



Group Music Therapy for Children with Special Needs

offered in partnership with Love 21 Foundation

Impact Report
April to June 2021

Prepared August 2021

About YAMA Foundation

YAMA Foundation makes yoga, art, and meditation accessible to Hong Kong's most vulnerable. Our work focuses around four core services areas: (1) People with Disabilities and Special Needs, including those living with Chronic or Terminal Illnesses; (2) People living in Poverty; and (4) People living with poor Mental Health. YAMA Foundation is tax-exempt charity (File#91/14823) under Hong Kong IRD Section 88.

Programme Overview

Programme Name	Group Music Therapy for Children with Special Needs – Intake #1
Beneficiary Organisation	Love 21 Foundation
Beneficiary Contact	Kenneth Chan – Programme Manager, Love 21 Foundation
Social Issue(s)	People with Down syndrome and/or autism often suffer from low life expectancy and poor overall health. They are rarely seen and frequently misunderstood by those with limited knowledge of their condition. As a result, members of this community are often held back by a lack of opportunities in education, employment, and inclusive recreation.
Programme Lead	Yvie Chang – Director of Programmes, YAMA Foundation
Teaching Staff	Jacqueline Leung – Registered Music Therapist
Programme Term	10 April thru 26 June 2021
Programme Outputs	10 x 60-minute group music therapy classes
Programme Participants	8 children with autism or Down syndrome, age 11 thru 15
Language of Instruction	Cantonese



Overview of Beneficiary Organisation

Love 21 Foundation is a charity dedicated to empowering the Down syndrome and autistic community in Hong Kong. As life expectancy and overall health of community members are often quite poor, Love 21's multifaceted approach aims to improve and prolong the lives of community members and create a sustainable lifestyle change.

Sports are at the core Love 21's mission. Whether it's football or yoga, hip-hop or trampoline, classes promote physical and mental benefits of sports-related activities, and also focus on strength training, coordination, and balancing mental health.

Love 21 also offers nutrition programmes, including cooking and food prep lessons to teach life skills and guide families to make healthy lifestyle choices, and art classes to enable members to explore and develop individual creativity. Non-sport programmes also invite participation from the whole family, which supports the organisation's mission to empower change in the entire family.

Programme Objectives

Designed by our Music Therapist, the programme focuses on participants' social, emotional, cognitive, and motor skills development through direct intervention in a group setting.

Our primary objective was to help participants learn coping skills that can be integrated into everyday living, whereby improving their overall quality of life. The music therapist establishes foundational skills through music, and shares ways to apply these same skills to other nonmusical aspects of life.



Through a structured class curriculum, the desired therapeutic outcomes were for participants to be able to:

1. Use socially appropriate greetings;
2. Wait their turn;
3. Demonstrate ability to stop/start on cue;
4. Vocalise during provided musical pause; and
5. Remain regulated when limits are set.

In addition, repetition of class sequence aimed to increase participants' ability to achieve these goals independently.

Class Structure

Duration:

60 minutes

Frequency:

1 class per week for 10 weeks
(Saturdays @ 2:30 PM)

Participants were led through a variety of games and activities with handheld instruments, singing, improvising, and dancing.

Each class opened with a 'Hello' song to encourage social orientation. This was followed by an activity with hand percussion instruments, to develop turn-taking and listening skills.



Next, singing or a game with large props such as a parachute or therapy ball increased cognitive skills and emotional regulation. A dance activity followed, to improve motor skills, and every class ended with relaxation to allow participants to calm down after all the activities and release their body tension.

The class closed with a 'Goodbye' song to reinforce social orientation.

The therapist provided live music accompaniment for all the activities and at least one Love 21 staff member was present during the sessions as a safeguarding measure and to provide support as needed.

YAMA Teaching Staff

Jacqueline Leung – Registered Music Therapist

Jacqueline has been teaching with YAMA Foundation and working with children with disabilities and special needs since 2019. She is a Registered Music Therapist, a flute teacher, and performer. Jacqueline holds a Bachelor of Music and Arts from The University of New South Wales in Australia, and Master of Music Therapy from the University of Technology in Sydney. She is a Registered Music Therapist (RMT) with the Australian Music Therapy Association.

Teachers Observations

The group comprised of 8 children, aged 11-15, with either autism or Down's syndrome. Over the 10 sessions, participants were invited to explore music both expressively (through vocalisation and playing different instruments) and receptively (i.e., listening passively).

In the beginning, most participants did not respond or sing hello/goodbye at the appropriate music cues. By Session 10, all students were able to wave hello/goodbye and verbalise hello/goodbye appropriately.

With hand percussion and singing activities, participants depended on verbal and gesture prompts to initiate and sustain turn-taking during the first few sessions. By Session 10 however, most were able to start and stop according to music cues.

During dancing activities, one participant who was otherwise reluctant to join in other activities or engage with peers responded with particular enthusiasm: she initiated pairing-up with other participants and was able to imitate the movements and dance with her peers in front of the class.

Students looked forward to relaxation before the end of class. When it was time, they would immediately go and get their own yoga mat and find a spot to lie down. They were eager to prepare for relaxation to live music and most would be able to settle down halfway through the music and remain quiet.

While there was initial hesitation from a one or two participants in the beginning, by the end of Session 10, all were more willing to join in class activities and became more engaged overall.

The only challenge related to the technical support of the classroom venue. Certain activities required the lights to be switched off. However, the light switch was located outside the classroom and so each time one of the staff would need to leave the room to adjust the lights. This was not a significant challenge however so there was minimal impact on the flow of the class.

Therapist's Assessment

The therapist conducted baseline and post-intervention assessments of participants' ability to achieve the therapeutic outcomes – at the end of the first session, and after the last session.





Participants' level of *independence* in achieving class outcomes, were scored on a scale of 0 to 6, with a higher score indicated a higher level of independence. Scores were assigned according to the following criteria:

0	No response
1	Hand-Over-hand Assistance
2	Physical Prompts
3	Modelled Prompts
4	Verbal Prompts
5	Single Additional Verbal Cue Only
6	Upon Request/Music Cue Only

Participants were scored individually, and the average of all individual scores after the first session was taken as the overall Baseline Score. Similarly, the average of all individual scores after the tenth session was taken as the Post-Intervention Score. According to the Music Therapy Assessment model used by the therapist, an increase of 25% or more between baseline and post-intervention assessments would signify positive change, meaning that participants have achieved adequate progress on the set programme goals.

Baseline Score	Post-Intervention Score	% Change
3.025	4.875	+ 61.16%

After 10 sessions of music therapy intervention, the average level of independence in activities has increased 61.16% (from pre-assessment score of 3.025 to post-assessment score of 4.875). This implies that overall the participants appeared to be more independent in their participation of the class activities. The 61.16% improvement exceeds the minimum target of 25% for positive change. As such, we are pleased to consider the programme goals fully-met.

Beneficiary Organisation Feedback

“The 10-week programme ran smoothly and was well-planned. Lessons were structured in a way that enabled participants to quickly break the ice (extremely helpful for those who were shy and hesitant to join in) and plenty of opportunities to play, move around, and familiarise themselves with various musical instruments.

The activities were overall fun and engaging and provided an outlet for expending creative energy. The kids especially liked the parachute and handbell sessions! Over time, the sessions have helped participants to feel calmer and more centered. Interactions with other kids and Jacqueline have also led to observable improvements in their interpersonal and communication skills as well as building confidence.”

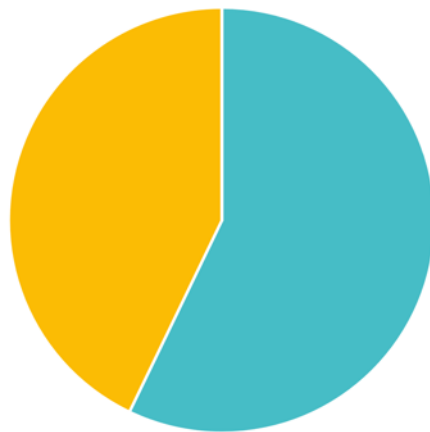
- Tsau Jin Cheng, Programme Coordinator, Love 21 Foundation



Participant Feedback

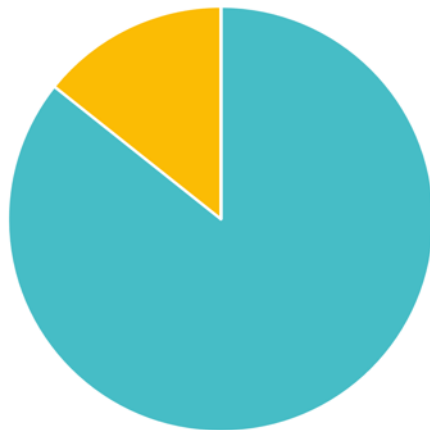
Parents of programme participants were invited to fill out an online form to provide feedback after the programme. 7 of 8 participants responded. Responses were as follows:

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following:



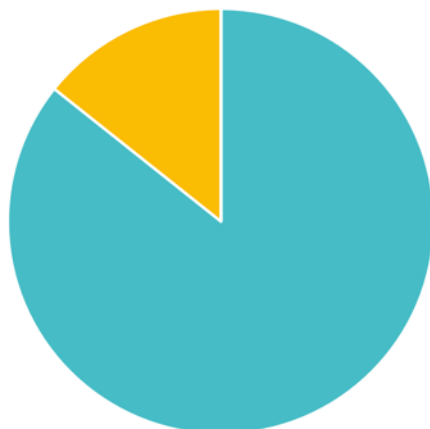
Overall Programme 整體計劃

- 5 Excellent 非常滿意
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 Unsatisfactory 非常不滿意



Class Schedule (Day/Time)
課程安排(日期/時間)

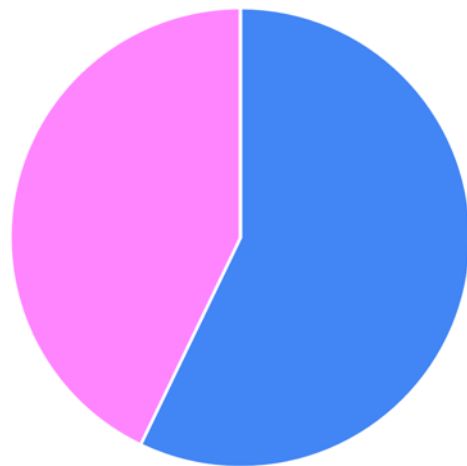
- 5 Excellent 非常滿意
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 Unsatisfactory 非常不滿意



Class Venue 課程場地

- 5 Excellent 非常滿意
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 Unsatisfactory 非常不滿意

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following:

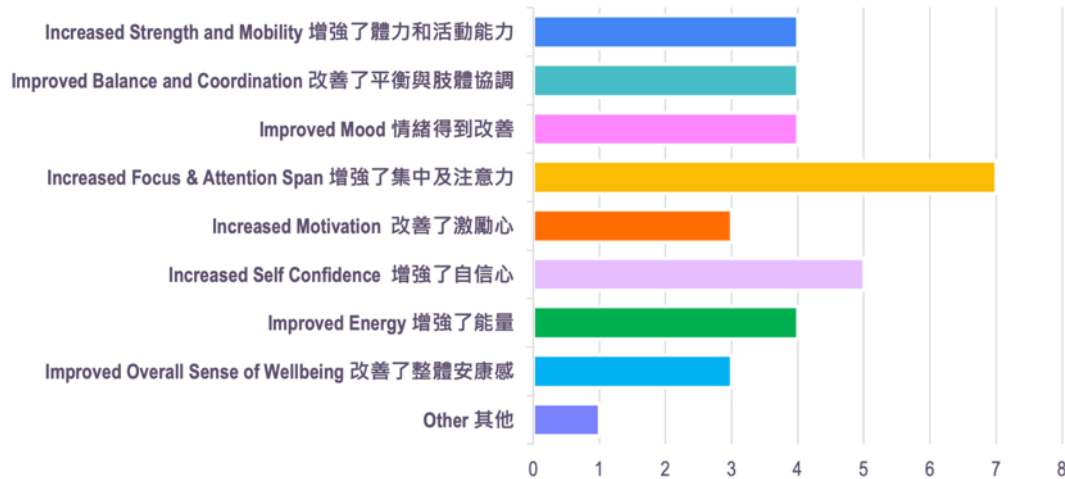


Student(s) enjoyed coming to class.

學生喜歡參加此課堂。

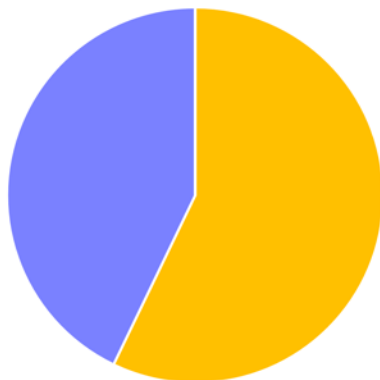
- 5 Strongly Agree 非常同意
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 Strongly Disagree 非常不同意

Student(s) benefitted from 學生在課堂中的受益:





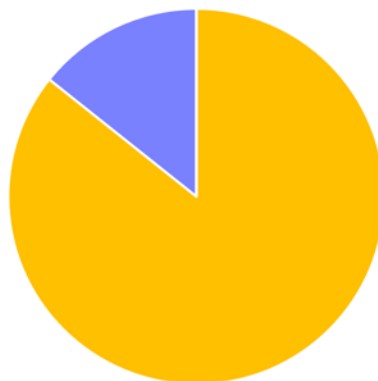
On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following:



Teacher's instructions were clear.

導師的指導清晰。

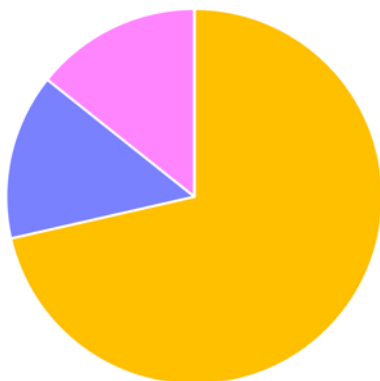
- 5 Strongly Agree 非常同意
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 Strongly Disagree 非常不同意



Teacher seemed knowledgeable.

導師具有相當知識。

- 5 Strongly Agree 非常同意
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 Strongly Disagree 非常不同意



Teacher used class time well.

課堂時間流程善用得好。

- 5 Strongly Agree 非常同意
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 Strongly Disagree 非常不同意



Teacher handled any disruptions in a fair and safe way.

- 5 Strongly Agree 非常同意
- 4
- 3
- 2
- 1 Strongly Disagree 非常不同意

YAMA FOUNDATION IMPACT REPORT

Group Music Therapy for SEN Children (Love 21 Foundation, Intake #1 – Apr to Jun 2021)

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What did you find most beneficial about the programme? Please share any highlights.

“Happy” – both Sunny Chen’s and Tse Yu Hin’s moms

“I learned more about music therapy through the classes, and daughter is also very happy.”
– Ng Oi Laam’s mom

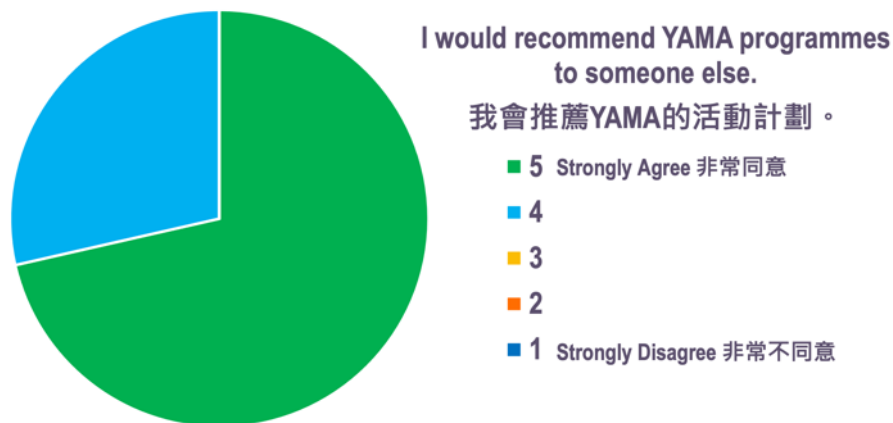
“I will ask my mom to sign me up for the next music therapy group.” – Tse Yu Hin, age 12

What improvements, if any, would you suggest to make the program better?

“Continue with classes!” – both Sunny Chen and Tse Yu Hin’s moms

“As every [participant] has special needs, sessions would go more smoothly if one more volunteer can be on hand to help.” – both Ng Oi Laam and Lau Wai Kit’s moms

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following: 以 1 至 5 作評分，您對以下陳述有何看法？



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YAMA Foundation would like to thank our partners and donors for their continued support and dedication. We are deeply grateful for this opportunity to serve the Hong Kong community. 🙏🙏🙏

If you have any questions about this Report, or would like more information on our programmes and services, please contact YAMA Foundation at +852 5507 0268 or by email to info@yamahk.org