Annual Report for the 2020–2021 Academic Year

General Information

A total of 337 students took part in El Sistema Greece classes and activities between September 2020 and July 2021.

ESG operated at the following locations:
1. The organisation's headquarters in Kypseli, where free music lessons are offered daily to children and young people aged 5-26.
2. The Dimitreion Day Care Centre (KDAP), run by the Apostoli NGO in Moschato, where ESG has been providing music instruction to the Centre's beneficiaries since 2018.
3. The Kalogeropouleio Conservatory in Corinth, where ESG began offering free music lessons in October 2020.
4. The Schisto Refugee Accommodation Facility, where ESG provided online music lessons from February to May 2021, when the facility closed permanently.
5. The IOM Accommodation Facility for Unaccompanied Minors, where ESG provided free lessons from April to June 2021.
6. The ELIX Accommodation Facility for Unaccompanied Minors, where ESG provided free lessons from October 2020 to June 2021.
7. Malliaras Schools in Alimos, where the El Sistema Greece Youth Orchestra (ESGYO) has held its weekly rehearsals since 2018.

A total of 1,658 hours of music instruction were delivered during the academic year, both in person and online. The breakdown of teaching hours by location was as follows:

1. Kypseli
Violin – 3 hours per week
Viola – 3 hours per week
Cello – 2 hours per week
Flute – 1 hour per week
French horn – 2 hours per week
Percussion – 2 hours per week
Trumpet – 2 hours per week
Kypseli Nucleo Orchestra – 1.5 hours per week
Music theory – 8 hours per week
Early childhood music education – 1 hour per week

Choir – 7.5 hours per week

Total: 33 hours per week; 1,074 hours per academic year

2. Dimitreion Day Care Centre (KDAP)
Violin – 2 hours per week
Trumpet – 1 hour per week
Cello – 1 hour per week
Orchestra – 1 hour per week
Choir – 3.5 hours per week

Total: 8.5 hours per week; 273 hours per academic year

3. Kalogeropouleio Conservatory
Violin – 1 hour per week
Clarinet – 1 hour per week
Cello – 1 hour per week
Choir – 1 hour per week

Total: 4 hours per week; 124 hours per academic year

4. Schisto Refugee Accommodation Facility
Violin – 2 hours per week
Viola – 1 hour per week
Choir – 1.5 hours per week

Total: 3.5 hours per week; 31.5 hours per academic year

5. IOM Accommodation Facility for Unaccompanied Minors
Early childhood music education – 1 hour per week
Choir – 1 hour per week

Total: 2 hours per week; 16 hours per academic year

6. ELIX Accommodation Facility for Unaccompanied Minors
Choir – 1 hour per week; 34 hours per academic year

7. Malliaras Schools

ESGYO rehearsals – 3 hours per week; 105.5 hours per academic year

Online Classes

In November 2020, in-person classes and rehearsals were suspended once again due to the second nationwide lockdown. ESG immediately introduced an online teaching programme combining live, synchronous lessons with asynchronous learning through Zoom and the organisation's online platform. To help students at the Schisto facility take part in the online lessons, ESG provided them with data cards to enable internet access.

In total, ESG provided its students with:
1,197 hours of online instruction via Zoom
11 pre-recorded video lessons for asynchronous learning

A total of 337 students attended ESG's regular weekly classes and rehearsals. Their distribution across the teaching locations was as follows:

Kypseli: 129 students
Dimitreion Day Care Centre: 40 students
Kalogeropouleio Conservatory: 31 students (22 from the city of Corinth and 9 residing at the Open Refugee Accommodation Facility in Corinth)
Schisto Facility: 24 students
IOM Accommodation Facility for Unaccompanied Minors: 15 students
ELIX Accommodation Facility for Unaccompanied Minors: 12 students
Malliaras Schools: 86 students, members of ESGYO

Our students represented the following nationalities:



Overview

The year began with in-person classes and rehearsals, with all the necessary health and safety measures in place, including regular disinfection, temperature checks, physical distancing, face masks and hand sanitizer. However, from November 2020 to May 2021, following the imposition of the country's second lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19, ESG's classes and activities moved online, primarily using Zoom.

Although in-person teaching was unavailable for most of the academic year, our teachers and students showed great dedication and perseverance in maintaining their connection with music and our musical community. When we were able to meet again in May, we were delighted to see that many students had continued to make progress. Despite having only a few in-person rehearsals from May onwards, we successfully staged two major concerts in June and July, at the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center (SNFCC) and the Odeon of Herodes Atticus.

At the same time, by making the most of the opportunities offered by online activities, we were able to greatly expand our participation in seminars, workshops and interactive meetings with Sistema programmes abroad and internationally acclaimed musicians.

Finally, despite the pandemic, this was the first year in which we expanded beyond the Attica region, offering free music lessons in Corinth in collaboration with the conservatory of the Kalogeropouleio Foundation. Alongside students living in the area, our classes also welcomed students accommodated at the nearby Open Refugee Accommodation Facility.

Activities in Chronological Order

September 2020

- The new academic year began. All classes started in Kypseli and at Apostoli, and orchestra rehearsals began at Malliaras Schools in Alimos.

- Launch of the European programme Songs for Europe. Four internationally recognised music education programmes, Wirth Music Academy (Austria), El Sistema Greece, Superar Slovakia and House of Good Tones Srebrenica (Bosnia and Herzegovina) joined forces to implement the pioneering European programme Songs for Europe. The initiative is part of the European Union's Creative Europe programme and has been designed by educators for educators. It aims to introduce and establish innovative music teaching methods, supported by state-of-the-art information technology and artificial intelligence tools. The programme runs for two years and is due to conclude in August 2022.

October 2020

- The third Lullaby Project concert took place at the Alternative Stage of the Greek National Opera, in collaboration with Carnegie Hall in New York and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center. ESG has been implementing the Greek version of the Lullaby Project since 2018 as part of its efforts to promote the social inclusion of vulnerable groups. The concert was held without an audience and livestreamed on the SNFCC's online platforms.

November 2020

- Earth Speakr Workshop. Fifty El Sistema Greece students took part in the interactive Earth Speakr Workshop, working together to share their thoughts and ideas for the good of the planet through the Earth Speakr app, developed by internationally acclaimed artist Olafur Eliasson. The programme was funded by the German Federal Foreign Office on the occasion of Germany's 2020 Presidency of the Council of the European Union and implemented in collaboration with the Goethe-Institute.

- In-person classes and rehearsals were suspended, and teaching moved back online, combining synchronous and asynchronous lessons via Zoom and the ESG online platform.

- Participation in a pan-European event marking World Children's Day. To mark the occasion, Sistema Europe, in collaboration with Alliance for Childhood, organised an online musical

celebration. ESG took part with a video performance by its orchestra, while two of its musicians, both members of the ESG Young Leaders Programme, contributed to a live, open discussion on the fundamental right to education and the importance of play in every child's development.

- Participation in an interactive online musical exchange with Sistema Ravinia. Also marking World Children's Day, ESG students and members of the Kypseli Nucleo Orchestra met online for the first time with students from Sistema Ravinia and performed "The Great Gate of Kyiv" together. They dedicated the piece to children around the world, reminding everyone of our shared responsibility to protect children's rights every day.

December 2020

- Online visits and Q&A sessions with world-renowned soprano Joyce DiDonato, ESG's International Ambassador, for the advanced choir class and members of the Young Leaders Programme.

- ESG Artistic Director José Ángel Salazar Marín delivered a speech at the Golden Pegasus Awards ceremony of the 11th Bridges International Film Festival. The El Sistema Greece Youth Orchestra also presented a video performance of "He's a Pirate".

- A virtual Christmas collaboration between the El Sistema Greece orchestra and choir, featuring Joyce DiDonato, performing "The First Noel". As live performances were prohibited, this performance replaced the organisation's customary concert at the SNFCC. It was broadcast on the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center's platforms, against the backdrop of the SNFCC Christmas World

- Collaboration with the international organisation Letters of Love, which connects refugee communities in accommodation facilities around the world through the exchange of handwritten greeting cards in different languages, sent by refugees to refugees. The collaboration helped provide Christmas gifts to 40 ESG students from socially vulnerable backgrounds.

January 2021

- ESG took part in the international project The Walk, contributing to the planning and implementation of activities in Greece, which following a pandemic-related postponement were held in September 2021. Carrying the message "Don't Forget Us", Amal, a giant puppet, set off from the Turkey–Syria border and travelled through Greece, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium and France before reaching the United Kingdom, bringing attention to the stories of the refugee children she represents. Along the route, cities, communities and villages welcomed Little Amal with artistic events.

February 2021

- ESG took part in the online event “Stories of Young and Old”, organised by Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), the Hellenic Forum of Migrants and Greenpeace. Five members of the Young Leaders Programme shared their personal stories and experiences and discussed the importance of community and the power of the arts and music in particular to bring people together.

- ESG orchestra students took part in the songwriting competition “Our Rights Become a Song”, organised by the Network for Children’s Rights. Their entry received a distinction, and the lyrics are due to be set to music by a well-known Greek composer.

- UNICEF’s international project “Reimagine the World as a Gamer”. Sama, aged 11, and Pouya, aged 16, both El Sistema Greece students, became characters in a UNICEF video game, inspiring their classmates and thousands of children around the world through their stories and dreams.

March 2021

- An online introductory event and workshops were held with students and teachers from Italy’s Libera Musica programme. Students presented the work and objectives of the two organisations and took part in musical games and interactive activities.

- An online seminar on the construction and maintenance of string instruments was delivered to El Sistema Greece orchestra students by acclaimed French luthier Sébastien Seixas, who lives and works in Greece.

- First of two lectures by ESG Educational Advisor Panagiotis Tsiridis for postgraduate students on the “Music and Society” programme at the Department of Music Science and Art of the University of Macedonia. The lecture focused on the El Sistema methodology, the aims of El Sistema Greece and the ways in which music can transform children’s lives.

April 2021

- Collaboration between ESG and Berklee College of Music – Valencia Campus. An educational workshop was organised with postgraduate students and music educators from Berklee College, together with five ESG students, with the support of ESG Artistic Director José Ángel Salazar Marín and ESG teacher and Young Leaders Programme Educational Coordinator Francis Gagliardi.

- ESG participated in an online event organised by KMOP (Social Action and Innovation Centre), as part of the MAX programme, which aims to strengthen the integration of migrants into local

communities. The event focused on sharing experiences and stories among representatives of organisations and the media.

- An online professional development seminar for all ESG teachers was delivered by Broadway actor and renowned creativity educator Eric Booth, known as the “father of teaching through the arts”.

- A choral masterclass for advanced ESG choir members was delivered by Lourdes Sanchez, Director of the Simon Bolivar National Choir of El Sistema in Venezuela.

- An online visit and interactive workshop for the musicians of the El Sistema Greece Youth Orchestra was led by Juan Carlos Maggiorani, conductor of Orchestra Geração and Artistic Director of El Sistema Portugal.

May 2021

- In-person orchestra and choir rehearsals resumed as ESG prepared for the World A Music concert at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, as part of the Athens Epidaurus Festival.

- Limited in-person lessons resumed for advanced instrumental students, with individual lessons only and in accordance with Ministry guidelines. Group lessons continued online.

- A collaboration was launched with the Association of Friends of Children with Cancer “ELPIDA”. El Sistema Greece undertook the production of a series of interactive educational videos and created a music section on the Association’s platform entitled “Hello!”, aimed exclusively at hospitalised children and adolescents and their parents. The initiative sought to offer therapeutic recreation through enjoyable activities during the strict isolation imposed amid the pandemic.

June 2021

- The fourth Lullaby Project concert took place at the Alternative Stage of the Greek National Opera, in collaboration with Carnegie Hall in New York and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center. ESG has been implementing the Greek version of the Lullaby Project since 2018 as part of its efforts to promote the social inclusion of vulnerable groups. The concert was held without an audience and livestreamed on the SNFCC’s online platforms.

- Second of two lectures by ESG Educational Advisor Panagiotis Tsiridis for postgraduate students on the “Music and Society” programme at the Department of Music Science and Art of the University of Macedonia.

- An open rehearsal by the Kypseli orchestra was held at the Meteoritis bookshop on Fokionos Negri Street.

- ESG students took part in the five-day international music workshop “Side by Side”, organised annually by El Sistema Sweden and the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra and Choir. Due to the pandemic, the workshop was held online.

July 2021

- The “World A Music” concert took place at the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, featuring the ESG orchestra and choir, Blend Mishkin and well-known Greek singers, as part of the Athens Epidaurus Festival.

- The first cohort of the ESG Young Leaders Programme graduated. Through regular meetings, workshops and a wide range of activities, including group music composition and performance, supporting teachers in beginner classes, collaborating with the ESG Communications Department, and actively assisting with rehearsals and the production of two concerts, participants gained valuable knowledge through patience and perseverance, while developing their personalities and skills in a holistic way.

- ESG collaborated with El Sistema Serbia, with ESG teacher Francis Gagliardi and Artistic Director José Ángel Salazar Marín taking part in the “Music Art Project” summer music workshop, held in person in Serbia.

- ESG took part in the Sistema Europe Youth Orchestra’s Summer Festival 2021 by delivering a teacher training workshop on neuroeducation entitled “Strategies, Activities and Planning to Sustain Attention in the Classroom”, led by ESG teacher Francis Gagliardi.

The undersigned,

Anis Barnat