

## Harmony Project Phoenix - IMPACT REPORT (June 2021)

In alignment with our overarching goal of removing barriers to increase access to higher education, for the third consecutive year, despite high dropout rates in the communities with which we partner, 100% of our seniors have graduated high school and enrolled in college in 2021. 100% of them are entering college as the first generation in their families.

Please allow us to proudly present to you our seniors' accomplishments and their future careers. Below is a breakdown of our class of 2021 by universities and majors: (Student 1) Santa Clara University - Major in Neuroscience with full-ride scholarship, (Student 2) University of Southern California - Major in Psychology with full-ride scholarship, (Student 3) Arizona State University - Major in Music Education with full-tuition scholarship, (Student 4) Arizona State University - Major in Justice Studies with full-tuition scholarship, and (Student 5) Arizona State University - Major in Biochemistry with partial scholarship.

Progress report towards our primary goal of positive change in our students is currently accomplished through a robust cloud-based business intelligence system (BI) that allows us to analyze data in real time. More specifically, we pay close attention to the following Key Performance Indicators (KPI): (1) year-over-year (YoY) retention rate, (2) attendance rate, (3) year-over-year growth rate, (4) average number of hours per week, and (5) total number of hours per school year. Our current KPI are: 86% YoY retention rate, 81% attendance rate, 51.7% YoY growth rate, 59 hours per week on average, and 1643 total number of hours in school year 2020-21.

Additionally, in the efforts to understand how our students outperform their peers as evidenced by their academic achievements, Harmony Project Phoenix is currently implementing focus groups as its impact evaluation method.

### Impact Evaluation Methodology

Following a thorough review of the literature on psychology, two constructs were identified to explain how the Harmony Project intervention could potentially benefit children and adolescents. The two constructs were prosocial skills and cognitive skills. In Spring 2021, it was possible to conduct an experimental impact evaluation to measure the causal effects of musical training.

Harmony Project students aged 11 and up were divided into two groups: the treatment group consisted of students who have been in the program for a minimum of 2 years, and the control group consisted of students who just completed a 10-week musicianship class in the Harmony Project Phoenix.

After a comprehensive bibliographic review, the instrument selected to estimate the effects in prosocial skills was the Mehrabian and Epstein's Questionnaire Measure of Emotional Empathy (QMEE; Mehrabian and Epstein 1972).

The evaluation results showed that, on average, children and youth in the treatment group increased their scores on the self-reported empathy index scale by 18 percent compared to the control group.

Means and standard deviations were reported as the following: Treatment Group M = 44, SD = 23; Control Group M = 36, SD = 20.

Responses from program applicants were obtained anonymously through a computerized version of the Mehrabian and Epstein's Questionnaire Measure of Emotional Empathy. Eighteen students participated in the Treatment Group while nine students participated in the Control Group.

We expect to conduct the second phase of our impact evaluation plan in end of the Fall 2021 semester. In the second phase we hypothesize that after 2 years of training participants in the Harmony Project, as compared to the control group, will show enhanced cognitive skills through the students' performance on the "Flanker Task", a measure of cognitive flexibility.