



# EP:IC

Data Analysis on the  
Impact of Auditioned  
Youth Music Ensembles

**EP:IC**  
Emerging Professionals  
Internationalisation of music Careers



Co-funded by the  
Creative Europe Programme  
of the European Union

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# Introduction

The EPIC project - Emerging Professionals: Internationalisation of Music Careers - co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union, is dedicated to the professionalisation and internationalisation of the careers of young musicians. Coordinated by the European Choral Association, with partners JSKD - the Republic of Slovenia Public Fund for Cultural Activities, Jeunesses Musicales International and Sing Ireland, the project aims to prove the value and impact of auditioned youth music ensembles and enhance the training available to emerging professionals.

Many youth ensembles active in Europe (and beyond) provide emerging musicians with invaluable skills and professional experience. This data collection maps the experiences of former members of auditioned youth ensembles (both choirs and orchestras, on an international and national/regional level) and identifies the impact of their participation.

A survey was sent out in late 2020 to alumni of the World Youth Choir, the EuroChoir, and a network of managers of national and regional youth choirs and orchestras. Here, we show the results and conclusions from the answers received, tracing career paths of different generations of alumni of these ensembles with their own perspective on the extent that these ensembles influenced their careers and lives.

Notably, 95 % of all World Youth Choir alumni who are in a music profession today gave credit to the ensemble for having had an influence on their careers.

The present document also represents a valuable resource for the ensembles themselves, to understand and support their participants better, as well as to advocate for themselves.

This is complemented by the personal testimonies given by World Youth Choir alumni at the EPIC project online reception held in September 2020. These can be found on YouTube at the following address: <https://youtu.be/TRay0fcZ13w>

In addition to this, the EPIC project has supported the participation of EuroChoir and national youth choirs at the Europa Cantat festival 2021 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, and provided networking events and several online training sessions to support the development of new skills and the discovery of new opportunities.

The results of the project are available on the EPIC website. Collective music-making is a powerful tool to bring people and nations together. As Europeans, we have a duty to foster the circulation of the next generation of artists in a sustainable, systemic way. The EPIC project is a first milestone along this promising path.



# 1

## Surveyed ensembles & sample

### 1.1 Overall sample

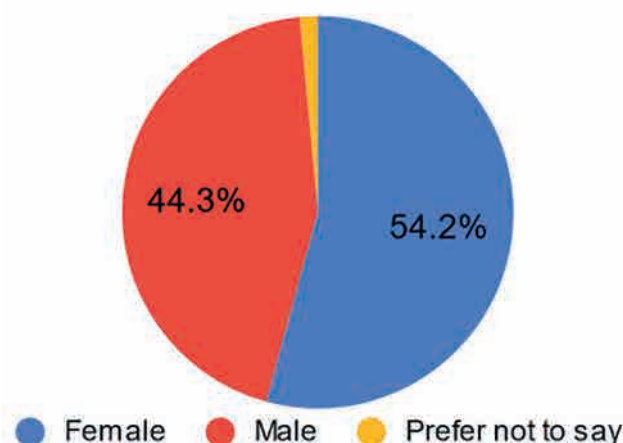
The survey was sent out to alumni of the World Youth Choir, the EuroChoir and a network of managers and conductors of national and regional youth choirs and ensembles who forwarded it to their network of alumni. We did not of course reach all alumni of the respective ensembles, but the size of the response gives us sufficient numbers for each ensemble to be able to draw reliable conclusions. For the national youth choirs and ensembles, we observed a strong response from certain countries in particular, suggesting they were most active in spreading the survey.

We first asked for general information, their name, the gender they identify as, their country of birth and country of residence, and the highest degree of level of school they have obtained as of today. This was followed by a section on each type of ensemble survey, asking for the number of repeated participations, in which years they participated and the age the respondent had when first participating, and also how they found out about the ensemble in question. We asked them what they were doing in terms of profession or education when first joining, and inter-personal questions if anyone else has applied after the respondent had told them about the ensemble, if the respondent is still in touch with people they met in the ensemble from their own country and from another country than their own.

The four sections with these or similar questions on the World Youth Choir, on EuroChoir, on National Youth Choirs, and National/International Youth Ensembles were followed by question on the current career status (whether they are professionally active, the profession involves music, they have worked/performed internationally) and questions to assess the impact the survey ensembles had on the respondent's career and life in general.

The full survey can be found in the annex.

Overall, 472 people answered this survey. 256 of them identified as female (54,2 %), 209 as male (44,3 %), while 7 preferred not to say (1,5 %). The gender balance is a fair reflection of the situation in choirs where there are usually more female than male singers.



*Fig.1 Proportion of responses by gender*

When filling in the survey, people were asked to indicate their country of birth and their country of residence as one possible indicator of internationalisation of their careers, with the following result:

81.36% were born in the 28 EU member states of 2019 (including GB), and 81.57% lived in one of the EU-28 countries. Further below, we will put our findings in an international context by comparing them with the EUROSTAT EU-28 average of 2019. We chose to consider EU-28, because 17% of all our answers came from the United Kingdom alone. Leaving them out, would have given us more recent numbers (2020), but only valid for two thirds of our sample. Considering the data for EU-28 of 2019, the last year it was done for the 28 countries, therefore is the most accurate statistics applicable for this present study. <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An international average percentage, for example, would be even more incorrect. While we do have a number of answers of residents of African (5), American (28), Asian (16) and Australo-Pacific (1) and non-EU European countries (36), taking a world-wide average would have falsified the statistics due to the overwhelming presence of EU residents. Calculating the exact percentages by taking only the relevant national averages into account would have exceeded the scope of this study by far.

|                      | Africa | Americas | Asia  | Australo-Pacifcs | EU-28  | non-EU | [empty] | Sum     |
|----------------------|--------|----------|-------|------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Country of Birth     | 10     | 27       | 18    | 0                | 384    | 31     | 2       | 472     |
|                      | 2.12%  | 5.72%    | 3.81% | 0.00%            | 81.36% | 6.57%  | 0.42%   | 100.00% |
| Country of Residence | 5      | 28       | 16    | 1                | 385    | 36     | 1       | 472     |
|                      | 1.06%  | 5.93%    | 3.39% | 0.21%            | 81.57% | 7.63%  | 0.21%   | 100.00% |

*Table 1: Exact distribution of responses by continent*

We see the vast majority of answers coming from EU citizens or residents of EU countries respectively. This was to be expected due to the network this survey was distributed through: EuroChoir is by definition mostly made up of Europeans, either by citizenship or residence, and the overwhelming majority of national, regional and international youth choirs and orchestras in the sample are based in Europe. As we shall see below, the only substantial data sample from outside Europe comes in through the World Youth Choir.

This geographical distribution clearly shows that the sample of answers is not a representative reflection of the actual ensembles, let alone the sector. We see 55 % of all answers coming from just five countries: Austria (14 %), United Kingdom (15 %), the Netherlands (13,1 %), and Ireland and Germany (6,4 % respectively). We may have had access to ensembles from these countries predominantly, or alumni of ensembles from these countries were incidentally more open to answering the survey. There may also have been more singers from some of these countries in the international ensembles such as EuroChoir and the World Youth Choir over the years.

As was to be expected in a connected sector like the music sector, many respondents participated in more than just one of the surveyed ensembles. Therefore, adding up the answers to one particular question per ensemble, the sum adds up to more than the 472 individuals who took part in the survey.

On the other hand, we gained access to a broader network: If, for example, a WYC alumni happened to have played in a national youth orchestra we did not reach out to through the network s/he would have still answered the questions in the orchestra section, thus giving us a greater and therefore more reliable sample.



## 1.2 World Youth Choir

The World Youth Choir (WYC) is an international ensemble of the best young choral singers from all over the world. Established in 1989, it brings together up to 100 remarkable young talents, between the ages of 17 and 26, for a session and tour every year. The WYC has become a global symbol for peace, unity and harmony; being recognised as a UNESCO Artist for Peace (1996-1998), as well as performing at the Olympic Games (1992, 2008) and Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony (2011).

The choir is created fresh each year, through a series of competitive national and online auditions, overseen by an international jury. With the help of our patrons, the European Choral Association, the International Federation for Choral Music and Jeunesses Musicales international, and a local host, each year a session of the programme is organised in a different country. The session takes place over the course of 3 weeks,

during which the singers that compose the WYC rehearse for up to ten days and then tour in selected locations, under the direction of renowned conductors.

Of the 472 surveyed individuals, a total of 109 (23.1%) took part in at least one World Youth Choir session. 55 of them identified as male (50.5 %), 53 as female (48.6 %), while 1 preferred not to say (0.9 %).

The WYC respondents identified 44 different countries when it comes to country of birth and 41 different countries of current residence. Regarding country of birth, 51,38% were born in the 28 EU member states of 2019 (including UK), and 53,21% lived in one of the EU-28 countries.

This makes the World Youth Choir the only truly international ensemble in this study, as we shall see below, and gives us access to at least some data from outside Europe.

|                      | Africa | Americas | Asia   | Australo-Pacifics | EU-28  | non-EU | [empty] | Sum     |
|----------------------|--------|----------|--------|-------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Country of Birth     | 8      | 24       | 14     | 0                 | 55     | 8      | 0       | 109     |
|                      | 7.34%  | 22.02%   | 12.84% | 0.00%             | 50.46% | 7.34%  | 0.00%   | 100.00% |
| Country of Residence | 5      | 24       | 12     | 0                 | 58     | 10     | 0       | 109     |
|                      | 4.59%  | 22.02%   | 11.01% | 0.00%             | 53.21% | 9.17%  | 0.00%   | 100.00% |

*Table 2: The full geographic distribution of World Youth Choir responses*

If we consider the intersection of participation in the World Youth Choir with other ensembles, we can see two main tendencies: singers who participated in the World Youth Choir only (57,80%) and singers who participated in both their national youth choir and the WYC (29,36%). The low intersection with national/international youth orchestras (1,83%) can be attributed to the high level of specialisation required for musicians to be selected for this project: while most singers are instrumentalists, they are often more dedicated to their voice practice. The low intersection with the EuroChoir (1,83%) may reflect a tendency for European or Europe-based singers to take part in one international choir or the other, but not both. There were also some participants who took part in a combination of 3 ensembles which included the WYC (9,17%).

With regard to the distribution of WYC respondents to the amount of times they took part in a WYC session, there was a pretty even distribution between the three options presented with 33,03% of participants having taken part in only

1 session, 24,77% in 2 sessions and 42,20% in 3 or more sessions. The fact that the majority did more than one session shows that the success of the project with young singers. Joining several sessions in different countries and regions of the world under the direction of different conductors also means that singers who join more than one session have a more complete educational and intercultural experience.





## 1.3 EuroChoir

EuroChoir is a unique choral project organised by the European Choral Association every year in a different country. Initiated by AGECE in 1982, EuroChoir offers the opportunity to young singers to get together to rehearse a challenging programme with two renowned conductors, improve their vocal skills and present the results of their work in public concerts. This special choir project aims to promote European choral music among young singers and to encourage cultural exchange within Europe.

Of the 472 surveyed individuals, a total of 59 (12.5 %) took part in at least one EuroChoir session. 25 of them identified as male (42.4 %) and 34 as female (57.6 %).

With it being a primarily European ensemble, a percentage of over 90 % Europeans taking part is not astonishing. 8.5 % non-Europeans have participated, too, who qualified for EuroChoir through European residency or even when not resident, due to their level of skill.

We see a slightly higher percentage of non-European residents (10.2 %), however, it is not clear if they lived outside Europe already by the time they joined the EuroChoir or if they have moved since.

|                      | Africa | Americas | Asia  | Australo-Pacifics | EU-28  | non-EU | [empty] | Sum     |
|----------------------|--------|----------|-------|-------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Country of Birth     | 1      | 1        | 3     | 0                 | 46     | 8      | 0       | 59      |
|                      | 1.69%  | 1.69%    | 5.08% | 0.00%             | 77.97% | 13.56% | 0.00%   | 100.00% |
| Country of Residence | 0      | 3        | 3     | 0                 | 46     | 7      | 0       | 59      |
|                      | 0.00%  | 5.08%    | 5.08% | 0.00%             | 77.97% | 11.86% | 0.00%   | 100.00% |

*Table 3: Full geographic distribution of EuroChoir responses*

Most EuroChoir alumni who answered our survey did also sing in their national youth choirs, 40 out of the 59 who answered the survey (68 %). Only four singers (7 %) were members of the World Youth Choir, and 3 (5 %) in a national or international youth orchestra. 17 individuals (29 %) participated in EuroChoir only.

60 % of the respondents only took part in one EuroChoir session, 22 % were part of two sessions and 18 % three or more times. We clearly see a lower rate of returnees, compared to the World Youth Choir. Indeed, EuroChoir has the lowest rate of returnees of all survey ensembles, as we shall see below. The reason may be that many singers discover this choir when they are already near the age limit, since many of them first sang in a national youth choir.



## 1.4 National/Regional Youth Choirs

National youth choirs made up a core part of the EPIC project, with three round tables for managers of national and regional youth choirs and ateliers for national youth choirs taking place at the Europa Cantat festival in Ljubljana in July 2021. The project collated up-to-date information on the form and functioning of national youth choirs, creating a resource to support existing national youth choirs and the development of new ones. During the course of the project, two new national youth choirs have been established, in Germany and in Serbia.

There is of course not a centralised system of the national youth choir in each country. Some countries may have one, others have none, and others have several auditioned youth choirs of excellent level, being called regional youth choirs or other. There is, for example, the National Youth Choir of Great Britain, but also the National Boys and Girls Choirs of Scotland, the National Youth Choir of Northern Ireland, etc., and Germany has a new national youth choir in addition to a number of regional youth choirs which have mostly been existing for many years.

Some singers provided the name of the country/region of their choir and others indicated the name of their choir, so as answers we received (including multi-referencing): Austria (29), Altenburger Sangerknaben (1), Basque Country National Choir (2), Bavarian Youth Choir (1), Belgium (3), Brazil (1), Great Britain (74), Canada (7), Carinthia (1), Styria (1), Catalonia (1), Denmark (1), England (2), Estonia (4), France (28), Germany (3), Iceland (1), Indonesia (1), Ireland (29), Italy (3),

Japan (2), Kenya (2), Michigan, US (1), the Netherlands (57), Norway (17), Peru National Choir (1), Poland (7), Scotland (1), South Africa (3), Spain (1), Sweden (4), London Youth Choir (1), Switzerland (8), Tenso Europe Chamber Choir (1), Thailand (1), USA (1), Venezuela (1), none (1).

Translated into countries where these ensembles are based: Austria (31), Germany (5), Spain (4), Belgium (3), Brazil (1), Great Britain (78), Canada (7), Denmark (1), Estonia (4), France (28), Iceland (1), Indonesia (1), Ireland (29), Italy (3), Kenya (2), USA (2), the Netherlands (57), Norway (17), Peru (1), Poland (7), South Africa (3), Sweden (4), Switzerland (8), Thailand (1), Venezuela (1), none (1), international (1) | SUM = 299 + 1 none + 1 international

Of the 472 surveyed individuals, a total of 297 (62.9 %) took part in at least one session of a national or regional youth choir. 122 of them identified as male (41.1 %), 168 as female (56.5 %), while 7 preferred not to choose either (2.4 %).

In the national youth choirs too, we see a strong tendency towards Europe, also strongly connected to the fact that the survey was spread through the network of regional and national youth choirs based in Europe: 90.9 % of the alumni who answered the survey were born in Europe, while even 93.3 % were residents of a European country. 4 % coming from the Americas, with Asia and Africa ranging between 1 and 2 % and the only respondent living in the Australo-Pacific also a former national youth choir singer: a German who relocated to New Zealand.

|                      | Africa | Americas | Asia  | Australo-Pacifics | EU-28  | non-EU | [empty] | Sum     |
|----------------------|--------|----------|-------|-------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Country of Birth     | 6      | 14       | 5     | 0                 | 243    | 27     | 2       | 297     |
|                      | 2.02%  | 4.71%    | 1.68% | 0.00%             | 81.82% | 9.09%  | 0.67%   | 100.00% |
| Country of Residence | 3      | 12       | 3     | 1                 | 251    | 26     | 1       | 297     |
|                      | 1.01%  | 4.04%    | 1.01% | 0.34%             | 84.51% | 8.75%  | 0.34%   | 100.00% |

Table 4: Full geographic distribution of national/regional youth choir responses





42 of the alumni of national youth choirs did also sing at least once in the World Youth Choir, a surprisingly low 14 %. Similarly, only 40 (14 %) did also participate in the EuroChoir. For both ensembles you would expect a higher intersection. Going on from a national youth choir to an international auditioned youth choir on a European or intercontinental level would seem like a logical step. So either these international ensembles are not known enough to singers of national youth choirs, they do not meet the needs and interests of the singers, or indeed the singers do not meet the standards the WYC and EuroChoir are looking for. However, given the high percentage of

former singers of national youth choirs in music careers, this third option seems unlikely.

Finally, 26 of the alumni of a national youth choir, almost one out of ten, did not only sing in a national youth choir but are also talented instrumentalists who played in a national or international youth ensemble. 68 % of all respondents participated in no other survey ensemble.

Given the different models of national youth choirs (some have an annual session, others are ongoing etc.) it was in the end not realistic to make data on duration of participation comparable.

## 1.5 National/International Youth Orchestras

The European Federation of National Youth Orchestras (EFNYO) was an associate partner of the EPIC project, and supported the distribution of the survey to member national youth orchestras. It was established in 1994, bringing together the finest pre-professional youth orchestras of Europe. With its 36 member organisations to date, EFNYO provides a platform for the exchange of expertise in music training, music performance, audience engagement, transnational mobility and intercultural dialogue between the leading national and international youth orchestras of Europe. Assuming and sharing responsibility for skilling future generations of musicians, the Federation truly benefits from its unique position at the interface of higher music education and the music profession.

Having not (only) one national youth choir per country, this is even more true of orchestras. There are many types of orchestras, symphonic, string, wind, etc., and in a lot of countries they all exist as a youth ensemble on a national level. Countries with strong regional identities or federal systems may have this system on a regional/provincial level, and of course there are many auditioned international youth orchestras as well.

When asked “In which national or international youth orchestra(s) did you play?” respondents entered a multitude of ensembles, not all having the status of national or even regional orchestra, some being international (e.g. European Union Youth Orchestra (25), World Orchestra). Notably, 45% of the respondents have played in more than one auditioned orchestra, one individual even played in more than six different orchestras: “Vienna Jeunesse Orchester, Orchestre Français des Jeunes, World Orchestra, Animato Foundation, Orchesterakademie Ossiach, Vienna Philharmonics, etc.” On average, each respondent played in 1.7 auditioned youth orchestras.

Of the 472 surveyed individuals, a total of 113 (24 %) took part in at least one session of an auditioned instrumental youth ensemble, national, regional or international. 59 of them identified as male (52.2 %) and 52 as female (46 %), while 2 (1.8 %) preferred not to choose either.

EFNYO being a European association and having member organisations in Europe, in the national and international youth orchestras, we see the strongest focus on Europe: 96.5 % of the respondents are Europeans, and 97,3 % are residents of a European country.

|                      | Africa | Americas | Asia  | Australo-Pacifics | EU-28  | non-EU | [empty] | Sum     |
|----------------------|--------|----------|-------|-------------------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
| Country of Birth     | 3      | 0        | 0     | 0                 | 104    | 5      | 1       | 113     |
|                      | 2.65%  | 0.00%    | 0.00% | 0.00%             | 92.04% | 4.42%  | 0.88%   | 100.00% |
| Country of Residence | 2      | 0        | 1     | 0                 | 99     | 11     | 0       | 113     |
|                      | 1.77%  | 0.00%    | 0.88% | 0.00%             | 87.61% | 9.73%  | 0.00%   | 100.00% |

*Table 5: Full geographic distribution of national/international youth orchestra responses*

As one might expect due to the time investment required for high-level skill development,, most alumni did not take part in an orchestra and a choir. Indeed, 74 % only played in an orchestra.

However, that leaves us with over one quarter who were part both of a national or international youth orchestra and at least one of the survey choirs: almost as many, 24 %, did sing in their respective national youth choirs, 9 % also sang in the World Youth Choir, and 2 % in the EuroChoir. Nobody participated in all four ensembles.

As we have seen with the national youth choirs, so it is for the orchestras; we cannot determine an average time of participation, due to differences in national youth orchestra models (annual or more frequent sessions, or ongoing).



# 2 Professionalisation

## 2.1 Overall

The professionalisation of emerging musicians' careers is one of the cornerstones of the EPIC project. Making a living as a musician can be very challenging; especially the step up from studying music to realising a music career is something many young musicians struggle with.

In a series of webinars created in the frame of the EPIC project and available on the project website (<http://european-choralassociation.org/epic>), this issue was addressed:

1. *How to audition for a national & international (youth) choir*, led by Josep Vila i Casañas.
2. *Raise your voice: Partnering up with media for singing*, led by Inari Tilli.
3. *Choose and be chosen: how to get into the world of professional choirs*, led by Laura Lopes, coordinator of TENSO Network, in conversation with Jennifer Reineke and Julia Reckendrees.

4. *Business for Musicians: Managing Your Career*, led by Gal Faganel

The response from survey participants showed clearly that the transition from studying to starting a career as a musician is indeed a challenge.

Analysing this transitional process and the needs and expectations of both young musicians and professional ensembles can no doubt have a strong impact and help emerging musicians to get into the professional world. This, in turn, helps ensembles and the wider music sector to attract creative and passionate young professionals.

This present study is one small contribution to what will hopefully develop into a rich body of resources on this crucial issue.

### Questions Asked

In the survey, the questions below were asked in order to find out about the effect of auditioned youth ensembles on the professionalisation of emerging musicians' careers:

1. "What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?"
2. "What were you doing when you joined the World Youth Choir/EuroChoir/a national youth choir/(inter-)national youth orchestra?"
3. "Please give a brief description of what you were studying/working as/doing at the time [you joined the ensemble]."
4. "Are you currently professionally active?"
5. "Does your current profession involve music in any way?"
6. "What are you currently doing professionally?"
7. "Did participating in one (or more) of these ensembles influence your career?"
8. "Please explain how participation in one (or more) of these ensembles influenced your career."
15. "Please explain how participation in one (or more) of these ensembles influenced your career."
16. "What would you say was the impact of participation in one (or more) of these ensembles on your life? What did your participation mean to you on a personal level?"



## Answers to questions asked.

### 1 - Highest degree / level of education

| Highest degree/level of school completed | No  | %      |
|--|-----|--------|
| Primary School                           | 1   | 0.21%  |
| High School                              | 40  | 8.47%  |
| Undergraduate/Bachelor's Degree          | 139 | 29.45% |
| Masters Degree                           | 256 | 54.24% |
| Ph.D. or higher                          | 22  | 4.66%  |
| Vocational/Professional Qualification    | 12  | 2.54%  |
| Prefer not to say                        | 2   | 0.42%  |

*Table 6: Highest degree / level of education*

This sample shows that of the 472 people asked, most of them have arguably already finished their education by the time they answered this survey. It also shows that most of the people asked (88.35%) have chosen tertiary, academic education and have attained ISCED level 5 to 8.<sup>2</sup>

This is a remarkably high amount as the average of the EU-28 countries in 2018 for the age group of 25 to 34 which was 40.9%.<sup>3,4</sup>

### 2 - Occupation when first joining the ensemble

This question is less relevant for the overall sample. In this free-text answer, the overwhelming majority wrote “studying” of some sort, often without making clear if it meant high school or university student.

However, since the ensembles in question have different aim groups in terms of age, we can make an estimation with a bit of guesswork: World Youth Choir and EuroChoir do only accept singers older than 18. The average age of participants when first joining the World Youth Choir was 22.61 years,

and 23.85 years for the EuroChoir, so the majority would have been university students.

This question of age when first joining was not asked for participants of National Youth Choirs and Orchestras, but those ensembles usually aim at people under 18, too. We will see further below that many of the first-timers in National Youth Choirs and Orchestras were indeed still going to school (and presumably under 18) when they first joined.

### 3 - Description of what you were doing when you first joined

This question gave the space to specify the answer to the question before. Most people ticked the option “studying”, so the answers to this question helped to have a specification here, since “studying” turned out to be ambiguous and both school and university students ticked this option. We will see down below the different occupations for each individual ensemble.

<sup>2</sup> C.f. UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED): Tertiary education includes ISCED levels 5 (Short-cycle tertiary education), 6 (Bachelor's or equivalent level), 7 (Master's or equivalent level) and 8 (Doctoral or equivalent level).  
<<http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>>.

<sup>3</sup> <[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/edat\\_ifse\\_03/default/table?lang=en](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/edat_ifse_03/default/table?lang=en)>.

<sup>4</sup> As the survey did not ask the age of the person answering, it is difficult to put these findings in a European context. As mentioned above, we compare our data to the EUROSTAT numbers for EU-28 of 2019, but EUROSTAT only offers data for the age groups from 20 to 24 or 25 to 34. We have opted for 25 to 34, hoping this is true for the majority of the people who have answered.

#### 4 - Are you currently professionally active?

This and the following questions now show us where the people are in their careers at the time they answered this survey.

|   | No  | %      |
|---|-----|--------|
| Yes (e.g. employed, freelance, looking for a job) | 382 | 80.93% |
| No (e.g. studying, career break)                  | 90  | 19.07% |

*Table 7: Current professional activity*

This supports the assumption above that most people who answered this survey are in a post-educational part of their careers - even though we have to take into account that answering „YES“ could mean a study break (so currently professional active but have not finished their studies, yet) and „NO“ could also mean a career break.

It is difficult, however, to compare this data to the EU-28 average, since EUROSTAT asks the question differently. The percentage of young people (20 to 24 years of age) across the 28 EU member states of 2019 who were neither in employment, nor in education or training (NEET) was 12.4 % (the lowest percentage of the last decade). Now, the NEET does not cor-

respond with our 'no' answers in this question, since it did include studying, hence education, and did not include 'looking for a job' which is part of NEET, according to EUROSTAT.<sup>5</sup>

It is justifiable, however, to assume a large part of those who answered 'no' to this question are indeed still in education; 8.7 % of our respondents ticked primary or high school as their highest level of education. Given the picture painted by the data we collected, especially the degree of third level education, it seems highly unlikely that former participants of our ensembles in question, have a higher NEET rate than the EU average.

#### 5 - Does your profession involve music?

This question shows us how many people are pursuing a music career.

|                     | No  | % of 382 | % of 472 |
|---------------------|-----|----------|----------|
| Yes                 | 260 | 68.06%   | 55.08%   |
| No                  | 87  | 22.77%   | 18.43%   |
| Sometimes/Partially | 35  | 9.16%    | 7.42%    |

*Table 8: Professional involvement in music*

<sup>5</sup> <[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/LFSI\\_NEET\\_A\\_H/default/table?lang=en&category=labour.employ.lfsi.une\\_h](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/LFSI_NEET_A_H/default/table?lang=en&category=labour.employ.lfsi.une_h)>.

The numbers add up to 382, the number of “Yes” answers in the previous question as to being professionally active or not.

Considering the percentage of the people who are currently professionally active, **68.1%** of the people who answered the survey are pursuing a music career, plus **9.2%** a career that sometimes involves music.

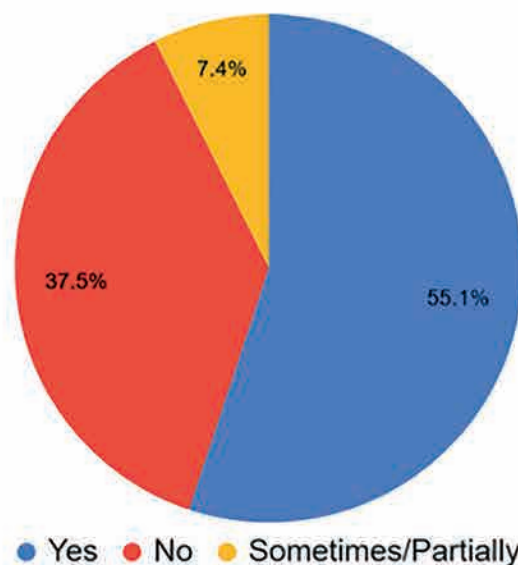
That gives us over **three quarters (77,3%)** of people who are in a career that involves music, at least partially.

## 6 - What are you currently doing professionally?

This question gives space to specify the profession. The data show that while being a member of an auditioned youth music ensemble means that there is a high probability for you to later work in a profession that involves music, that does not necessarily mean you will become a professional singer or in the case of the youth orchestras a professional instrumentalist.

Of the 295 people whose careers involve music, we have professional musicians - singers, both classical and pop music, both solo and ensemble singers, choral conductors, voice teachers, orchestral conductors, freelance and orchestra musicians - composers, music critics and journalists, school and university teachers, music therapists, and cultural and arts managers and two priests.

It will be interesting to see further below how career paths differ between the different ensembles, and between singers and instrumentalists.



*Fig. 2: Proportion of respondents whose careers involve music*

It is also interesting, however, to see the answers of those in non-musical careers. We have a wide range of professions: engineers, lawyers, researchers, IT, psychologists, medicine, real estate and much more. In accordance with our findings from above, most people are in academic jobs, but we also have factory workers and railway personnel in our sample.



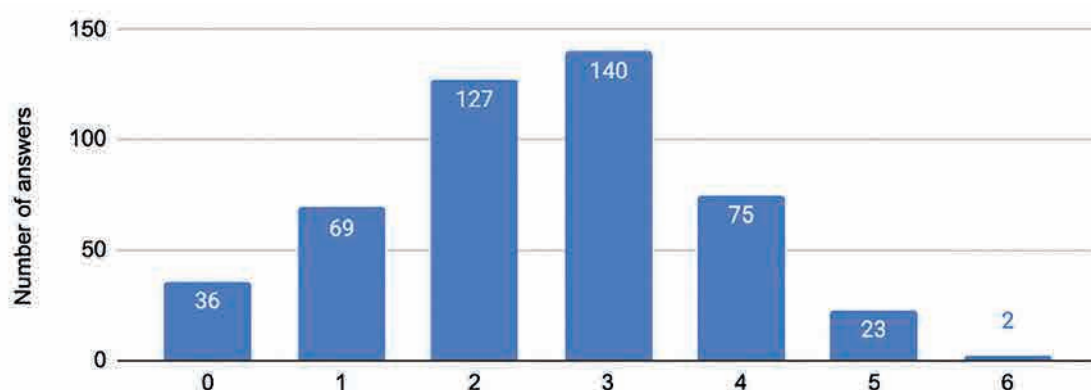
**15 - Please explain how participation in one (or more) of these ensembles influenced your career**

**16 - What would you say was the impact of participation in one (or more) of these ensembles on your life? What did your participation mean to you on a personal level?**

On questions 15 and 16, respondents were asked to describe the impact of their participation in auditioned youth ensembles through their own words, on open-answer fields. Due to

very overlapping input given as answers to these two similar questions, we have chosen to process the answers together.

Through a first look into the answers we identified a few areas of impact mentioned recurrently by respondents. Therefore we created 6 categories fitting these broad areas of impact and marked each respondent's for their alignment with these. Respondents' answers ranged from matching none of the categories to matching all 6 of them, following a gaussian-like distribution as seen in the graph below.



*Fig. 3: Number of answers matching one or more categories*

The 6 categories, along with a description and some examples of the type of answers which were deemed to match them, are described below:

**A Social dimension:** Meaningful social connections, development of social skills and/or feeling of belonging to a like-minded community.

**B Repertoire:** Learning new and/or challenging repertoire

**C Professional development:** Improved knowledge, skills and relevant professional experience in the music field

**D Networking:** Valuable professional networking and/or mention to concrete resulting opportunities in the music field

**E Confidence & self-development:** Increased self-confidence, boosted motivation to pursue a music career and/or sense of personal growth

**F Intercultural awareness:** Gained intercultural perspective and/or developed a stronger a European identity

|   | WYC    | Eurochoir | NYC    | NIYO   | TOTAL  |
|---|--------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|
| Partially or fully in music profession (n=) | 85     | 30        | 165    | 88     | 295    |
| Social dimension                            | 61.18% | 66.67%    | 63.03% | 45.45% | 57.29% |
| Repertoire                                  | 15.29% | 10.00%    | 17.58% | 11.36% | 15.59% |
| Professional development                    | 71.76% | 60.00%    | 66.06% | 76.14% | 69.83% |
| Networking                                  | 65.88% | 50.00%    | 47.88% | 43.18% | 49.49% |
| Confidence & self-development               | 65.88% | 46.67%    | 71.52% | 61.36% | 65.42% |
| Intercultural awareness                     | 44.71% | 33.33%    | 13.94% | 12.50% | 19.32% |

*Table 9: Categories of influence on career*



In terms of networking, confidence and intercultural awareness, quite a high number of respondents stated a similar impact, especially if we consider these are open answer questions. That is, if it had been a multiple choice question where the same fields were presented, it would likely have higher numbers due to acquiescence bias. However, respondents individually answered these questions, so these results are not subject to such a bias.

The benefits for networking included the initiation of many new opportunities, and developing confidence resulted in new projects and a morale boost to continue in music, as well as increased self-worth. Intercultural awareness, naturally, was especially seen in international ensembles.

Quotes from alumni on how they were affected by participation in international youth ensembles were very touching. For example, Piotr, now a professional singer in the Poznań opera choir in Poland, sang in the World Youth Choir in 1989, 1990 and 1991. His testimony shows how participation in an international ensemble can have an influence on young people, even beyond pure career criteria:

“

In those days, Poland was still cut off from the world after many years of communism. Participation in „WYC“ gave me the opportunity to see the world outside of Poland, meet great young musicians from other countries, get to know great music and great conductors (like Eric Ericson or others).

Eugene from the US participated in the 1995 WYC session and said:

“

I felt as if I met individuals who understood me on the deepest level without even needing to speak the same language. We spoke the one international language--MUSIC.

## 2.2 World Youth Choir

When first joining, 78 % of all people answering where studying, all except three were enrolled as university students. While the overwhelming majority were studying in the musical field, voice, opera singing or music education, there were also people studying linguistics, biology or medicine.

The average age of people when first joining WYC is 22.6 years.

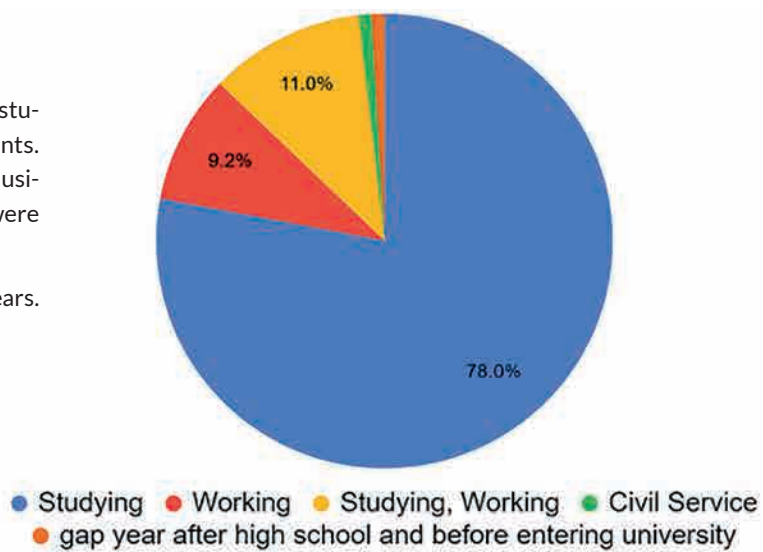


Fig. 4: Occupation of World Youth Choir respondents at time of joining the choir

Today, the percentage of former World Youth Choir participants who have completed tertiary education is 93.58 %, an even higher value than the already high percentage of 88.35 % in the overall sample and the highest of all surveyed ensembles.

| Highest degree/level of school completed | No | %      |
|--|----|--------|
| Primary School                           | 0  | 0.00%  |
| High School                              | 4  | 3.67%  |
| Undergraduate/Bachelor's Degree          | 40 | 36.70% |
| Masters Degree                           | 58 | 53.21% |
| Ph.D. or higher                          | 4  | 3.67%  |
| Vocational/Professional Qualification    | 2  | 1.83%  |
| Prefer not to say                        | 1  | 0.92%  |

Table 10: Highest degree/level of school completed

The vast majority were professionally active and nine out of ten professionally active are in a music profession, at least partially:

| Currently professionally active?                  | No | %      |
|---|----|--------|
| Yes (e.g. employed, freelance, looking for a job) | 95 | 87.16% |
| No (e.g. studying, career break)                  | 14 | 12.84% |

Table 11: Current professional activity

| Current profession involve music in any way?      | No | %      |
|---|----|--------|
| Yes (e.g. employed, freelance, looking for a job) | 95 | 87.16% |
| No (e.g. studying, career break)                  | 14 | 12.84% |
| Sometimes/Partially                               | 5  | 5.26%  |

*Table 12: Professional involvement in music*

Among them, there are naturally mostly singers, but also teachers of various levels of education. Interestingly, over 21 alone are conductors, ranging from high school chorus to conducting professional choirs and orchestras. This shows that a high-level auditioned youth choir can also be a good training opportunity for conductors or that young singers who have the opportunity to sing in such an ensemble may develop an interest in conducting. Evidence of this is given in the National Youth Choirs section below, where Ive from Norway was inspired to become a choral conductor by her time in her National Youth Choir

95 % of all World Youth Choir alumni who are in a music profession today gave credit to the ensemble for having had an influence on their careers; only four out of the 80 having answered “yes” in the previous question said it did not have an influence.

Not all aspects of emerging careers are easy to measure in figures and charts, and sometimes stories can be stronger than statistics. We would therefore like to share some quotes from former singers as to how participation in the WYC had an influence on their music careers. One female singer who participated in 1993, said:

“ [It] gave me the musical basics and inspired me to study singing/music.

Today, she has made a career as a voice teacher. This shows how exposure to high-level international conductors and singers can not only influence your career, but actually encourage you to get into professional singing.

Also for Frank, who participated in the early 1990s, singing in the WYC was a key experience in pursuing his career. Today a professional singer and voice teacher, he says:

“ [w]ithout WYC I would have stopped singing I guess.

But it is not only the interpersonal effect of career, the interest in music as a profession, that participation in WYC has on people. Being chosen for the World Youth Choir can certainly

help young musicians to make the most of their talents. It can be an asset in the CV and real career boost, as Lukas, a choral director and a more recent alumnus from Indonesia, recounts:

“ Since I joined the World Youth Choir, I am more widely known in Indonesian choirs. I contacted the choir directors in Indonesia, and established several collaborations. [...] I am often asked to be a speaker at a workshop about choir. My ability has improved after getting knowledge in the World Youth Choir [...].

This quote also shows that alumni of such ensembles are important multipliers who will not only profit personally but will also transmit what they learned in their country of origin.

Theresa, a professional singer from the United States and alumna of multiple sessions in the early 2000s, goes down the same way: “Having the World Youth Choir on my CV made people take me seriously as a choral singer.”

Also Juan’s singing career has really taken off since he sang in the WYC a decade ago:

“ Someone heard me singing in the WYC and offered me to go as an extra chorus member to France. Then I met people who invited me to other professional choirs. Ended up in the Paris National Opera House choir, from there to the Opera Studio and now I work as a soloist worldwide :)

For Maartje, the 1993 Norway session inspired in her an everlasting love for Scandinavia and the Nordic repertoire. She subsequently moved to Norway to study singing. As a professional singer, she was even invited to perform in Edvard Grieg’s house. On top of this, the 1995 session with Frieder Bernius established the contact that eventually led her to become a member of Bernius’ Stuttgart Kammerchor for nearly a decade. She says, in a nutshell:

“ My work up to today, is directly related to the WYC. It has been essential for me.

## 2.3 EuroChoir

When first joining, 50 % of all people answering were studying, while 22.7 % were studying and working part-time. The remaining 27.3 % were already employed full-time by the time they first joined EuroChoir.

The relatively high percentage of people in employment is supported by the average age of 24.9 years for first-time EuroChoir singers. All but three people were employed in the music sector or studying a musical subject.

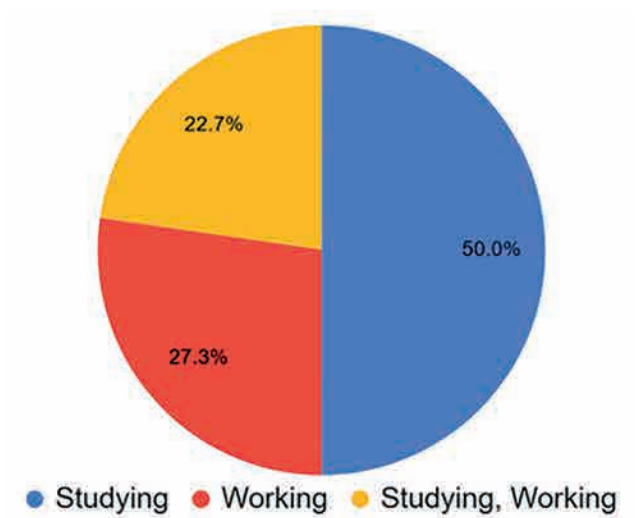


Fig. 5: Occupation of EuroChoir respondents at time of joining the choir

The percentage of former EuroChoir participants who have completed tertiary education at the moment of answering the survey is 83.05 %.

| Highest degree/level of school completed | No | %      |
|--|----|--------|
| Primary School                           | 0  | 0.00%  |
| High School                              | 7  | 11.86% |
| Undergraduate/Bachelor's Degree          | 17 | 28.81% |
| Masters Degree                           | 30 | 50.85% |
| Ph.D. or higher                          | 2  | 3.39%  |
| Vocational/Professional Qualification    | 2  | 3.39%  |
| Prefer not to say                        | 1  | 1.69%  |

Table 13: Highest degree/level of school completed

Three quarters are professionally active, meaning nearly 25 % are still in education. These figures can be explained by the sample we have got; all but four participated in 2010 or later. Therefore, naturally, our respondents are younger and hence more likely to still be in education. Out of these professionally active, two thirds are in a career that involves, at least partially, music.

| Currently professionally active?                  | No | %      |
|---|----|--------|
| Yes (e.g. employed, freelance, looking for a job) | 45 | 76.27% |
| No (e.g. studying, career break)                  | 14 | 23.73% |

Table 14: Current professional activity





| Current profession involve music in any way? | No | %      |
|--|----|--------|
| Yes  | 22 | 48.89% |
| No   | 15 | 33.33% |
| Sometimes/Partially                          | 8  | 17.78% |

*Table 15: Professional involvement in music*

Here we see most of them being teachers at secondary level, with also a few conductors and cultural managers.

82 % of all EuroChoir alumni who are in a music profession today gave credit to the ensemble for having had an influence on their careers; only four out of the 22 having answered “yes” in the previous question said EuroChoir did not have an influence.

Marlene from Austria, who sang in the EuroChoir in 2018, underlined how this experience benefited her in her path to becoming a music teacher. Not only did she get to know new repertoire, but it also opened up a network of like-minded people for her. To this day, she is still in contact a lot with people from abroad she met in EuroChoir. This benefit was also pointed out by Ruben, now a professional conductor and composer from the Netherlands. The networking aspect is analysed in more detail in the next chapter. Having such a network can help singers in both the professionalisation and internationalisation of their careers

Linde from Belgium even married a singer she met in EuroChoir over ten years ago. Now, she has been living in his country for 9 years already and has made a career as music teacher, conductor and freelance musician.

A participant in a number of sessions in the 2010s, now a project manager in the culture sector, took learnings from the EuroChoir beyond the purely musical aspects: Experiencing the EuroChoir projects “helped me to directly experience how to plan and produce live music projects.”

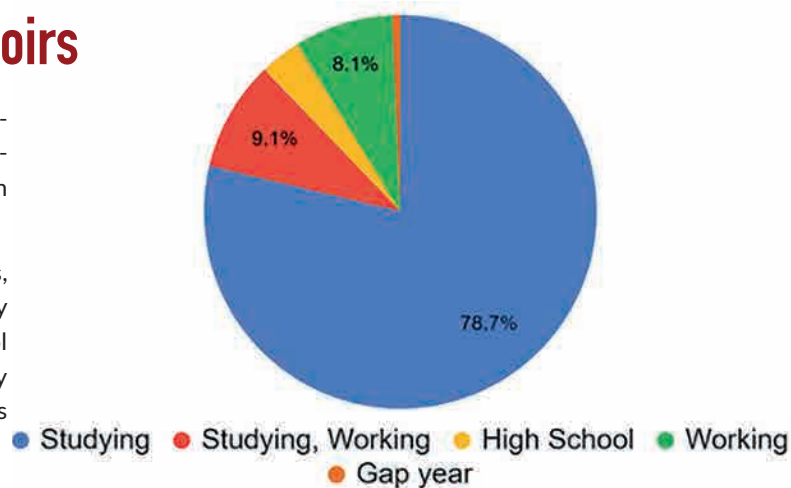
Experiencing a EuroChoir session in 2014 offered Michael “the opportunity to work with different conductors and witness the unique perspectives in how they approach music”, experiences he can now draw from as a professional conductor and CEO of the Irish Institute of Music and Song.

## 2.4 National/Regional Youth Choirs

When first joining, an overwhelming 78 % of all people answering were studying, while 9.1 % were studying and working part-time. 8.1 % were working full time, 3.4 % in High School and 0.7 % in a gap year.

However, the option “studying” proves to be ambiguous, out of 233 people having ticked this option, 89 clarified they were studying in a second-level programme (high school etc.) if we take this into account, the number of university students drops to 144 (48,4 %), with second-level students rising to 99 (33,3 %).

For this ensemble, the questionnaire did not ask the age when first joining, but given the numbers of second-level students, we can assume a lower average than in WYC and EuroChoir.



*Fig. 6: Occupation of national/regional youth choir respondents at time of joining the choir*

85.86 % of the alumni of national and regional youth choirs went on to complete tertiary education:

| Highest degree/level of school completed | No  | %      |
|--|-----|--------|
| Primary School                           | 1   | 0.34%  |
| High School                              | 31  | 10.44% |
| Undergraduate/Bachelor's Degree          | 91  | 30.64% |
| Masters Degree                           | 149 | 50.17% |
| Ph.D. or higher                          | 15  | 5.05%  |
| Vocational/Professional Qualification    | 10  | 3.37%  |
| Prefer not to say                        | 0   | 0.00%  |

*Table 16: Highest degree/level of school completed*

Three quarters are professionally active, meaning nearly 25 % are still in Nearly four fifths were professionally active by the

time they answered the survey, with 70 % of them active in a music profession, at least partially.

| Currently professionally active?                  | No  | %      |
|---|-----|--------|
| Yes (e.g. employed, freelance, looking for a job) | 235 | 79.12% |
| No (e.g. studying, career break)                  | 62  | 20.88% |

*Table 17: Current professional activity*

| Current profession involve music in any way? | No  | %      |
|--|-----|--------|
| Yes  | 136 | 57.87% |
| No   | 70  | 29.79% |
| Sometimes/Partially                          | 29  | 12.34% |

*Table 18: Professional involvement in music*

Hulda, a secondary music teacher from Norway, first joined the Youth Choir when she was still in school and has found inspiration to pursue music as a career:

“It changed my life entirely, both on a personal and academic level. The National Youth Choir gave me the inspiration and confidence to study musicology and become a semi-professional ensemble singer.

Her fellow Norwegian Ive, now a professional choir conductor, was equally inspired by her time in the National Youth Choir:

“To be part of the national youth choir opened my eyes to all the wonderful choir repertoire [...]. The conductors were of great inspiration to me, and made me want to be a choir conductor myself. [...] The process of studying the music together, working towards, and being in, a choir competition gave me experience that I now use with my own choirs.

Her four-year term in the National Youth Choir of Great Britain was the kick-start of her career for Andrea, now a professional singer. Singing in the choir “helped [her] with confidence to audition for music conservatory.” This is also true for Yvonne, a dutch professional singer. She said that the National Youth Choir was what made her take up studies at the conservatory, and ultimately go on to become a professional.

A professional actor, singer, vocal coach and musical director said that

“National Youth Choir was one of the best musical educations I could ever have had or wished for. The level of musicianship, the environment for nurturing excellence and the quality of the choral directors and education of its members is next to none. The bar is raised high and it's young people meet it and have a real pride in doing so that nurtures the whole group. I have rarely experienced anything of that same level of quality ever since.

Jacques, a French choral conductor, tells us that he greatly profited from the high artistic level in the National Youth Choir and that many of whom he sung with during his five-year stint in the mid-2000s have gone on to become professional musicians.

Elizabeth first joined the National Youth Choir of Great Britain in 2000. Two decades later, she works in this very ensemble, passing on the passion for music to the next generation:

“My love of singing came from joining NYCGB. It has changed my life being part of this choir. I am so grateful for the love of singing, training, travelling, friends, and now work I have from this amazing organisation!

Also Patrick has found more than musical training in the National Youth Choir of Ireland. Having been a singer in 2017, he now conducts, amongst other ensembles, the Irish Youth Training Choir.

Gustavo from Spain sang in a National Youth Choir in the Netherlands for more than 10 years, starting in 1995. He has since made an academic career in music and is now a senior professor for music theory at the Conservatory of Amsterdam. His experience in the choir gave him a musical experience at the highest level and opened up a network of musicians. Both have come in very useful during his career.

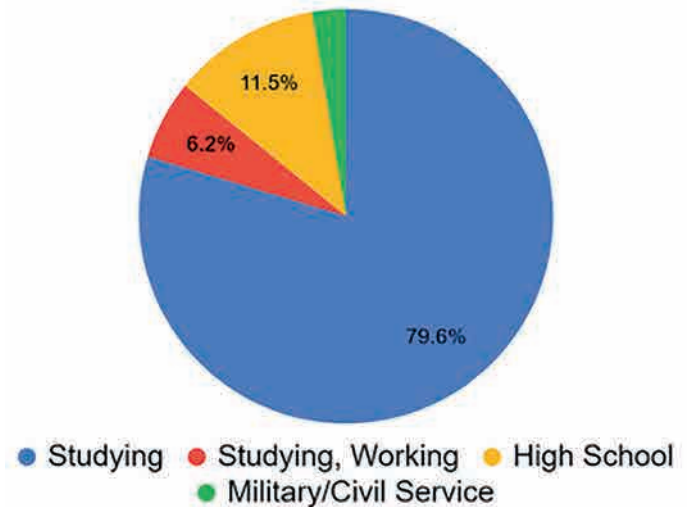
## 2.5 National/International Youth Orchestras

When first joining, 79,6 % of all people answering were studying, while 11,5 % were in high school. 6,2 % were studying and working part-time and 2,7 % in military or civil service..

Here too, “studying” was an ambiguous option and needs a closer look. Out of 90 having ticked this option, 28 clarified they were studying in a second-level programme (high school etc.). If we take this into account, the number of university students drops to 62 (54,9 %), with the number of second-level students rising to 41 (36,3%), the highest percentage in all surveyed ensembles.

Also for national youth orchestras, the questionnaire did not ask the age when first joining, but given the numbers of second-level students, we can assume a lower average than in WYC and EuroChoir.

Even though over a third of respondents were still in secondary education by the time joining the national youth orchestra, 91,1 % went on to complete tertiary education. Again, the highest percentage of all survey ensembles.



*Fig. 7: Occupation of national/international youth orchestra respondents at time of joining the orchestra*

| Highest degree/level of school completed | No | %      |
|--|----|--------|
| Primary School                           | 0  | 0.00%  |
| High School                              | 9  | 7.96%  |
| Undergraduate/Bachelor's Degree          | 27 | 23.89% |
| Masters Degree                           | 73 | 64.60% |
| Ph.D. or higher                          | 3  | 2.65%  |
| Vocational/Professional Qualification    | 0  | 0.00%  |
| Prefer not to say                        | 1  | 0.88%  |

*Table 19: Highest degree/level of school completed*

85 % of the alumni of national youth orchestras were professionally active by the time they answered the survey (a percentage only second to WYC alumni), with over 92,7 % of them in a profession that involves music, at least partially. This is the

highest percentage of musicians in all survey ensembles; even more striking that only 1.04 % said “sometimes/partially” and over 91 % answered with a clear “yes”.

| Currently professionally active?                  | No | %      |
|---|----|--------|
| Yes (e.g. employed, freelance, looking for a job) | 96 | 84.96% |
| No (e.g. studying, career break)                  | 17 | 15.04% |

*Table 20: Current professional activity*



| Current profession involve music in any way? | No | %      |
|--|----|--------|
| Yes  | 88 | 91.67% |
| No   | 7  | 7.29%  |
| Sometimes/Partially                          | 1  | 1.04%  |

*Table 21: Professional involvement in music*

With the highest percentage of people in the music sectors of all alumni of our survey ensembles, it is especially interesting to take a closer look at the career paths of former youth orchestra musicians:

47 out of the 88 who answered “yes” above are instrumentalists with either fixed positions in orchestras or freelance (53 %). 27 % are teachers, educators or academics. We also have two professional singers, both of whom have also participated in a national youth choir, five conductors and one composer and one music critic. As was expected, a lot of these musicians play in an orchestra or freelance and teach at the same time.

90 % of the alumni of national or international youth orchestras, who are in a music profession today, gave credit to the ensemble for having had an influence on their careers, again, this number is only second the thw WYC alumni. Only 9 out of the 88 having answered “yes” in the previous question said it did not or only indirectly.

Elisabeth, now teaching at Mozarteum Salzburg, said that playing in a youth orchestra allowed her to

“ build up the symphonic repertoire which later made it easier to join a professional orchestra spontaneously with the same programme.

Wolfgang, principal trumpetist at Mozarteum Orchestra, says he would not be there without his experience in Wiener Jeunesse Orchester and JÖPH.

Patrick says:

“ I realised in many ways, that making music for a living is something I want to achieve.

He has come a long way since that decision and is today first violin at the Theatre of Lower Bavaria.

For Peter, a professional chamber musician in Sweden, his experience in a youth orchestra sparked the ambition of becoming an ensemble musician. It helped him in terms of:

“ getting to know how it feels to play together with high quality musicians and helped [his] decision to become an orchestra musician.

Ines had the experience of playing in two different youth orchestras:

“ Being part of the Youth Orchestra of Portugal was very influential in my musical journey. It made me really enjoy playing with people and in an orchestra setting. I was always looking forward to our programmes and to the opportunity of meeting young musicians like me, as well as working with the great conductor Pedro Carneiro. It also gave me the chance to occasionally join the great professional orchestra OCP and perform alongside professional musicians while I was still studying. This was extremely valuable to me, not only for the experience itself but because it gave me a glimpse of professional life at a crucial point in my formative years. Playing with the Romanian Youth Orchestra was also an incredible opportunity. [...] We performed in Sinaia, Bucharest and Berlin in great concert halls, which made for a truly remarkable experience. During the project, I got to play some Romanian music that I didn't know before and that I came to really enjoy.

Also Marianna, member of Orquestra Filarmónica Portuguesa and violin teacher at Academia de Música de Paços de Brandão cherishes her time in the Portuguese Youth Orchestra:

“ Being involved in the National Portuguese Youth Orchestra „Jovem Orquestra Portuguesa“ for 6 lovely years made a huge impact in my life. It shaped me as a musician, a human being and as an artist. Participating in such a project was a boost in my personal and career growth. Nowadays I can definitely attribute much of my success to the values and knowledge I learned in those gold days. I will forever be thankful to them to have built in me the musician that I am today.



Michaela says,

“

being part of a national youth orchestra gave her “a clear picture, if [she] loves playing in an Orchestra or not” and clearly she did love it, for today she is 1st violin tutti in an orchestra.

His time in the European Union Youth Orchestra and the contacts he made there inspired Paul to study music in London. Today he is double bass player at Magdeburgische Philharmonie.

Bernhard, an orchestra musician from Italy, said

“

playing in the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra opened doors for him in his career path, being part of the renowned orchestra made him receive invitations for auditions afterwards.

Marcela, a university professor for flute, reckons she profited a lot through the exposure to the highest musical level:

“

As member of EUYO I got an opportunity to play solo performance with Munich Radio Orchestra and this improved my soloistic skills.

Seeing the highest percentage of alumni in a music profession, the second-highest professionally active and the second-highest who said participation in the ensemble was beneficial to their careers, it is safe to say that national and international youth orchestras have the most significant impact on young musicians' careers, at least within our sample.

# 3

## Internationalisation / Networking

The impact of internationalisation and networking in emerging musicians' careers is another cornerstone of the EPIC project. It has been well documented through impact studies of international mobility programmes (eg. Erasmus+ Impact Study)<sup>6</sup> that a period of mobility can have a huge impact on one's professional development. Said impact manifests in diverse manners, including but not limited to: development of skills and knowledge on the specific study field, strengthening of social skills, motivation to explore one's own identity, creation of a wide network of professional contacts, increase in employability and confidence to take substantial life decisions. Within the youth music field, professionals working with auditioned youth ensembles are no strangers to these effects, having seen anecdotal evidence of such impact throughout the implementation of international and national youth projects and in this survey we aimed to collate evidence to substantiate this phenomenon for the music field in specific.

In the survey, the following questions were asked in order to find out about the international and networking aspect of these auditioned youth ensembles on the emerging musicians' careers:

9. "Has anyone applied for the [ENSEMBLE] after you shared your experience with them?"
10. "Are you still in touch with others from a different country who played in your [ENSEMBLE]?"
11. "Are you still in touch with others from your own country who played in your [ENSEMBLE]?"
13. "Have you worked/performed in countries other than your own during your career?"

### Answers to questions asked.

#### Overall answers

#### 9 - Has anyone applied for the [ENSEMBLE] after you shared your experience with them?

The majority of the surveyed population has stated that someone else from their social circles has applied for the corresponding auditioned youth ensemble after they have shared the experience with them. The percentages range from a solid majority of 64.41% for the EuroChoir and 71.56% for the World Youth Choir to an overwhelming majority of 81.03% for National Youth Choirs and 86.24% for National and International Youth Orchestras.

The act of sharing this experience and encouraging others to participate can only be perceived as a strong indicator of the high value our surveyed participants see in participating in auditioned youth ensembles. It also shows that the young musicians do not keep the experience to themselves, they function as multipliers and will often increase the visibility and knowledge about the ensemble in their personal networks.

Furthermore, we can also infer a perceived high value of the experience by the third party who heard about this experience from their contact, since they ultimately decided to apply themselves. The slight difference in percentages seen of third party applicants between the international ensembles (WYC and EC) and national ensembles (NYC / NIYO) can likely be attributed to common barriers for participating in international experiences such as language barrier, lack of economical resources or lack of confidence to travel abroad alone.

<sup>6</sup> <<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/94d97f5c-7ae2-11e9-9f05-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>>

|                            | WYC | WYC (%) | EC | EC (%) | NYC           | NYC (%) | NIYO          | NIYO (%) |
|----------------------------|-----|---------|----|--------|---------------|---------|---------------|----------|
| Yes                        | 78  | 71.56%  | 38 | 64.41% | 235           | 81.03%  | 94            | 86.24%   |
| No                         | 8   | 7.34%   | 8  | 13.56% | 55            | 18.97%  | 15            | 13.76%   |
| Not sure/Prefer not to say | 21  | 19.27%  | 9  | 15.25% | Not an option |         | Not an option |          |
| Not applicable             | 2   | 1.83%   | 4  | 6.78%  | Not an option |         | Not an option |          |

*Table 22: Number and percentage of participants who caused further emerging musicians to participate in their ensemble*

Note: This question was asked in relation to each of the ensembles, thus someone who participated in more than one could answer in a specific manner to each one.

#### 10 - Are you still in touch with others from a different country who played in your [ENSEMBLE]?

|                   | WYC | WYC (%) | EC | EC (%) |
|-------------------|-----|---------|----|--------|
| Very often        | 47  | 43.12%  | 21 | 35.59% |
| Sometimes         | 47  | 43.12%  | 21 | 35.59% |
| Rarely            | 10  | 9.17%   | 11 | 18.64% |
| Never             | 4   | 3.67%   | 6  | 10.17% |
| Prefer not to say | 1   | 0.92%   | 0  | 0.00%  |

*Table 23: Participants still in touch with colleagues from a different country who participated in the same ensemble*

Note: This question was asked in relation to each of the ensembles, thus someone who participated in more than one could answer in a specific manner to each one.

The creation of an international network of music contacts is often referred to as a major benefit of participating in auditioned youth ensembles, which is well substantiated through the findings in our survey. The percentage of participants who identified being very often or sometimes still in touch with ot-

hers from their ensemble vastly outnumber the ones who claimed rarely or never communicating with them. The numbers were slightly higher for the WYC, with 86.24% still maintaining frequent and occasional contact in comparison with 71.18% EuroChoir respondents in the same category.

#### 11 - Are you still in touch with others from your own country who played in your [ENSEMBLE]?

|                   | WYC | WYC (%) | EC | EC (%) | NYC           | NYC (%) | NIYO          | NIYO (%) |
|-------------------|-----|---------|----|--------|---------------|---------|---------------|----------|
| Very often        | 33  | 30.56%  | 16 | 27.12% | 142           | 47.97%  | 41            | 36.28%   |
| Sometimes         | 45  | 41.67%  | 25 | 42.37% | 119           | 40.20%  | 50            | 44.25%   |
| Rarely            | 17  | 15.74%  | 9  | 15.25% | 32            | 10.81%  | 17            | 15.04%   |
| Never             | 5   | 4.63%   | 3  | 5.08%  | 3             | 1.01%   | 5             | 4.42%    |
| Not applicable    | 8   | 7.41%   | 6  | 10.17% | Not an option |         | Not an option |          |
| Prefer not to say | 0   | 0.00%   | 0  | 0.00%  | 0             | 0.00%   | 0             | 0.00%    |

*Table 24: Participants still in touch with colleagues from their own country who participated in the same ensemble*

Note: This question was asked in relation to each of the ensembles, thus someone who participated in more than one could answer in a specific manner to each one.



Similarly when it comes to keeping connection with others from their own country, the majority has stated to still be in touch with the people they met in their auditioned youth ensemble. If we once again take the combined percentage of answers marked as “very often” and “sometimes”, we have percentages ranging from 69.49% to 88.17% of participants who still maintain regular contact within their national network. The importance

of both national and international networks of contacts is further corroborated by the answers to the open question “Please explain how participation in one (or more) of these ensembles influenced your career”, where 49,49% of respondents who still have an active career in music have mentioned networking to be one of the main professional gains they drew from their auditioned ensemble experience.

### 13 - Have you worked/performed in countries other than your own during your career?

The percentage of participants who identified having very often or sometimes performed internationally is 65% and above across all ensembles, with the three subsegments that include

an international experience (WYC, EuroChoir and NIYO) above 75% (77,65%, 76,67% and 89,77%, respectively). We can conclude a very strong correlation between participation in international auditioned youth ensembles and an increased number of international performance opportunities.

|                      | WYC    | EuroChoir | NYC    | NIYO   | TOTAL  |
|----------------------|--------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|
| No                   | 3      | 5         | 27     | 0      | 30     |
| No (%)               | 3.53%  | 16.67%    | 16.36% | 0.00%  | 10.17% |
| Yes - but rarely     | 16     | 2         | 31     | 9      | 52     |
| Yes - but rarely (%) | 18.82% | 6.67%     | 18.79% | 10.23% | 17.63% |
| Yes - sometimes      | 37     | 12        | 66     | 33     | 113    |
| Yes - sometimes (%)  | 43.53% | 40.00%    | 40.00% | 37.50% | 38.31% |
| Yes - very often     | 29     | 11        | 41     | 46     | 100    |
| Yes - very often (%) | 34.12% | 36.67%    | 24.85% | 52.27% | 33.90% |

*Table 25: Number and percentage of participants who have worked/performed in countries other than their own*

Note: This question was asked in relation to each of the ensembles, thus someone who participated in more than one could answer in a specific manner to each one.



# Conclusion

We see most alumni of our surveyed ensembles in a music profession today (68.1 %) or in a profession that at least partially involves music (9.2 %), making a total of 77.3% working with music in one way or another. Only 22.7 % are not in a profession involving music, with a lot of them still being in education and will no doubt find their way into the professional music sector in the future.

In terms of education, we see a highly academic field, with almost 90 % who have completed a degree in tertiary education, more than twice as much as the EU average. The World Youth Choir alumni have with 93.6 % the highest percentage of tertiary education.

Taking the percentage of alumni active in the music field as an indicator of professionalisation, national and international youth orchestras prove to have the highest impact on their participants. This is supported by the quotes of alumni we saw above. Also World Youth Choir and national and regional youth choirs show a very strong impact, with EuroChoir showing slightly smaller numbers.

In the questions on the assessment participation in the auditioned ensembles had on their careers, it was sometimes hard to distinguish which ensemble was made reference to if people participated in more than one, which ensemble did make the impact. However, the overwhelming majority of music professionals gave credit to the ensembles they participated in for having had an important impact, often indicating that the experience was instrumental in

their decision to pursue a musical career.

Throughout all survey ensembles, we see a strong networking aspect and a sense of belonging to the alumni group of the ensemble. Most people have shared their experience with others and encouraged others to participate which is a strong indicator of the high value our surveyed participants see in participating in auditioned youth ensembles.

More than half of our alumni are still in touch “often” or “sometimes” with people they met in the ensembles, serving as professional contacts, friends, and sometimes, as we saw, family. Remarkably, alumni of the international choirs are still more often in touch with people from a different country than with people from their own country which shows a strong outward-bound mindset and proves that these international ensembles foster international networks, friendships and understanding.

The percentage of participants who identified having “very often” or “sometimes” performed internationally is 65% and above across all surveyed ensembles. The ensembles that include an international experience (WYC, EuroChoir and NIYO) range even above 75% (77,65%, 76,67% and 89,77%, respectively). Thus, we see a strong correlation between participation in international auditioned youth ensembles and an increased number of international performance opportunities.

### **Connection between auditioned youth choirs on regional/national, European and international level:**

An interesting finding of the EPIC data collection was that only 14% of singers in regional and national youth choirs also participated in a session of the World Youth Choir. It may be because the World Youth Choir does not market itself well enough on this level, that the conductors and managers of national youth choirs do not want to promote the World Youth Choir because the sessions often happen at the same time as those of their own choirs, that singers of national youth choirs are not confident enough to apply for the World Youth Choir or that there are economic barriers.

The Board of the World Youth Choir Foundation with representatives of the European Choral Association and Jeunesses Musicales, both partners in EPIC, as well as the International Federation for Choral Music took this finding as a starting point to rethink and redesign the vision and strategy for the foundation in the coming years. As a legacy of the EPIC project the World Youth Choir Foundation aims at strengthening the connections between auditioned youth choirs on regional and national level (building on the network created during the EPIC project and adding non-European choirs to this network), youth choirs in different regions of the world (including Euro-Choir, but also the African Youth Choir, the Asia-Pacific Youth Choir and other choirs of this type) and the World Youth Choir at the top of the pyramid.

*The World Youth Choir aims to be at the top of a pyramidal network of auditioned youth choirs which are important educational tools for young singers including potential future music professionals (singers, music educators, managers or conductors). It serves as an inspirational example of what singers can achieve and can encourage those singing in national or regional ensembles to strive for more.*

This strategy may include raising the age limit for the World Youth Choir so that it will not be perceived as competition to the national and regional youth choirs, as well as offering subsidies to the travel expenses of young singers from countries underrepresented in the World Youth Choir in the past. (More information will soon be published on [www.worldyouthchoir.org](http://www.worldyouthchoir.org))

This means that the EPIC project will have a long-term sustainable effect on the scene of auditioned youth music ensembles.





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