

# Colombia Creativa Artists' Professionalisation Programme (PPACC - Programa de Profesionalización de Artistas Colombia Creativa): Evaluation of the organisation and musical training accomplished

## Programa de Profesionalización de Artistas Colombia Creativa (PPACC): valoración de la organización y formación musical conseguidas

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### Abstract:

Professional music education is still an emerging educational sector in some countries, as in Colombia. Within this sector, there are new, interesting initiatives that provide musical training for non-institutionalised professional groups, who would not otherwise be able to obtain academically valid credentials, given their geographic dispersion and employment situation in the country. In this sense, an analytical study associated with this area has been conducted to explore the general functioning and achievements in musical training of the Colombia Creativa Artists' Professionalisation Programme (PPACC - Programa de Profesionalización de Artistas Colombia Creativa), identifying weaknesses, strengths and opportunities for improvement. This programme is sponsored by the Ministry of Culture of Colombia and is one of the main ways for professional musicians who could not be trained in official centres to achieve certification of their competencies with academic validity in this country, providing them with clearly improved employability within the field of musical training. For this research, a qualitative methodology was used, by means of interviews and an emergent content analysis was conducted with the NVivo program. Among the main results, of note are the organisational difficulties encountered and the tensions and rejection of the programme by some participants. Also strengths such as the flexibility of the programme and the opportunity it provides for national musical training of groups of artists who are not institutionally professionalised.

**Keywords:** music education, Colombia, professionalisation of artists, management of educational programmes, employability of music educators.

### Resumen:

La educación musical profesionalizante pertenece todavía a un sector educativo emergente en algunos países, como ocurre en Colombia. Dentro de este ámbito, surgen interesantes iniciativas de ayuda a la formación musical para colectivos profesionales no institucionalizados, que no podrían contar con otras vías de obtención de credenciales con validez académica dada su dispersión geográfica y situación laboral en el país. En este sentido, se ha realizado un estudio de análisis para explorar el funcionamiento general y los logros en formación musical conseguidos por el Programa de Personalización de Artistas Colombia Creativa (PPAC), así como para identificar debilidades, fortalezas y oportunidades de mejora. Este programa está auspiciado por el Ministerio de Cultura de Colombia y es una de las principales vías con que cuentan los músicos profesionales que no pudieron formarse en centros oficiales para lograr una certificación de sus competencias con validez académica en el país. Ello supone una clara mejora de la empleabilidad dentro del ámbito de la formación musical. En esta investigación, se aplicó una metodología de tipo cualitativo y se realizaron entrevistas y un análisis de contenido emergente mediante el programa NVivo. Entre los principales resultados, destacan las dificultades encontradas de tipo organizativo y las tensiones y el rechazo hacia

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el programa de algunos participantes. También fortalezas como la flexibilidad del proyecto y la oportunidad de capacitación musical nacional para colectivos de artistas no profesionalizados institucionalmente.

**Palabras clave:** formación musical, Colombia, profesionalización de artistas, gestión de programas educativos, empleabilidad de educadores musicales.

## 1. Introduction

Education is considered to be a personal possession and a process that is shared by all individuals, through which they obtain skills, knowledge, behaviours and principles (Anderson & Fejes, 2005; Tejada & Thayer, 2019). This implies that learning is not solely limited to the formal education system, but rather, as emphasised by Folkestad (2006), Romeu-Fontanillas et al. (2020), Sangrá et al. (2021) and Souto-Seijo et al. (2021), other non-formal and informal educational spaces enrich and nourish this process.

Melnic and Botez (2014) define education as a process including many factors that contribute both to the personal and intellectual education of the human being. According to Kashif and Cheewakrakokbit (2017) and Tejada and Thayer (2019), education can be defined as the continuous process of human and cultural training that provides individuals with essential tools and knowledge for their growth and development in society.

The scientific literature also indicates that music in education has a positive effect on the acquisition of benefits from such different fields as psychology, medicine, anthropology, neurology or education (Corrigall & Trainor, 2011). This makes it an extremely significant field within the area of educational policies in all countries.

In terms of the situation of higher education in music based on a transnational analysis and of the similarities and differences regarding educational models in different countries and cultures, several studies reveal university approaches to the orientation and specialisation of future professionals in the field of music. Along these lines, Sanchez-Escribano et al. (2022) conducted a comparative study of instrumental music education in the United States, Spain and Singapore. It demonstrates the emergence of four analysis dimensions in the three countries studied: accessibility, the value assigned to instrumental music education, professionalisation and specialisation, and qualifications and requirements for teachers. As convergence factors in the three cas-

es, these authors indicate three distinct teacher profiles: the first corresponds to those who have mainly received training in instrumental music but have little or no educational and pedagogical training; the second professional profile is the exact opposite; and the third places equal importance on pedagogical knowledge and musical skills.

Similarly, López-León et al., (2015), Wang and Lorenzo (2018), Lorenzo et al., (2023) and Lorenzo and Turcu (2023) have conducted international studies on musical training and employability of teachers in Puerto Rico, China, Colombia and Romania, and they coincide in detecting the three educational models found by Escribano et al. (2022). This makes it possible to establish a similar pattern for training and employability of music degree graduates at universities in most countries around the world. Two clear positions appear in this pattern: the musical pedagogue and the practical musician, thus producing an ambivalent situation that has not been fully resolved in any educational system.

In this context, there is a need for this research, which analyses the Colombia Creativa Artists' Professionalisation Programme (PPACC - Programa de Profesionalización de Artistas Colombia Creativa). The PPACC is an institutional music programme from the Colombian Ministry of Culture, designed to detect the strengths and weaknesses of the specific training offered and implement strategies to improve its development.

## 2. Music education in Colombia

According to Dias (2014) and Hyland (2013), higher education is an educational cycle that provides a space for interconnections between fields of knowledge. Given its interdisciplinary nature, it can influence different aspects of knowledge, such as research; innovation; civic and professional education, both critical and intellectual; or science and technology. It can also drive major social, economic and cultural transformations involving different issues (Langa & David, 2006).

Nevertheless, in many countries, higher education still faces major difficulties. In Colombia, there are restrictions and a lack of opportunities regarding access to this educational level for a considerable proportion of society (Langa & David, 2006; McAleavy & O'Hagan, 2004). As Dias (2007) states, over 68% of the higher education institutions (HEIs) and higher education programmes in Colombia belong to the private sector. This puts its gross enrolment ratio for higher education far below the other countries in the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) (Gómez & Celis, 2009; Herrera & Infante, 2003). In fact, although the country has made major progress over the last two decades, as different studies show [Melo-Becerra et al., 2017; MEN (Colombian Ministry of Education), 2014], the enrolment rate is relatively low in international terms, even more so if we compare it to developed countries (MEN, 2014).

Furthermore, in the comprehensive training of human beings, arts and music education is a tool that favours the development of cognitive, emotional and social skills and abilities (Corrigall & Trainor, 2011; Diamond, 2013; Guhn et al., 2019). However, in Colombia, in terms of representativity and importance, the area of training in arts and music has gradually lost ground in the context of school education (Aróstegui & Kyakuwa, 2021; Rodríguez, 2015, 2016).

Arts education provides a space for artists, trainers, teachers and learners from different intercultural backgrounds to meet and participate (Ñáñez-Rodríguez & Castro-Turriago, 2016). Likewise, music education concerns both the aesthetic, sensory and intellectual sphere and the emotional, affective and social aspect (Sala & Gobet, 2017).

Colombian national regulations cover all the arts under a single educational area called *arts education*; therefore, it is very common to employ a single teacher to cover more than one artistic field. This means that little importance is given to their speciality (Casas, 2015). As a result, as Rodríguez (2016) indicates, teachers provide education based on programmes that are mostly lists of contents involving general knowledge, but without the necessary tools to create sound, long-term processes. Within these dynamics, we find one of the most frequent problems in the field of formal music education, not only in schools but also at higher levels: the lack of relevance and contextualisation of teacher training (Cremades-Andreu & García, 2017).

In this way, despite the mandatory nature of arts education in the Colombian school system at the levels

of basic and secondary education, the criteria for quality and enrollment do not meet expectations. Moreover, due to the lack of scientific research relating to artistic-pedagogical experiences, it is difficult to cite studies that support this system (Ministry of Culture, 201). This has led to such a reduction in the value of arts and music education in schools that it has swiftly moved to extra-curricular spaces involving non-formal and informal education. The Ministry of Culture has assumed the responsibility of guaranteeing enrolment, quality, implementation, guidance and supervision, tasks that are, in theory, the responsibility of the Colombian Ministry of Education (Arenas, 2011; Rodríguez, 2015).

In relation to the circumstances and quality of higher education programmes for music in Colombia, Cárdenas and Lorenzo (2013a and 2013b) indicate that these programmes have not yet achieved a sufficient culture of change, evaluation and improvement to make their curricular projects relevant and coherent. This situation has created inequalities between the necessary training resulting from a professional music programme, with its own characteristics aimed at professionalizing performing musicians, and the training involved in music degrees, which have to take into account the artistic and musical education that students have received in the different levels of the general, pre-university system of teaching. Therefore, it seems that, in Colombia, there has not been a sufficiently clear curricular basis to address the differences in training of these two groups of target students, what has created an imbalance between the training received by each group and the professional duties of higher education graduates once they enter employment (Lorenzo et al., 2023).

In contrast, it should be emphasised that teachers of music degrees show great interest in participating in the processes of designing and modifying curricula for educational programmes, both as part of a music degree and for professional musicians. However, such disposition is severely limited by the fact that these teachers are not usually sufficiently involved in the institutional management processes by holding management positions (Cárdenas & Lorenzo, 2013a; Cárdenas et al., 2015).

### 3. The pedagogical model of the Colombia Creativa Artists' Professionalization Programme (PPACC)

In compliance with the UNESCO (2006) guidelines on the creation of programmes to promote and contribute

to artists' well-being and quality of life, and in accordance with demands for the requalification, updating, promotion and transferability of the skills and competencies of the Colombian artistic and cultural sector, in 2002, work began on charting the paths of action that eventually led, in 2007, to the consolidation of the Colombia Creativa Artists' Professionalisation Programme (PPACC). This is a special policy concerning higher education in the arts, designed by means of a collaboration between the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education, in association with ACOFARTES (Asociación Colombiana de Facultades y Programas de Artes – Colombian Association of Arts Faculties and Programmes) and ICETEX (Instituto Colombiano de Crédito Educativo y Estudios Técnicos en el Exterior – Colombian Institute of Educational Credit and Technical Studies Abroad) (Ministry of Culture & ACOFARTES, 2011). This synergy among institutions “seeks to address the lack of vocational training for the country’s artist-trainers, as a strategy aimed at providing qualifications for their work in the arts, pedagogy and cultural management” (Ministry of Culture, 2015, p. 5).

The PPACC is also a strategy that aims to consolidate and preserve the country’s cultural expressions and traditions within the academic framework and prepare the way for interculturality and the dialogue of different types of knowledge. Its academic proposal, designed by all the participating institutions working together, indicates the strengthening and consolidation of a space for interaction and dialogue of knowledge between the western tradition and the different artistic and cultural expressions. These expressions have traditionally also had a real and effective influence in revitalizing the country’s social and cultural panorama (Ministry of Culture & ACOFARTES, 2010). The PPACC, rather than being an educational programme, is a combination of complex, mid- and long-term strategies, which are essentially aimed at improving quality of life for empirical, self-taught or informal artists and educators in Colombia. This is a nationwide, public policy involving co-operation, social responsibility and inter-institutional alliances; a policy that is unique and innovative, not only in this country but generally across the whole of Latin America (ACOFARTES, 2011). It was the result of the Colombian State reflecting on the social debt it had incurred with the different sectors of the country’s artists (Guzmán-Valenzuela, 2017).

Additionally, according to Green (2002, 2008), the PPACC is academically justified by several studies

relating to how folk musicians acquire their skills and knowledge in an informal way, outside the formal learning system and without much help from trained instrumentalists. As this author points out, it is extremely interesting (and closely-linked to the PPACC work philosophy) to observe that the musical practices adopted by folk musicians correspond to the attitudes and values of informal learning that the Colombian programme has included in its academic content. Thus, it has incorporated auditory imitation, improvisation and experimentation as methodological classroom resources to bring informal learning ecologies for this type of music into the formal, disciplinary environment of music teaching in universities. Furthermore, Green highlights folk musicians’ commitment and passion as their natural learning dimensions, which may have been a decisive factor in their increased motivation and participation in the PPACC academic programme and their success, both professionally and socially, among the public that this programme targets.

The PPACC uses strategic alliances with different public HEIs, which have made their curricular arts programmes available to the project. In other words, its implementation did not require the creation of new academic/curricular programmes. Rather, the existing ones in the different participating institutions were adapted and made more flexible depending on the specific peculiarities, characteristics and needs of this public policy (Ministry of Culture & ACOFARTES, 2010). As a consequence, there are various implementation models for the PPACC; the curricular and institutional conditions governing each academic programme mean that they are structured in a similar way, but they are not identical. Nevertheless, the public policy itself indicates that certain guidelines are unalterable.

In general terms, the version of the PPACC for music presents a training programme based on the same curriculum as the music degrees at the university where it is held. The participants are usually granted five semesters of university education after passing the admissions tests and they have to undertake a further five semesters of a curriculum structured around four components: a pedagogical component, an interdisciplinary component (the relationship between arts and education), a music discipline component (50% of the disciplinary training), and a research component, in which the participants prepare their degree project to obtain their qualification (Ministry of Culture, 2015).



The subjects on the PPACC curriculum are the same as those taught on the regular degree courses in music and music education at each university. Regarding the study load, it concentrates mainly on pedagogical and musical aspects that folk musicians have not been acquired previously. It is assumed that music theory and the development of musical interpretive competencies are skills that the participant has acquired at an earlier stage. Thereby, the programme does not repeat subjects that involve learning an instrument, but rather it provides others that are related to the reinforcement of musical areas such as harmony, the development of auditory perception and musical grammar.

As for the teaching staff involved, it is basically composed of the same teachers who regularly work at the universities that run the programme, with occasional invitations to speakers on a subject of educational, pedagogical or musical interest.

As the PPACC has been running for over ten years, this research aims to conduct an analysis and nationwide evaluation of the music programmes linked to the project, by examining the opinions and experiences of the different agents involved in the process: director or project manager at the Ministry of Culture, project co-ordinators at each university, teachers and graduates. The published study originated, partly, from the doctoral thesis *Análisis del programa formativo Colombia Creativa y evaluación de las titulaciones en música vinculadas al programa [Analysis of the educational programme Colombia Creativa and evaluation of the music qualifications associated with the programme]*, by Yuly Rodríguez Ramírez. Furthermore, this work tries to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the PPACC so as to establishing opportunities for improvement that reinforce the project in future stages of implementation.

#### 4. Methodology

The methodology used is of a qualitative nature, based on identifying and structuring patterns and on describing and interpreting the data collected during the study, which are typically narrative or textual

(Fernández, 2004). Within this research model, flexibility, fit and interaction between educational practice and research are essential aspects. Consequently, it is not one-way, linear or static, and there is always room for debate and differences, with the aim of both describing and interpreting practice (Santaella, 2016).

To this effect, the qualitative methodology used is similar, in a descriptive and analytical way (Quintana, 2006), to the description of a specific reality (Anguera, 2008), taking into account the different interactions, aspects and dimensions. Specifically, the research entails analysing the data collected and converting them into categories and codes by interpreting the results of the interviews and their relation to the study objectives and the review of the scientific literature consulted (Anguera, 2008; Drisko, 2008).

The process of analysing the data obtained through this research used the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 13 to categorise and code the information (Bauselas, 2004; Bazeley, 2002). In addition, a system of categories, subcategories and emergent codes has utilised (Anguera, 2008).

##### 4.1. Participants

This study seeks to analyse and evaluate the structural and academic characteristics of the PPACC, placing particular emphasis on the music programmes linked to the project, and to assess the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement. It involved forty-three agents, who attended a semi-structured interview: a manager of the Colombia Creativa professionalisation programme at the Ministry of Culture, eight PPACC directors at the different participating institutions, fourteen teachers on the ten professional music programmes implemented under the PPACC and twenty PPACC graduates from the educational programmes Music and Degree in Music. Due to the geographical difficulty in locating interviewees for the programme in all the areas of participation, the decision was taken to select those who responded to the request to collaborate in the research and who represented the different stakeholders in the PPACC.

TABLE 1. Percentage distribution by gender of participants.

Gender	Directors	Teachers	Graduates
Men	11.6 %	25.6 %	34.9 %
Women	9.3 %	7.0 %	11.6 %

TABLE 2. Frequencies and percentages by age ranges of participants in each study group.

Age in years	Directors		Teachers		Graduates	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
20-30	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	10.0%
31-40	2	22.2%	4	28.6%	7	35.0%
41-50	2	22.2%	5	35.7%	8	40.0%
51-60	2	22.2%	2	14.3%	3	15.0%
>61	3	33.3%	3	21.4%	0	0.0%

Regarding the PPACC admissions process, the folk musicians interested in participating had to go to the university of their choice based on their interest, convenience and/or proximity, with the documentation required for the programme. This process included several criteria that the regular university programmes did not contain, such as, for example, a minimum number of years of artistic and teaching experience, a minimum age of 28-30 years, or experience in the field of cultural project management. This was the first selection filter and the process was conducted overall by a university administrative department and/or a team of teachers that was created for each programme to manage the PPACC and increase curricular flexibility.

After the first access stage had been completed, the following stage involved the admissions test applications, which were adapted and/or made more flexible depending on each institution's criteria. In some cases, depending on the artists' artistic experience, knowledge and recognition in their field, it was considered that applicants could be exempted from certain specific musical tests, as their extensive experience attested to their mastery of the basic elements of the theoretical/musical language addressed in these tests.

#### 4.2. Instrument

The data collection used a semi-structured interview model that was designed *ad hoc*, based on a series of questions that aimed to capture the interviewees' impressions concerning the subject of study (Fernández, 2013; Larenas & Díaz, 2012). In the educational field, the interview has been widely used, as an effective, easy and practical instrument that encourages dialogue among the different agents in the educational community (Zwiers & Morrissette, 1999), enabling the collection of a large amount of information (Creswell, 2003).

The interview content was assessed by expert judgement, with the participation of 29 experts connected to the area of music education and other areas related

to educational, psychological and social research. The experts assessed the pilot interview following the indications contained in the introductory letter that they had received about the study, which explained how they should assess the instrument. They made their assessments according to the level of agreement ("hardly relevant" to "very relevant") with the wording and relevance of each item. The group of experts was composed of seventeen doctors, five doctoral students and seven academics with master's degrees. Of these, twenty-two belonged to different Colombian institutions and seven to higher education institutions in Spain and Brazil. After the review by the twenty-nine experts, a statistical analysis was conducted on the experts' assessments of each of the items, in line with the criteria established by Barbero et al. (2003). These criteria establish different decisions to take for each question depending on whether the value of the average of each item is equal to or higher than 2.5. The median value is also considered, while the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile (P50) should obtain values that are equal to or higher than 2.5. In addition, an ambiguity coefficient is established, which aims to measure dispersion in the experts' agreement, using the interquartile range as the criterion. Based on the above, three possibilities were established for each item: eliminate it, review/modify it or accept it.

After having included the recommendations from the group of experts, the final interviews were composed, taking into account the literature review conducted for each category proposed.

#### 4.3. Procedure

The interviews were held with forty-three participants, via individual video conferences on platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet. The qualitative analysis of the texts arising from the interviews used the following stages (Lorenzo, 2011): reduction of excessive textual data, reconstruction of the meaning of the interview texts, and inferences drawn from comparing the different meanings encountered in the interviews.

## 5. Results

Once the process of transcription and analysis of the forty-three interviews was completed, the next stage was to establish a system of categories and codes based on the emergent coding process (Burnard, 1991; Cho & Lee, 2014; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Mayring, 2000; López-León et al., 2015). The results obtained are shown below.

### 5.1. Category “difficulties-weaknesses-strengths” of the PPACC

Firstly, there is the category “difficulties-weaknesses-strengths” of the PPACC. This category de-

finer three subcategories, corresponding to the difficulties, weaknesses and strengths of the PPACC overall, and of the institutions implementing this programme. The subcategory “difficulties of the PPACC” (DIFPR), consisting of three codes, identifies the general difficulties that the different groups of participants experienced during the process of implementing the PPACC. These are mainly related to administrative and management processes. Figures 1, 2 and 3 indicate some of the textual references identifying the interviewees' opinions about this subcategory.

FIGURE 1. Textual references for the code “difficulties of the PPACC” (DIFPR).

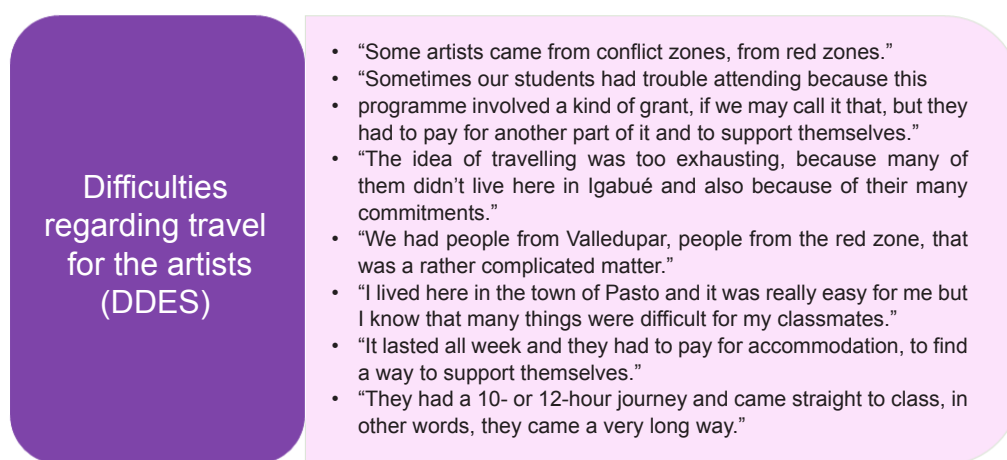
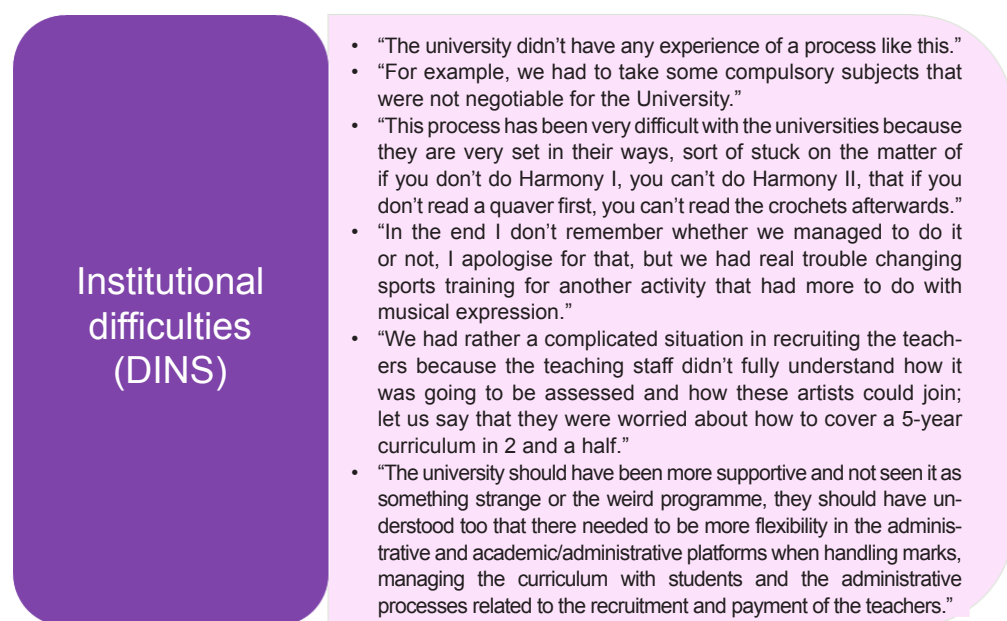


FIGURE 2. Textual references for the code “institutional difficulties” (DINS).



As the programme was not offered in the regions where the artists were located, this made it very difficult for them to attend and travel to the educational centres for different reasons, whether related to

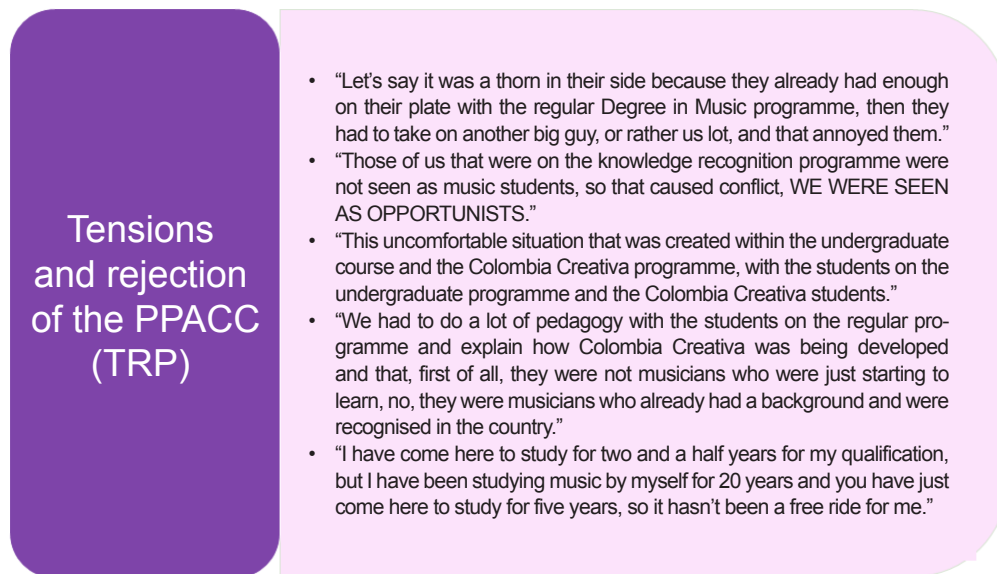
finances, work or public order. This was even due to weather conditions such as landslides, which prevented the use of the country's main roads for long periods of time.

Figure 2 establishes that one of the main difficulties encountered by the PPACC relates to the lack of knowledge and experience of the universities in implementing a programme of this nature. In this sense, there were many discussions about how to adapt the curricula, how to reach agreements on what the artists were going to study or not study, how the curriculum for a five-year degree could be made more flexible so that it could be studied in half the time, etc. The greatest difficulty laid in making the higher education authorities (academic

boards) understand the relevance and necessity of the PPACC for the country and make them aware of their ethical and social commitment to the programme and the students as a higher education institution.

On another note, the subcategory “weaknesses of the PPACC” (DEBPR) is composed of a total of twelve codes that represent the main weaknesses of the PPACC, most of which are related to academic/administrative management.

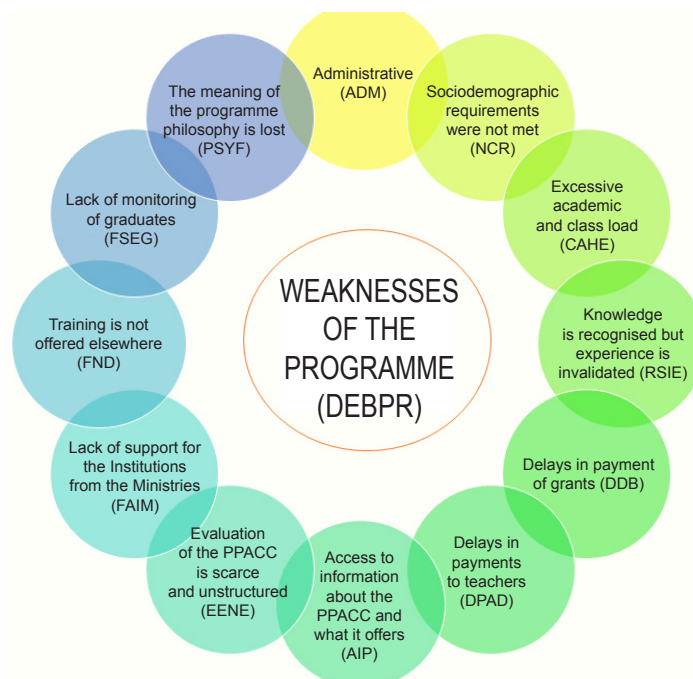
FIGURE 3. Textual references for the code “tensions and rejection of the PPACC” (TRP).



According to the results in Figure 3, the PPACC created considerable tension and rejection, both in terms of the understanding of the students on the regular programme and that of the teachers themselves who taught the class-

es on these academic programmes. This meant that there was a need to socialise the project, involving both the team of teachers that were going to work on the PPACC and the actual students and teachers on the regular programmes.

FIGURE 4. Codes for the subcategory “weaknesses of the PPACC” (DEBPR).





As shown in Figure 4, the main weakness of the PPACC is that the programme philosophy and meaning are lost (PYSF). Along these lines, although the participants agree that the PPACC is an essential strategy and venture for the country, they also complain that it has been manipulated to benefit both artists that neither require nor deserve this opportunity and the academic institutions themselves, for whom the approval of the PPACC provided an opportunity for a “profitable business”.

In terms of the sociodemographic requirements of the students participating in the programme, there is a clear weakness regarding the special attention that the teachers should have shown to those who came from a different cultural background or who had different learning factors due to their status as nontraditional students; for example, being an adult and needing a specific teaching methodology. Apparently, the Ministries of Education and Culture did not provide proper training for the teachers on the programme.

Other significant weaknesses were the lack of support from the Ministries (of Education and Culture) for the programmes, the delays and irregularities in

payment to the institutions, and the small number of posts appointed at the different universities to coordinate and manage the PPACC.

In the subcategory “strengths of the PPACC” (FORPR), there are three codes that are directly connected to good management and assertiveness in implementing the PPACC within the different academic programmes: “comprehension and commitment to recognition and curricular flexibility”, “ease of selecting the work team” (SETR) and “same teaching staff as on the regular programme” (MDPR).

These strengths relate to the institutions’ commitment to curricular adaptation and flexibility. Also to the advantage for the PPACC of having teachers that were not only highly qualified in their educational field but who also were very knowledgeable about the academic programme they were offering. And this because, before becoming part of the PPACC, they had, at least, two or three years of teaching experience on the regular programme; in other words, they had in-depth knowledge of the curriculum. This favoured the adaptation of the content according to the group of students being taught.

FIGURE 5. References for the code “comprehension and commitment to recognition and curricular flexibility”.

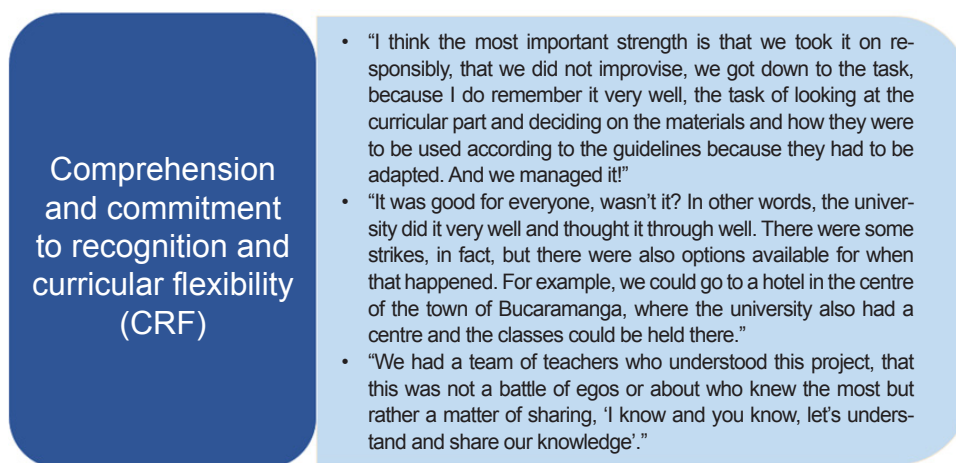


FIGURE 6. References for the code “ease of selecting the work team” (SETR).

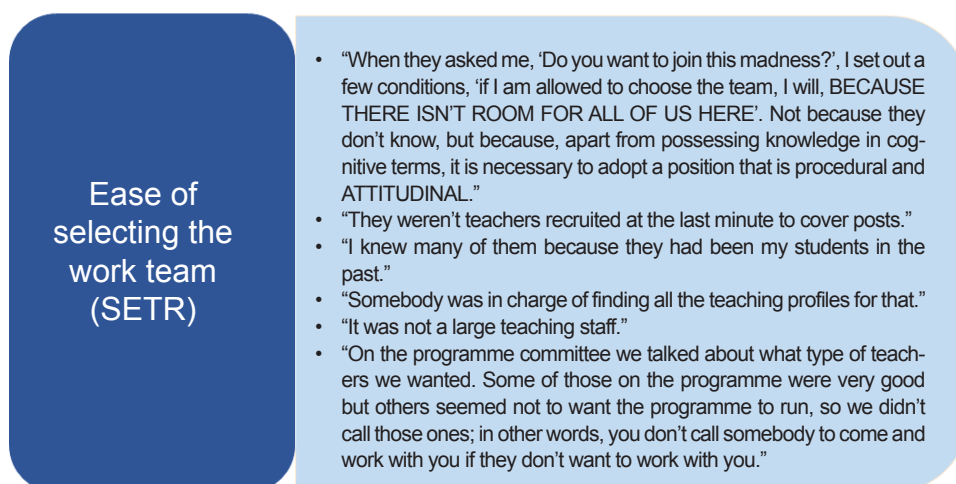
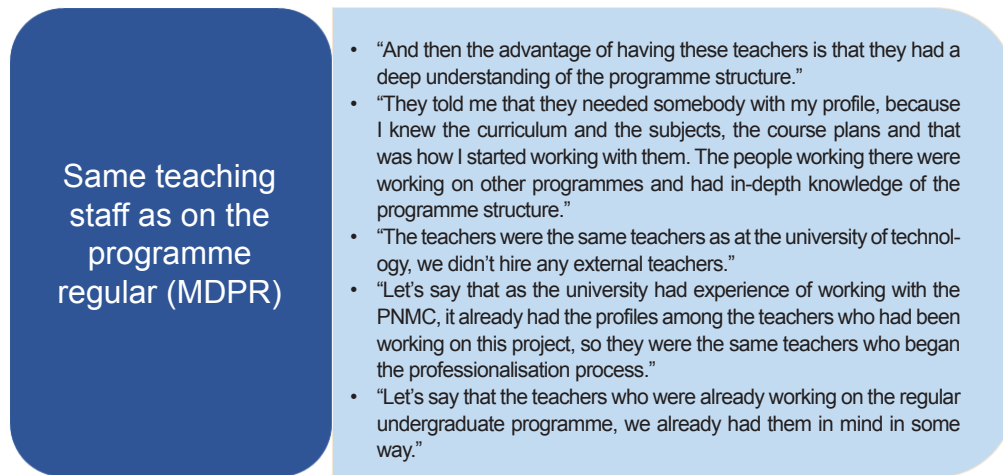


FIGURE 7. References for the code “same teaching staff as on the programme regular” (MDPR)



No significant differences were found among the participating universities, with reference to the weaknesses, difficulties and strengths of the PPACC. On the contrary, all of them presented different aspects that they had in common in the three analysis dimensions.

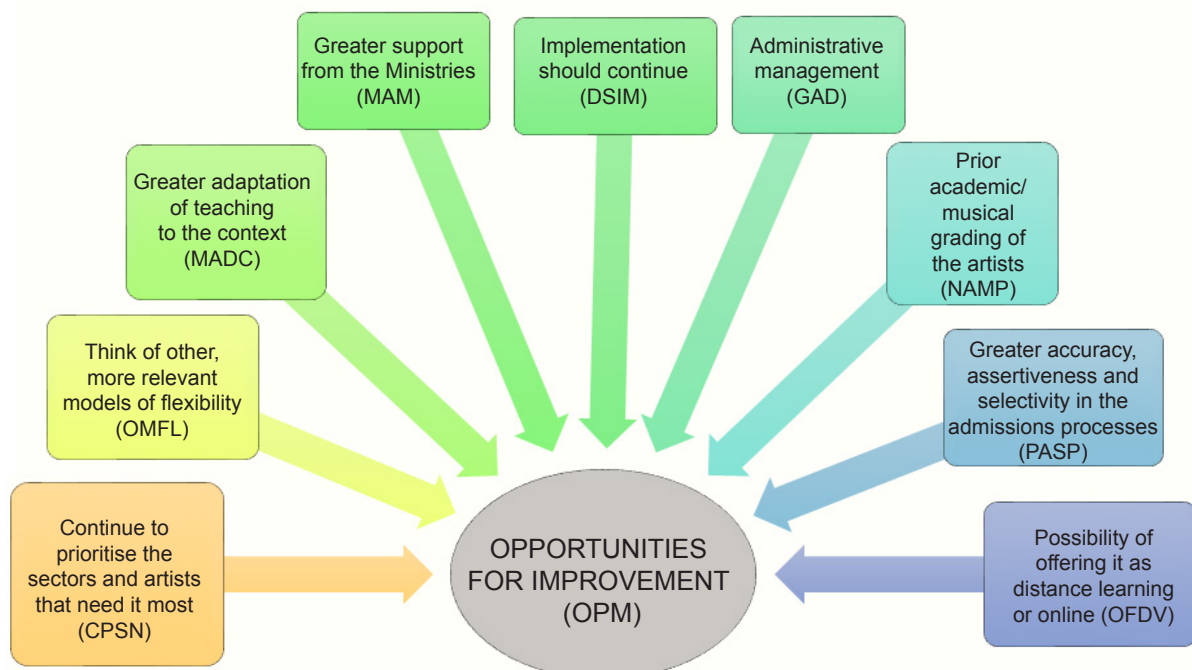
**5.2. 5.2. Category “opportunities for improvement” (OPM)**

In this category there are nine codes, which characterise the opinion of the PPACC managers, coordinators, teachers and graduates about the recommendations and expectations regarding the improvement of the programme in future stages of implementation. The codes associated with this category are shown in Figure 8.

Along these lines, the participants agree on the necessity of the Ministries becoming more involved in the processes and providing real support to the institutions, before, during and after the implementation of the programme (MAM). Here they indicate, for example, the need to evaluate the academic and management processes and to monitor the graduates to discover their level of satisfaction and the real impact of the PPACC on their lives.

The interviewees also agree that is it essential for the admissions processes (PASP) to involve greater accuracy, assertiveness and selectivity. They are convinced that the PPACC has been such a necessary and successful strategy for the country that it should continue to be

FIGURE 8. Codes for the category “opportunities for improvement” (OPM).



implemented (DSIM). However, they indicate that strict modifications need to be made to the way administrative management is conducted.

Lastly, partly as a result of the whole experience of Covid-19, teachers and artists also indicate that an opportunity for improvement is offering this professionalisation online and as distance learning, thereby continuing to give priority to the sectors and artists that most need it, reaching as far as their regions. This would involve taking the university to more disadvantaged settings, making the programme more equitable.

## 6. Discussion

The study conducted with the agents involved in the different processes for implementing the PPACC defined results that, in accordance with Giraldo et al. (n.d.) and Melo-Becerra et al. (2017), confirm the PPACC as a necessary and relevant learning pathway in the national context of Colombia, as it provides appropriate answers to several questions and needs raised by the professional sector of music artists.

Nevertheless, there is the fact that academic institutions lack inducements for teachers to work with the nontraditional population. This, as stated by Abramo et al. (2019), could be a sign that, although adult education plays a fundamental role at present, in Latin America, there is a generalised absence of university courses or bachelor's degrees that focus on training for trainers of adults, which is exportable to bachelor's degrees focusing on music in this country. This fact is worthy of special attention, considering that, as indicated by Fernie et al. (2013), Lee et al. (2020) and Tucker and Morris (2011), apart from the administrative regulations and the efforts to make curricula more dynamic and flexible and to adapt them to the relevant contexts, the launch of the PPACC and its success is primarily due to the teachers and the teaching processes.

Despite the firm commitment and teacher engagement in all of the institutions evaluated, a lack of flexibility was observed in professional practices, as was a shortage of intercultural competencies (Taylor et al., 2016) as regards some teachers, mainly in areas related to musical language (piano, history of music, grammar, music theory, analysis and composition). This partly hindered dialogue, reflection, development of critical thinking and the implementation of contextualised teaching/learning practices (Bovil & Woolmer, 2018; Gerbic, 2011; Jonker et al., 2020).

Perhaps this is where further research is needed into how to improve the necessary involvement of teachers on a programme where their participation is crucial and that requires a different vision of music education in higher education. Regarding what has already been stated by Cárdenas and Lorenzo (2013a) and Cárdenas et al. (2015) with reference to Colombian music education in the HEIs, there are parallels with the PPACC, where the political administration of the programme, both in universities and in the Ministries of Education and Culture, is not sufficiently flexible to involve the teachers' interest in being part of the processes of designing and modifying the curricula. This implies an almost structural weakness that should be corrected through the participation of all the groups involved in the programme and greater involvement of the teaching staff in institutional management processes and university management posts.

Finally, at an administrative level, the weaknesses of the PPACC include the lack of graduate monitoring, which is an ongoing issue in the Colombian higher education system and internationally, and the minimal or almost non-existent evaluation of the programme. To this effect, the root of this problem lies in the limited culture of curricular evaluation in the country and, again, the lack of support and intervention by the Ministries of Education and Culture after signing the contracts and agreements regarding the programme development with each university.

## 7. Conclusions

The PPACC was established as a meeting point and a space for the dialogue of knowledge, which, as indicated by Cabarcas et al. (2018), Stanton (2018) and Zapata and Niño (2018), has consolidated its position as the first real attempt, with all its successes and failures, to change the paradigms of music education in the country. Also to construct a space for critical and intercultural pedagogical/musical training for music professionals who have not had the opportunity to enrol in formal institutions to pursue or complete their studies.

Based on the perspective of programme evaluation and in the light of the results of this study, in terms of its implementation on the different professional music programmes involved, it can be said that, overall, the processes have been effective, relevant and satisfactory. A perspective that has been greatly enhanced by the teachers' skill and effectiveness and their extensive



knowledge and experience of the corresponding curricula that they teach.

Regarding the academic processes, the most successful are planning for teaching/learning, selection and preparation of disciplinary content, design of teaching methodologies and organisation of activities, assertive communication, the good relationship with students, and tutoring and evaluation, with the work of the teaching team being one of the most significant strengths of the PPACC.

Obviously, with such a complex programme, held nationally and with the added difficulty of integrating students regionally, it was to be expected that there would be shortcomings. However, these have been balanced by the mid- and long-term benefits for Colombia of providing a way to return to employment for music professionals who represent a sector that has great importance for the country's cultural and economic activity.

In accordance with the experience and learning related to the flexibility of the curricula involved, there is a need for the HEIs to create new spaces for reflection and dialogue in the interest of readapting and co-creating the curricula and processes for the country's higher education in music, so that they are relevant and contextualised, and truly meet Colombia's needs. Lorenzo et al. (2023) made this clear in recent works on higher level music qualifications in Colombia and it can be applied to the PPACC, as the teachers are the same in both cases.

Lastly, both the results of this research and the experience itself of fourteen years of implementing the PPACC in this country can be used as a sound, theoretical and empirical basis for arranging similar processes in other regions or countries. As indicated by the Ministry of Culture (2015), this public policy has taken shape as an unprecedented strategy, not only in this country but also in the context of Latin America, where there are no similar arts education processes.

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