



## Erasmus Training Event Program #2 - Arte Para La Motivacion

April 8-12, 2016–04–18 Lisbon/Fozdo Arelho

Good Practices: Netherlands – MUS-E Jaffa Institute

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The MUSE-E Jaffa Institute program was officially established in 2008 during a memorable two-day International Conference, "Advancing Children through the Arts," attended by board members of the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation, a guest youth orchestra of seventy players from Bern Switzerland, and over 500 local participants. While the MUS-E program began with a small group of 15 children, today, it serves over 500 at-risk children from multicultural backgrounds in formal and informal educational settings. Professional artists engage the children in a wide range of artistic activities, including drama, music, painting, visual arts, and martial arts. The goals of the program are twofold. On the one hand, art-education classes outreach to as many children as possible, with the intent of helping them explore means of expression and communication which were previously unavailable to them. On the other hand, the program focuses on select research monitored projects, which seek to further our understanding of the power of the arts, especially among at-risk children and youth. To date, the research projects have explored whether and how innovative methods of teaching and learning strengthen the cognitive, social, and personal benefits of arts education. One such project, *Mediated Music* Intervention and Language Skills of Kindergarten Children of Migrant Workers, funded by the Caritas Foundation, Germany, aimed to assess the impact of *Mediated Music Lessons* on the language proficiency of a select group of kindergarten children of migrant workers. *Mediated Learning* is a didactic approach intended to nurture quality and synchronized teacher-child interactions while specifically focusing on enhancing children's general learning skills. Extensive research has

confirmed positive interactions between music education and general learning skills (Hallam, 2014), as well as between *Mediated Learning* and general learning skills (Feuerstein, 1988; Klein, 1987). Our research aimed to assess the impact of classes that draw on both of these powerful educational practices. The participants included 63 kindergarten children. The children in the experimental group (n=31) studied music for two hours a week for four months with a certified music teacher who was also a trained mediator. Children in the control group (n=32) studied music for the same period of time with a certified music teacher, who was not a trained mediator. Pre- and post-assessments evaluated the development of music aptitude (Gordon, 1979), executive functions (working memory, self-regulation, and cognitive flexibility, Davidson et al., 2006), Audio memory (words and numbers) (Digit span) and language proficiency (Goralnik, 1982). The findings indicated significant improvements for the research group in cognitive mechanisms and language proficiency. These findings are significant in that they suggest that mediated music environments successfully engage challenging children; foster improved learning skills which may transfer to other contexts in a relatively short period; and upgrade the impact of even experienced, quality music teachers.