

Invitation

Online Pre-Symposium | 14–15 October 2022

University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna | Anton-von-Webern-Platz 1, 1030 Vienna, Austria
Department of Music Education Research, Music Didactics and Elementary Music Making (IMP)
Partners: European Music School Union (EMU), Conference of Austrian Music School Associations (KOMU)

SUSTAINABILITY

Music schools and their ecosystems: Building sustainable futures

Music schools belong to larger cultural, environmental, social, and economic ecosystems that sustain them and that they in turn help sustain. In this pre-symposium, we will focus on interactions and interdependencies within the smaller and larger ecosystems that are relevant for music schools. Issues may range from the expectations on music schools to prepare future professionals for a complex music world to the effects of global sustainability crises on the practices of music schools and music school research.

In changing times, music schools can rely on tried and tested concepts and ways of acting but also push for new developments, innovate, and establish new standards. Both preservation and innovation take place on artistic, pedagogical, and societal levels, which highlights the impact that music schools can have in their communities and their potential to drive positive, even visionary change.

Join a vibrant group of music school researchers and practitioners in this essential discussion about the development of music school education in contemporary societies! In preparation for the 3rd European Music School Symposium (6–7 October 2023), we will spend a day and a half together focusing on sustainability from several different perspectives. Main topics will include the following:

Topic 1 | Cultural sustainability

Music schools must balance between tradition and innovation, maintaining and revitalising musical heritage and current musical practices while at the same time actively developing new cultural and artistic visions in lively interaction between students, teachers, and audiences.

In this working group, we will ask: How can music school teachers and leaders contribute to a rich and evolving ecosystem of musical practices in local and international communities? Can sustainable collaborations between music schools and educational and cultural institutions help to support cultural traditions and to innovatively develop them further? And what kind of music school research can inform and support cultural sustainability?

Topic 2 | Social sustainability

Issues of social sustainability in music schools range from the prospects of individual flourishing for students and teachers to the broader impact that music education can have on society. How, for instance, can music schools support their students' long-term well-being and artistic development, prevent dropout, discouragement, or strain injuries, and help students build relationships and resilience for lifelong music making? Beyond the micro-level of the classroom, music schools can change the societies in which they operate by enabling encounters between different population groups, working across generations, and breaking through social barriers. To achieve this, many music schools form collaborations with educational, cultural, and social institutions or initiatives. How can we secure long-term sustainable effects and outcomes of such collaborations? What does it take to make collaborations professional and to maintain their vitality?

In relation to music school research, we might ask: what voices will be present and absent in our research communities if modes of working require intensive academic productivity as well as ability to travel? What risks are involved if music school studies are conducted primarily by scholars who are economically advantaged, time-rich, and do not live with disabilities?

This topic will probably require more than one working group as social issues have been at the heart of music school research in the last years. We aim to jointly map existing research and find out where the next steps could lead us.

Topic 3 | Environmental sustainability

As all institutions, music schools face local and global challenges regarding environmentally responsible use of resources. What measures can music schools take to implement sustainability in their structures and through their ways of organising teaching and learning? Can digital resources play a role in this process? What other strategies could music school employ to meet climate, energy, and environmental targets?

In this working group we survey ideas and good practice models for music schools who strive to reduce their ecological footprint and think about how interdisciplinary research could support music schools in their efforts to promote environmental sustainability. In addition, we ask: what would sustainable use of resources look like in music school research, from data generation and analysis to reporting and dissemination?

Topic 4 | Economic sustainability

Music schools often depend on funding from combined sources: subsidies from state and local governments, fees collected from students and their families, and other incomes. Funding policies and regulations vary between countries and have complex impacts that are not always predictable. What policies may contribute to stability and development and what kind of checks should be implemented to support such policies? What economic measures can support the transition to cultural, social and environmental sustainability for music schools and does this require the crossing of institutional borders and social worlds?

In addition to these structural issues, there will also be opportunities to discuss economic sustainability in music school education with regard to the landscapes of the current international music industry. How can music schools with ambitions to provide pre-professional education respond to a world where online music education offers are increasing and artists must often make their way through new media and marketing channels, engage in entrepreneurial activity, and face risks of precarity as working opportunities might not be sufficient to ensure livelihood? How are the challenges of long-term careers reflected in the curricula of music schools and music universities?

Registrations will open at the end of August and close on 15 September 2022.

Questions/Contact:

Michaela Hahn, hahn-m@mdw.ac.at

University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Department of Music Education Research,
Music Didactics and Elementary Music Education (IMP), 1030 Vienna, Austria