Dear colleagues,

I would like to start this newsletter with a picture of our last online meeting (in March 2015):

Over the years, we have become used to this form of communication, in addition to the annual in-person meetings. It has enabled us to stay in touch in the time between meetings, without the need to travel. It has also enabled intercultural learning in ways not necessarily related to the project aims. In this meeting, for example, I learned about “The Brady Bunch”, a sitcom that colleagues in the USA and Australia (and maybe in other countries) grew up with, but that was less well-known where I grew up. Because of the resemblance that is obvious to those who know it, I have called this “The TIME-A Bunch”.

In this newsletter, please note some important deadlines during this year. As the recruitment is coming to an end, we are looking ahead to the interim analysis that will be done in the second half of this year and that will determine how the project will continue – more about that below.
In addition, we have the usual reports from the sites. Not all sites are included this time. Israel and Norway did not have any specific news to report from their site (but are mentioned with their sub-projects in points 5 and 6 below). Colleagues in the UK have made up for that by sending no less than three reports from their sites.

Best wishes

1.) Recruitment to date and ending recruitment
Together, we have managed to randomise the incredible number of 278 participants until the cut-off date for the interim analysis. This is a fantastic achievement, and I would like to thank you all for this tremendous effort!

New participants continue to come in and continue to be welcome. They won’t be included in the interim analysis, but will be a “bonus” (as Jörg Assmus called it) for the final analysis. You can continue to recruit until about mid-October. What happens after that will depend on the results of the interim analysis and our decision at the meeting in New York based on that (see 2-4).

2.) Planning data entry and video upload
2.1 Data entry in OC:
We know that you always try to enter data as timely as possible, but there is one time this year when this will be especially important. The day to note is 31 August 2015. On this day, we need to have completed OC data entry of all assessments until and including 5 months for all participants randomised until 7 April 2015. For those who were randomised shortly before that time, this also has implications for the planning of the assessments. Please make sure that all 5-months assessments are scheduled before that date.

2.2 Video upload onto UHEADS:
Please continue to upload your videos as soon as possible after the therapy session is completed. We have now two master students in Bergen who will analyse treatment fidelity from May until August, and we need to make sure that we feed them with enough videos during this time.

3.) Past events
We had four online meetings during the last half year (18.11.2014, 25.11.2014, 22.01.2015, 18.03.2015). One of them was arranged during night time in Europe to make it easier for those from other continents to join – a success, as the picture on the first page confirms.
The Data Monitoring Committee had three meetings in this period (9.12.2014, 7.01.2015, 6.5.2015). Discussions focused on overall progress, safety, and planning the interim analysis.

4.) Upcoming events
The next online-meeting will take place on 18 May 2015.
The next annual meeting will take place in New York, at Molloy College, from 28-30 October 2015. Many of you are planning to attend, and some of those who can’t come will try to link up through a video connection. Our site in the USA that hosts this meeting is still the largest in terms of participants recruited. They have also been active in organising
conferences where they have brought together interdisciplinary views on developmental interventions for ASD (see their report below). I would like to thank John and his team for making the meeting there possible. As of now, the schedule will be as follows:

Tuesday 27th: arrival (or extra day for those who want to arrange other meetings)
Wednesday 28th/Thursday 29th: Meeting of TIME-A group; discussion of interim results
Friday 30th: Public conference with presentations by the TIME-A group and others.

The conference date, together with some general topics, is already announced here: www.molloy.edu/ce/musictherapy

The annual meetings are primarily intended for site managers. People with other roles are welcome, but not all parts of the meeting will be equally relevant for them. As in previous meetings, we ask all sites to fund travels by themselves, but can offer to book and pay the flight ticket for one person per site where this is not possible. If you need that, please contact Lucja until end of May with the specifics of your itinerary. Hotel will be reserved and paid by the project, please contact Monika about your arrival and departure dates. I look forward to seeing many of you there!

5.) News from the central office

After the project is before the project (to paraphrase Sepp Herberger, German football legend). In December, we received notice from the Research Council of Norway that Karin Mössler won a grant of NOK7m for the “Shared Moments” project (long title: “The bodily and emotional quality of the therapeutic relationship as outcome predictor in music therapy with children on the autism spectrum”). This project will be a continuation of TIME-A in that it will re-use and analyse videos from the project, thus adding a process-outcome perspective. The funding is for four years and will start when Karin returns from her maternity leave this coming August.

Monika Geretsegger successfully defended her PhD in Aalborg in April. Her position in Bergen was therefore changed from “researcher III” (researcher) to “researcher II” (senior researcher). Shortly after the defence, she also heard from the Journal of Music Therapy that her article on treatment guidelines (to which many of you have contributed) was accepted for publication. Congratulations to both!

6.) Sub-projects: How to get going

As you know, we need abstracts from those of you who are planning any sub-projects linked to TIME-A, especially if you want to analyse videos. This is to avoid unnecessary duplication of work, to facilitate collaboration between sub-projects, and for us to be able to grant access to videos on UHEADS. In the shared dropbox folder to which you all have access, we have a folder “Sub-projects”. It contains the folders “Abstracts of proposed sub-projects” (currently empty) and “Completed sub-projects” (currently with two master’s theses from Germany and Israel, respectively). Feel free to add your own sub-projects into one of these folders. When a sub-project is completed, we would also like to receive a reference to the completed sub-project. We will then include this in the annual report to the Research Council and may also add it to the TIME-A website.
6.) News from the sites

Our last cohort was 5, which takes us up to 36 participants randomised. We have been participating in the project since the start of 2013, and so are now in our 3rd year we have noticed that we are running out of steam with our partners. We may squeeze in one more small cohort to start in July, which will allow us to finish MT sessions before the summer break, but further negotiations are needed with our partners. Music therapist Jo Rimmer will present a case study from the project at the Nordic Congress of Music Therapy in August 2015, exploring her work with a 6 year old boy who was highly motivated by songs by the Beatles and how these were incorporated into improvisations. Grace is progressing with the analysis of the improvised lyrics/dramatic role play of another participant from 2013, and will share more details as they unfold.

Grace Thompson, University of Melbourne, Australia

The 12-month assessment of the last child recruited in Vienna has taken place in mid-January this year, and the TIME-A site in Austria is now closed. I would have liked to recruit more families for study participation, but I am also pleased with the fact that all 16 children that were randomised stayed on until their respective 12-month follow-up, resulting in a retention rate of 100% for this subsample.

I am also very happy to share good news about our manuscript now entitled “Common characteristics of improvisational approaches in music therapy for children with autism spectrum disorder: Developing treatment guidelines” (Geretsegger, Holck, Carpente, Elefant, Kim, & Gold, in press): It has recently been accepted for publication in the Journal of Music Therapy. Many thanks again to all the music therapists within the TIME-A network and beyond who kindly provided their expert feedback in response to the survey that was part of this work.

Lastly, my exciting PhD journey that was intertwined with the development of the TIME-A project has recently come to a happy ending: In my PhD defence at Aalborg University on April 19, I was honoured to discuss my work, its implications, and some future directions for music therapy research in ASD with committee members Cathy McKinney, Colwyn Trevarthen, and Thomas Wosch.

Monika Geretsegger, Aalborg University/University of Vienna, Austria; now at Uni Research Health, Bergen, Norway
We are so happy to communicate that we are improving our Brazilian TIME-A in the last months. We randomized more 12 participants and we hope to randomize more 13 participants until October. The TIME-A in Brazil are opening ways to talk about music therapy on autism in different instances. Different postgraduate programs and autism associations in Brazil are calling the Brazilian site manager to talk about music therapy in the autism field. In terms of publications, we are preparing one article talking about validation in Music Therapy assessments, since we translated and validated the Music in Everyday Life questionnaire to use in Brazil. We can feel now many good vibrations for the TIME-A in Brazil!

Gustavo Gattino, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

In Italy is going on an intensive work as far as patient recruitment is regarded both at the Scientific Institute Stella Maris in Calambrone, Pisa, and at the Autism Center of Rovereto, University of Trento. Until the end of March 2015 we have enrolled forty-two patients; among these children six dropped-out after being assigned to the control group condition (5) or music therapy (1). Eleven children have just completed twelve months of music therapy/counseling and had their outcome evaluation. We are working on the possibility to perform quantitative and qualitative microanalysis on italian music-therapy session. We are really interested on this topic and we would like to share our ideas with other group. Next June 12th we will organize at Stella Maris a Seminar on improvvisation in Music Therapy during which we’ll have a session to present our Time-A project to a large audience.

Filippo Muratori and Ferdinando Suvini, IRCCS Fondazione Stella Maris, Italy

TIME - A trial in Korean site has been almost completed. Total 26 children have been recruited with 4 drop-outs, and one child moving away to the U.S after the 5 months music therapy trial. The drop-out children were either the children who were allocated to 3 times a week intensive music therapy sessions, or the children who were allocated to the standardcare. Now, the final three children is waiting for the 4th assessments in either August or September this year. There have been four music therapists, two music therapy professors, two clinical psychologists who are the ADOS research level assessors and one undergraduate assistant involved in TIME-A Korean site so far. I am very thankful for their cooperation and eagerness to work with me and with the TIME-A team. If opportunities arise again, it is possible to work further with both music therapy teams and clinical psychologists at Rudolf Center for Children with ASD in Seoul. Lastly, there is a personal news I’d like to share with the TIME- A team from the two music therapists who came to the TIME-A meeting in Vienna last year. Sua Kim recently got married, and Slvina Choi is expecting a baby next month. At the beginning of the TIME-A trial, only one therapist (Slvina Choi) was a Nordoff-Robbins trained therapist, but later two therapists also joined N-R training course in Seoul, and became N-R therapist.

Jinah Kim, Jeonju University, Korea
We are pleased to report a lot of progress since the last report and we've been able to catch up on clinical targets. The last of the set up issues such as difficulties with IT and systems, video uploading etc. have all been resolved so much more focus can be on students and clinical work. This is very exciting and the project has gained a lot of momentum with this change. 33 students have been tested to date of whom 25 have randomised to treatment. We are now working with 25 students in 5 schools.

Parents: We've had some very positive responses from parents eg. 'I didn't think my child could do this. I've never seen him do that before.' (Parent of child from Brewster Ave.). One parent whose child was not randomised has praised the project for its importance in undertaking research to support understanding and intervention with children with autism.

Schools: The team have worked hard to engage schools, some who have been initially reticent. Once the therapy has started they realise that music therapy can offer something positive to the school environment and they are much more engaged. We have found that schools are very pleased to have Teaching Assistants in sessions. T/As have very positive about music therapy and they have fed back about increased skill levels for working with both TIME-A students and also the wider student cohort.

Interest is being created in legacy of the project. We are working with schools to try and find ways to continue music therapy work when the project finishes. This is very difficult given the current funding climate but the fact that we can now work in partnership with these schools is very helpful.

Therapist: Laura, our music therapist gave a lovely presentation to our music therapy team this week. This prompted very valuable interest and discussion particularly about the value of music therapy 3 times a week for some students. There was also interest to know how this would translate into ADOS test outcomes.

We look forward to continuing until the end of the summer term in July and then randomising a further 15 students in August.

Órla Casey, Cambridge Schools, Cambridge, UK

Everyone has been working hard at the London sites (Central and North West London and Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trusts) to identify potential participants for the study. Figures up to the end of March 2015 show that we have passed a half of our target of 50 participants. Also, retention in the study is very good, with all 26 participants that are enrolled into the trial are still taking part. Of all parents approached about the study a high percentage agree to participate (current conversion >90%), with schools a good resource for recruiting. With the summer holidays fast approaching the research team has worked hard to ensure two schools remain open so music therapy can still be delivered.

Amy Claringbold and Mike Crawford, CNWL Foundation NHS Trust, London, UK
Recruitment in the east of England is ongoing with 9 children recruited across 3 sites in Cambridgeshire, and 10 more consented children at a fourth site in the neighbouring county of Essex. Participants from Essex are expected to be randomised in May, and additional sites in Bedford and North London are being contacted for autumn recruitment. Alexandra Georgaki was appointed as the TIME-A music therapist for the East of England in November, and is currently conducting sessions in Cambridgeshire. She is also in close contact with school personnel, presenting case examples to staff working with our participants, and meeting with parents for advisory meetings and therapy progress updates. Two-month follow-up assessments are on-going, and a newsletter was circulated to parents in the East of England before the Easter holidays. The team are looking forward to working with new recruits and hearing from other sites!

Helen Odell-Miller and Sarah Faber, Anglia Ruskin University

Greetings from the Rebecca Center for Music Therapy at Molloy College in New York! We are coming to an end of our randomization process for TIME-A. We have recently completed randomization of our final cohort. In addition, May 1st we will be hosting a research conference that will highlight developmental interventions as evidence-based practice with children with ASD. Several TIME-A team members who have published RCTs of studies that included children with ASD have graciously offered to present their research via a video format. That being said, I am happy to report that the conference has sold out with a total of 225 registrants (with a growing waitlist. Finally, we are preparing for the October TIME-A meeting which will take place in October at Molloy College. The meeting will also include a 1-day conference that will feature TIME-A researchers. More information to follow soon! Hope all is well.

John Carpente, Molloy College, Rockville Centre, NY, USA