processes.

As to the effects of its implementation in universities, due to its short-term duration in some of them and dependence on the regulated training programs, the Project achieved no structural changes in any of them. On the other hand, concerning the instructors who participated in the project, it was actually possible to engage in conversations motivated by a greater knowledge and respect toward different forms of knowledge and those in possession of that knowledge. This could result in their classrooms and subjects becoming settings where diverse musical practices may be more readily embraced.

Some universities opened new locations for cohorts in cities besides those in their main campus. These cities did not previously have higher-education training programs in music. Participating universities also offered new cohorts with a differential approach aimed at people coming from isolated regions. This is significant, as it reveals the development of a pedagogical and political approach to dialogical processes. It requires that universities establish some degree of communicative action through which they may be able to adapt to the specific needs of their surroundings and to develop strategies to respond to them.

The Creative Colombia project meant a significant breakthrough in the country, its purpose being to acknowledge and improve quality of life for many artists coming from a variety of backgrounds. Nevertheless, as a public

policy strategy, it failed to overcome the challenges and contradictions generated by the insertion of traditional and popular forms of knowledge in an academic setting. These contradictions have been pointed out in analyses of some musical education contexts by authors such as Queiroz (2004), Ochoa (2016) and Arenas (2016). The incorporation of alternative forms of knowledge demands a rethinking of the existing power dynamics in education, but could also lead to its perpetuation. It is paradoxical that academia, which has historically marginalized and dismissed forms of knowledge produced outside of its purview, is now in charge of classifying, defining, and deciding which practices deserve to be part of its training processes, and which do not.

The coloniality of knowledge underlies some of these policies and perpetuates the implicit belief that different forms of artistic knowledge can only acquire a certain degree of validity through their incorporation into academia, as referred by Castro-Gómez (2007) and Santos (2010). From such a perspective, these forms of knowledge are considered merely an exotic or colorful addition to training processes, instead of a valid object of study, receiving the equitable treatment in order that a dialogue with academic forms of knowledge may then take place.

One of the limitations affecting the academic incorporation of traditional forms of musical knowledge is the tendency to reduce them to simple repertoires, severing the bonds that join them to those who bear them and to the life experiences that generate and reproduce them. Policies implemented as a result never go beyond trying to solve some of the consequences of those limitations (including the exclusion of these forms of knowledge from institutional training processes), however, they never address the structural social, economic, and political causes that generate them.

Since its inception in 1997, the Ministry of Culture has generally taken initiatives to acknowledge and make diverse musical practices visible, thereby promoting training processes that respect the logics and dynamics in which these practices originate. Nevertheless, so far there have not been enough dialogical scenarios between this Ministry and the Ministry of Education, or universities, where the results achieved by those training processes may serve as guidelines for further action at the higher education level. This would, in turn, contribute to strengthening the inclusion of diverse musical practices.

Finally, one controversial factor in academic settings, is that traditional and popular musical practices, as well as the ways in which they are appropriated, are successful on their own and have never depended on academia to be relevant. As a result, academia should find the appropriate mechanisms to integrate these practices into its sphere of action, so that it can better respond to the needs of its surrounding context, which it often misinterprets. In this sense, approaches such as those of Aharonián (2011), Shifres and Gonnet (2015), and Carabetta (2017) can become important references regarding the integration of these practices within the context of Latin American music education.

6. Conclusions

For participating universities, Creative Colombia was a unique opportunity for developing an appreciation of the multiple forms of knowledge and experiences brought by high quality musicians and music educators from different regions of the country. This experience is an important reference for institutional pedagogical processes in terms of strategies and mechanisms not only to acknowledge the musicians and educators, but also their knowledge and how it is appropriated.

The relevance of a region-centered approach in the Project's development is corroborated by the diverse characteristics found at each one of the participating universities. In the case of the Universidad Distrital music program, the establishment of a dialogue among different forms of knowledge was much more evident during the training processes. In that program there is a longstanding tradition of interaction with folk and regional music as part of how the curriculum is conceived. In the cases of Universidad de Nariño and Universidad del Atlántico, problems associated to violence, lack of transport infrastructure, and insufficient music education programs seemingly had a greater impact on the students' prior learning processes.

The limitations of Creative Colombia regarding dialogue establishment are associated to a significant reliance on traditional training programs at each university within the curriculum and the course syllabus. The curriculum and course content are, the result of institutional structures that have historically hierarchized, legitimized, and privileged certain forms of knowledge over others. As a result, the incorporation knowledge forms beyond their realm of influence is usually unsuccessful. Furthermore, there is no evidence that dialogue establishment was seen within each university as one of the Project's main goals, nor was there any evidence of its support through policy implementation or institutional structures. Therefore, decision making and implementation of dialogues was mostly up to instructors as part of the subjects they were teaching. As a result, the approach was heavily conditioned by their own thought systems regarding the acceptance and/or validation of the forms of knowledge that students participating in the Project.

Generally speaking dialogical settings were highly appreciated by most of the students interviewed. They acknowledge the importance of academic training to complement, update/refresh, and enrich their prior knowledge. They perceived no discrepancy among different forms of musical knowledge, and furthermore conceived their university experience as a chance to develop tools to better understand and systematize some of the musical and pedagogical practices they were already developing, not merely obtaining a university degree.

From this general perspective and considering the concept of ecology of knowledges, there is also a need to reconsider the supposedly universal reach of formal training processes. Moreover, polyphonic epistemologies may be posited, by recognizing how incomplete one's own arguments are as the basic condition for establishing a dialogue. Even though there is frequent mention of the broad musical background of many students, there is also a tendency to get them to rename, reconceptualize or relearn their prior knowledge, to keep them in tune with academic tradition. Such an attitude reveals the vast difference there is between acknowledging those forms of knowledge, which actually occurs during the admission process, and establishing a dialogue with them, which would imply incorporating them into training processes without trying to change them. This trend is also the result of the coloniality of thought still present at universities, which leads to consider that traditional forms of knowledge, anchored in specific non-academic settings, constitutes epistemological obstacles, that need to be translated in a way that does not impede access to knowledge considered absolute and universal.

Another noticeable phenomenon was the constant reference to the fact that many of the students came to the Project with "zero knowledge," "no readings," and that they were starting "from scratch." These expressions refer mainly to the lack of familiarity with theoretical aspects of music. They reflect a perspective from which the prior knowledge of students is associated with the lack of a grammar and inherent codes. Furthermore, it merely forces an understanding of the multiple epistemologies of diverse musical practices in academic terms.

Finally, the university is perceived not just by administrators and faculty, but also by many students as a privileged place, meant to validate different forms of knowledge. It is furthermore considered a place where they can get the necessary tools to understand or systematize their own musical and pedagogical practice, even if there were few or no similarities between these and formal academic practices.

7. Recommendations

From the results and conclusions presented above, a series of recommendations can be made. Some of these may be considered not only for the implementation of similar music education projects, but also to develop a dialogical component in general processes of music education in higher education. These recommendations contemplate three basic levels at which the educational system operates:

Macro-level: related to decisions and implementation of policies and reforms at the level of the Ministries of Culture and Education, regarding the development of projects such as Creative Colombia.

Meso-level: related to decisions and measures to be taken by universities and higher education programs about music education.

Micro-level: actions to be implemented in the classroom.

The analysis of these results indicates there to be a basic element, which may foster or inhibit the establishment of dialogical settings. That is the existence of systems of thought and ideologies among the agents involved in the music education processes which are the foundation of institutional structures. This should thus be considered in regard to the following recommendations.

Macro-level:

Dialogue must be a political commitment at this level, to promote and foster interaction among decision-making institutions in arts education. Consequently, the Ministries of Culture and Education should be effectively coordinated in the fields of the arts and education when designing and implementing joint projects, such as Creative Colombia. Joint work should also include devising a set of policies and programs for informal learning and job-oriented training with plans and approaches coming from higher education programs.

According to Butler and Fraser (1995), there are two types of action aimed at redressing injustices. On the one hand, affirmative action includes those measures that attempt to redress the unjust effects of a given social order without trying to alter the underlying system which generates them. On the other hand, transformative action tries to correct those unjust effects precisely by restructuring the underlying system that generates them (p. 47). While Creative Colombia may be understood as a form of affirmative action, transformative solutions should also be contemplated when devising similar policies and projects. In doing so, structural disadvantages which make policies and projects inaccessible to many people may be overcome.

Meso-level:

Administrative, academic, and epistemological structures upon which universities rely should be more flexible. In academic settings in particular, the possibility of establishing a dialogue among different forms of knowledge requires modifying and/or creating new curricula with that specific intention. Pedagogical and ideological structures from which curricula are traditionally conceived in music education are not conducive to the development of dialogical settings. Consequently, alternative forms of knowledge, differing from academic knowledge, are not conceived as epistemological options that may interact on equal footing within educational contexts.

In addition to becoming more flexible, universities should also promote the establishment of dialogical settings across disciplines. Such an approach would result in an approach to music practice from multiple perspectives, furthermore making it possible to implement dialogues among different forms of knowledge as part of the training processes.

In order to create dialogical settings in which the logic of popular forms of musical knowledge may be respected and embraced, universities need to overcome the compartmentalized approach to traditional subjects in their curricula. It is possible to transcend the context of isolated subjects, in favor of the idea of modules and diverse training settings integrating theory and practice. These settings are much more organic to teaching and learning processes with regard to alternative forms of knowledge. Furthermore, conditions should also be created for experts in traditional and popular forms of musical knowledge to become university instructors and researchers. The implementation of Creative Colombia as a university outreach activity in places beyond the main university campuses may be the first step towards the development of decentralized projects. As a result, music education training programs could respond more realistically and specifically to social needs in different regions. Finally, one of the main roles of universities is the development of research practices which may lead to dynamize processes of reflection and instruction in this area, in order to promote a greater articulation of the three levels explored here: macro-, meso-, and micro-levels.

Micro level:

While traditional university settings are not designed to incorporate other forms of knowledge, it is in the classroom context where the implementation of strategies promoting dialogue with alternative approaches to music may take place in a more organic way. The inclusion of traditional and folk music in academic settings is usually limited to its inclusion in repertoires, disregarding fundamental elements of their epistemologies, such as social context, presence in everyday life, and diverse teaching and learning processes. Consequently, it is necessary to change the perception of the classroom as the only possible setting where educational action takes place. Field practice where students may have experiential access to the places and people who practice alternative forms of music should also be developed.

Different music appropriation strategies of informal learning generate great results, and are regularly used by students participating, not only in the Creative Colombia project, but also more generally in music education programs. Therefore, every subject should make it possible to build bridges between the students' prior knowledge and traditional academic knowledge. Among these informal learning strategies that may be incorporated into the classroom, is the integration of theory and practice by including listening, performance, and creation activities; interactive collaborative learning; and overcoming an exclusive reliance on sheet music, developing the possibility of learning "by ear."

The contingency generated by the Covid-19 pandemic created the conditions for educational settings to include new and varied technologies in the teaching and learning processes. Particularly in music education, all the experiences with these technologies may be a relevant reference for the development of projects to reach faraway regions and/or individuals who have no access to traditional education programs for one reason or another.

Systems of thought:

This is a key aspect in every project oriented at establishing dialogical settings with regard to popular forms of knowledge. It would be useless to modify academic or administrative university structures, if participants in educational processes do not open their minds to alternative forms of knowledge as an integral part of academic training.

Current tenets resulting from the interaction between music education and ethnomusicology emphasize the need to study multiple forms of music, focusing on those who produce, perform, and consume them. This idea has deep implications for programs such as Creative Colombia. It means acknowledging and validating the life stories and music background of every participant. Specific curricular pathways should be implemented according to their individual strengths, weaknesses, and expectations.

Dialogical education as a field of knowledge has become an increasingly relevant and valid object of research internationally. In the specific context of music education in Colombia, such an educational perspective is completely relevant, as it responds to the growing need to build bridges connecting diverse artistic practices that have been historically marginalized or excluded. Music education programs seeking to implement projects such as Creative Colombia must recognize that each form of knowledge is partial and situated, and moreover, there is no universally valid form of knowledge. Thus, will it be possible to change the rules, and avoid the concept of a single, universal music repertoire. This would thus open the way to the acknowledgment of multiple repertoires and their particular forms of knowledge, that are completely valid and pertinent in their own given contexts, and may furthermore contribute positively to flexible, enriching perspectives on music learning.

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