

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Goal #3:

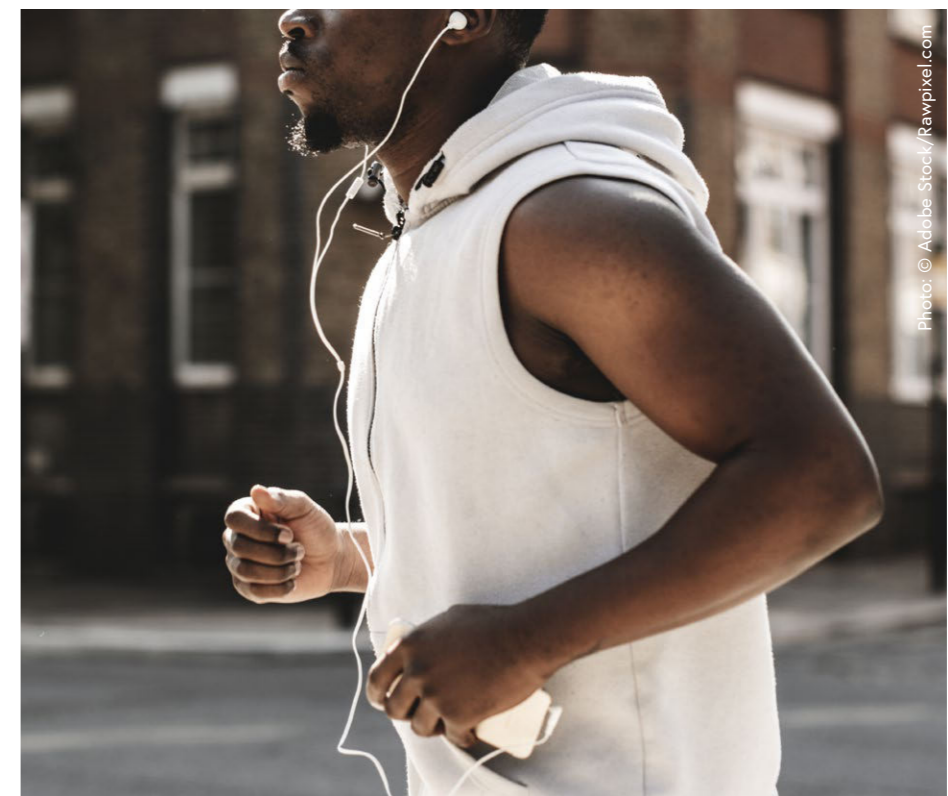
Good Health and Wellbeing

What is the goal?

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

A number of studies point to the positive impact that music has on our health and wellbeing. This has been true for thousands of years.

From a tribal dance to welcome a guest into a village to celebrating weddings or mourning funerals, music impacts how we feel towards each other, how we communicate and how we get along. But music has far wider reaching impacts. Learning music is proven to improve early childhood cognition. Studying music improves one's performance in science and maths. Music slows the onset of dementia and is an effective treatment for the disease. Music helps millions of us exercise. Yet, music is tangential, a passive participant to our health and wellbeing policies. Most countries are not socially prescribing music. It is not a mandatory topic throughout education. There are few music programs in senior and care facilities. Few large firms have music in the workplace policies. Active, direct and intentional music use vastly improves our health and wellbeing. It is time to assign specific SDG indicators to music, and work on developing international policies to promote, mandate and utilise the power of music. But try exercising without music. It's hard.



How Can Music Impact Good Health and Wellbeing?

IT CAN HELP US LIVE LONGER

According to a South African study, "Attending a live music gig once a fortnight for only 20 minutes increases a person's well-being by 21% and can add up to nine years to your life."²⁴

IT CAN REDUCE STRESS

According to a study by the National Institute of Health in the United States in 2013, "Music listening has been suggested to beneficially impact health via stress-reducing effects...Its findings indicate that music listening impacted the psychobiological stress system. Listening to music prior to a standardized stressor predominantly affected the autonomic nervous system (in terms of a faster recovery), and to a lesser degree the endocrine and psychological stress response."



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Where Has It Worked?

MUSIC IN THE WORKPLACE WEEK (UK)

Music At Work Week was launched in 2019 in the UK. Its aim is (i) to increase awareness regarding the health effects of music and (ii) to encourage employers to embed it in workplaces to enhance employee experience and wellbeing. A number of large employers, including Sennheiser and Gibson supported it.²⁵

THE NEW NOTE ORCHESTRA

A collaborative orchestra organised to support people recovering from substance abuse programs. This led to the creation of the Addict's Symphony, as well as a number of other programs directly linking music to supporting those recovering from alcohol and drug dependency.²⁶

ENGLISH NATIONAL OPERA are teaching online classes using breathing techniques to support long COVID sufferers. Sopranos are helping sufferers.²⁷

What Can We Do?

For music to help promote health and wellbeing, we must advocate for the following:

MUSIC AND SOCIETY POLICIES WORLDWIDE

In the UK, the House of Lords conducted an enquiry into music in society, exploring the role of music on aging, education, economic development and urban regeneration. A briefing paper was produced to begin to explore the holistic impact music has on society, and how it can be incorporated into other government policies. These solutions can align with SDG #3 and be used as a template for any government to outline, clearly, the impact music can have on society, to begin to take the steps to ensuring they happen.²⁸

MUSIC PROGRAMS IN ALL SENIOR & CARE FACILITIES

Initiatives like Music in Care Homes in the UK or Singing for Seniors should be introduced across intergovernmental organisations, as all nations are facing an aging crisis, a care crisis and a cost crisis. Music can slow other costly degenerative issues, such as reduced brain function, dementia or loneliness. A weekly concert, community choir and engaged music program can be rolled out anywhere, to anyone, and it can significantly improve the health and wellbeing for those of us now living in senior or other care facilities.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH INSURERS AND PHONE PROVIDERS

In the UK, some insurance firms are providing discounts for customers that prove they go to the gym every week (presumably music plays a role in that).

INCORPORATE MUSIC AND WELLBEING INTO COVID RECOVERY

The evidence is there. Music can improve mental health, increase confidence and support interpersonal behavioural development. The more music programs available to everyone as lockdown eases will support wider community cohesion, no matter where one lives.



Photo: © UNICEF/UNI317998/Choufany

WHICH TARGETS WILL WE MEET?

3.8

Achieve universal health coverage including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

3.D

Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.