



## **El Sistema Foundation Sweden**

### **Business Plan 2019-2021**

El Sistema is a global movement that helps people improve their lives through the power of music. The organisation was founded in 1975 in Venezuela, and today has a presence in around 70 countries.

The foundation has been active in Sweden since 2010, when the first classes given in accordance with the El Sistema approach took place at Angered Cultural School in Gothenburg.

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This three-year business plan for the El Sistema Foundation describes the origins of the foundation, its current status, and the plans for the coming years.

The business plan was established by the Board of Directors of the El Sistema Foundation and will be updated and revised annually.

*3 December 2018*

*Board of Directors, El Sistema Foundation*

*Eric Sjöström, Chairman, Helena Wessman, Vice Chairman, Christina Backman, Sten Cranner, Stefan Forsberg, Jalle Lorensen. Co-opted member: Mats Karlsson.*

*“What you learn in an orchestra - practice, discipline and teamwork - is what you need to create a good life for yourself outside music.”*

Gustavo Dudamel, Conductor and Initiator, El Sistema Sweden

*“El Sistema’s integrative work and its worldwide network, from the local to the global, gives us a broader insight and also the possibility to share the feeling of participation and belonging. The fact that we can offer our students such a context gives me a sense of warmth and hope.”*

Johannes Lindh, Process Manager, El Sistema Örnköldsvik

*“El Sistema allows new arrivals to quickly gain a foothold in society, even before they have learned to speak Swedish. We also see that children whose first language is Swedish demonstrate improved linguistic abilities, and schools notice the difference in children who have participated in El Sistema at pre-school level. They are socially mature, have learned to listen to others, how to present themselves, collaborate and work in a group situation. El Sistema breaks the cycle of exclusion for entire families.”*

Ulrica Boije, Pre-school Headteacher in Hammarkullen

*“It may seem simple and perhaps obvious, but it’s all about meeting and doing things on equal terms. A cultural public right, that’s what we want our cultural school and El Sistema to be.”*

Magnus Ekwall, Head of Unit, Malmö Cultural School

# El Sistema in Venezuela

El Sistema's founder, José Antonio Abreu, was born in 1939 in Valera, Venezuela. In addition to being a renowned economist, musician, composer, psychologist, philosopher, teacher and politician, he also became the orchestra leader who changed the lives of hundreds of thousands of poor children in the favelas of South America using classical music. The formation of the El Sistema social initiative has drawn attention from all corners of the globe.

Having studied economics and music, Abreu set up what was initially known as "the Foundation for the National Network of Youth and Children Orchestras of Venezuela" in 1975. The official name of El Sistema is now "*Sistema Nacional de Orquestas Juveniles e Infantiles de Venezuela*". Under the programme in Venezuela, pupils shall spend at least four hours every day after school practising and repeating classical orchestral music and choral song, and also be active during the weekend.

## ***In a garage***

The story about how he brought together eleven young musicians in a garage in order to start this project has gone down in legend, and most of these original members and founders are still involved, providing leadership and development in various parts of the organisation. One of Maestro Abreu's many talented students, Gustavo Dudamel, has become a world-famous conductor and acts as an ambassador for the spreading of El Sistema throughout the world.

In 1979, Abreu received recognition in his native Venezuela for his work. His star was in the ascendency - in just a few years, he would become the country's Minister of Culture - and the awards and decorations came thick and fast. In 1993, El Sistema received UNESCO's international music prize, which was followed in May 2009 by Abreu being awarded the Swedish Polar Prize for his efforts. His roll of honour also includes an "Alternative Nobel Prize", the Right Livelihood Award, the Erasmus Prize, the Order of the Rising Sun, the Grand Cordon, the Glenn Gould prize, the TED prize, and the Puccini international prize. He has also been nominated as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize.

## ***1 million children***

Today, almost 1 million children attend the state-funded music school in Venezuela. The music schools are located in the poorest shanty town neighbourhoods, known as "núcleos", in order to make education available to the most impoverished children and their families. Many children attend the schools every day, spending hour upon hour playing music and singing together, not only classical music, but also traditional folk music as well. In Venezuela there are thousands of El Sistema orchestras, with the most renowned being the Simon Bolivar Orchestra, which is constantly on tour around the world.

The imaginative system, where someone who has learned to a new level is immediately able to teach one who has not come as far, contributes to the socialisation that is thought to be crucial for the musical result, personal maturity and the future of the individual. Taking responsibility for their own development, as well as that of others.

# El Sistema in Sweden

El Sistema was introduced to Sweden on 9 May 2009. On an initiative from its then recently appointed Head Conductor Gustavo Dudamel, the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra travelled to Angered in Gothenburg to give two performances of Beethoven's 5th Symphony in the sports hall of Hammarkull School for local children and young people. Dudamel, himself an El Sistema student, told the young audience how happy he was to have the chance to play Beethoven for them. He also talked about the important role classical music has played in the development of pop, hard rock, hip hop and performance arts. When the last note was played, the orchestra received a standing ovation and cheers from the children, many of whom had never before experienced a concert or even heard classical music.

The guest performance of the Symphony and Dudamel in Hammarkullen had a major symbolic impact on many in the district and for the orchestra. This was a new way of lowering the threshold to the concert house at Götaplatsen. When Camilla Sarner, then Head of Angered Cultural School, thanked the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra and Dudamel for their performances, the idea that music could change the day to day lives of families living in deprived areas was born.

## ***Beginnings in Sweden***

The first El Sistema programme in Hammarkullen began in autumn 2010 and was hosted by Angered Cultural School. The Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra stood as a guarantor when funds were applied for to start the organisation, and took an active role in the establishment of El Sistema in Sweden. The Simon Bolivar Orchestra from El Sistema in Venezuela was invited to give a series of concerts during a week's residence at the Gothenburg Concert Hall, coinciding with a programme in Hammarkullen and seminars for politicians and business leaders. For many years, the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra also organised national conventions and seminars concerning the El Sistema concept, and was a key player in the establishment of the Side by Side camp in Gothenburg.

Almost immediately, an educational line was drawn between pre-schools and primary schools. The new collaboration drew significant attention and was migrated to several districts in Gothenburg - and quickly out to other municipalities in Sweden. In 2011, El Sistema became established in Malmö, with Södertälje following a year later. New El Sistema organisations are popping up in Sweden every year. Currently, El Sistema has a presence in close to 30 municipalities - in 40 locations - around Sweden in both big cities and rural areas, engaging around 10,000 children and 40,000 members of their extended families.

The El Sistema educational system is primarily offered in municipal music and cultural schools that, thanks to benefiting from public funding, are best equipped to offer easily accessible education at little or no cost. El Sistema is also available in schools and pre-schools where El Sistema education forms part of a profile and the goal of giving all children better criteria. El Sistema is available in many places in Sweden and, in order for all children who play and sing in El Sistema shall be able to create music together no matter where they live, a common repertoire must be built. This means, for example, that everyone can play the same music when they meet up at camps, no matter their level. Music is learned step by step, and eventually everyone can make a major musical step up.

## ***Financing***

El Sistema organisations throughout Sweden are financed by a combination of several public bodies. The cultural schools - where El Sistema education is given - are financed by municipal local authorities. The various orchestras that are affiliated to the educational programmes are mainly financed by the regions, county councils and university colleges that receive state funding. The only exception to this is the El Sistema Foundation, which is financed through sponsorships, projects, grants and donations.

El Sistema is primarily active in areas where there is greatest need and opens its doors to children who do not obviously participate in the cultural life of the places in which they live. Children who had not previously come into contact with a Swedish cultural school were given a way in, not only to a cultural school, but also to Swedish society and its cultural institutions. The fact that pre-schools and schools form an intrinsic part of the El Sistema organisation also strengthens culture schools' work with El Sistema. A red thread of music as a tool for social development to follow from child to adult.

# The Method

El Sistema is often described in metaphorical and philosophical terms as a fostering method based on the idea that the teaching of orchestral discipline promote social and intellectual development of the individual and creates alternatives to the violence and criminality of poverty and the streets. In the long run, a better society is created.

El Sistema uses music as a means to give children the tools to create a better life. The vision is to give all children the opportunity for positive development by creating music in choirs and orchestras. Music is one of humans' most powerful means of conveying feelings, standards, solidarity, harmony and mutual compassion. Music unites, builds bridges and is a universal language understood by all mankind. Through music, El Sistema creates a better world.

El Sistema promotes the right of all children to play and sing together in orchestras/ensembles or choirs, with repertoires consisting primarily of artistic music and folk music from different parts of the world. The choices children make can, much further down the line, lead to musicianship and creativity in a variety of different styles and genres. Wherever El Sistema takes root, the organisation takes shape according to each local context.

## ***Musical meetings***

El Sistema primarily works where needs are greatest. All children are entitled and shall have the opportunity to come into contact with music regardless of their background or where in the country they live. Priority is given to group learning, with a common objective that, in concrete terms, means a common repertoire, continuing education and knowledge building. El Sistema works for integration, democracy, equality and diversity. El Sistema uses the musical meeting as an opportunity for intercultural dialogue, extending invitations to children and families that do not normally participate in cultural life.

Children are given time to absorb the fundamentals of music and deepen their learning in a playful and serious manner, where their creativity, energy, imagination, dreams and artistic expression are taken as seriously as in professional ensembles.

Professional orchestras and choirs are involved in the organisation and work on becoming role models. Older and more experienced students teach their younger counterparts and El Sistema usually offers opportunities to play together at least three times a week. In addition, students are also expected to practice at home. Frequent practice and repetition form one of the cornerstones of the El Sistema approach. This is why students meet several times a week in order to play together. El Sistema also views musical meetings as an opportunity for intercultural dialogue. Within El Sistema, children's families form an important and natural part of the organisation.

In El Sistema, you learn by helping each other. Those that have learned more help beginners and, by doing so, we work together to build up the music produced by the orchestra and the choir. It's fun to play together, and you learn more quickly when you have someone next to you who knows what they are doing. A clear example of this is Side by Side by El Sistema, which was staged for the first time in 2014 and is the biggest music camp in Sweden, held every year in Gothenburg. The camp will be part of the city's 400-year jubilee. Some 2,000 children, young people, professional musicians and teachers will come together for a series of concerts that are open to the general public. Every year, both awareness and involvement from international players increases. Since 2016, the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra has been the main organiser, working in close collaboration with the El Sistema Foundation Sweden and Gothenburg cultural schools.

El Sistema collaborates with many professional orchestras and choirs in Sweden. This involves different meetings between musicians and El Sistema's students, for practice and collaboration, and sometimes joint concerts, in large concert halls - "side-by-side concerts". In this way, El Sistema also links children and their families to society and cultural life.

# El Sistema Foundation Sweden

The organisation's formal name is the El Sistema Foundation. In less formal and international contexts, it is known as

El Sistema Sweden.

## **Background**

El Sistema Foundation Sweden was formed in 2012 by driving forces Gustavo Dudamel, Camilla Sarner and Robin Mannheimer, along with a number of private individuals: Ulf and Lena Aschan, Björn and Kerstin Aschan, Jack and Ulla Forsgren, Peter and Karin Hjärne, Anna Mannheimer and Peter Apelgren, Dag and Karin Mannheimer, as well as Per and Karin Settergren.

The Foundation's statutes stipulate that the purpose of the Foundation is to “promote the care and upbringing of children and to subsidise teaching and/or education by participating in the El Sistema's global vision to develop and create positive social change in children's lives via the platform of music”. According to the statutes, the Foundation's registered office shall be in Gothenburg, and the Board of Directors shall consist of between five and seven people, one of whom shall be the Managing Director of the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra.

Backed by a letter of support from El Sistema Venezuela, the Foundation supports the development of the El Sistema programme in Sweden and functions as a cohesive hub. The El Sistema brand is defined by a brand platform, a name policy and a graphic profile programme. These provide guidance to collaboration partners that use the El Sistema approach and teaching methodology, and reflect what El Sistema stands for.

## **Activity**

The Foundation works together to safeguard, disseminate, develop, educate and quality assure El Sistema in Sweden. With the Letter of Support from founder J.A. Abreu, the Foundation has assumed the responsibility of representing El Sistema in Sweden and the world. The brand is protected and owned by the Foundation.

In order to maintain El Sistema as a cohesive entity in Sweden, partnerships have been established with all interested stakeholders. The Foundation actively works to build collaborative alliances with various different parties:

- State/county councils/regions/municipalities
- Academia
- Civil society
- Business community
- Collaboration partners

In the early years, the Foundation was able to financially support the rolling out of El Sistema throughout Sweden thanks to grants from the Cultural Foundation of the Swedish Postcode Lottery. The Foundation now receives support from organisations including SEB, the Sten A Olsson Foundation for Research and Culture, the Theodor and Hanne Mannheimer Funds, Gålöstiftelsen, and Stiftelsen Signatur.

From the outset, the Foundation has worked to provide methodology and skills development. The following pages set out the Foundation's vision, business concept and activities.

# Vision and Business Concept

## ***Vision***

The El Sistema Foundation Sweden shall be the clear and most competent organisation in Sweden in respect of knowledge dissemination, information and development of the El Sistema method in all municipalities where such activities are conducted. The Foundation shall also contribute to the international development of El Sistema.

All Foundation activities shall ultimately enable more children and young people enjoy richer lives through the medium of music. The goal is to achieve a greater level of diversity, both on stage and in the audience, and to supplement existing infrastructure for music life and education in pre-schools, cultural schools, teacher training institutions, and professional music life.

## ***Business concept***

- El Sistema Sweden is the national, collective force and umbrella organisation for El Sistema and El Sistema-inspired operations in Sweden, and the organisation that represents Sweden in international El Sistema contexts.
- El Sistema Sweden owns, manages, and protects the El Sistema brand in Sweden.
- El Sistema Sweden guarantees the future development of the El Sistema method in Sweden by assuming responsibility for training, continuing education and providing support to the schools, teachers and educators that apply the El Sistema approach.
- El Sistema Sweden is responsible for the artistic development of the El Sistema method by collaborating with universities and university colleges in Sweden, and working with “role model” El Sistema organisations.
- El Sistema Sweden supports those who want to raise awareness of, or promote El Sistema through collaboration with musical education at all levels, all of civil society, as well as musicians, orchestras, choirs, and other cultural players.

## ***Artistic grounds***

Ron Davis Alvarez, a conductor, violinist and educator from Venezuela, and a man who was brought up in El Sistema under the leadership of founder J.M. Abreu, has been Artistic Director of El Sistema Sweden since 2016.

His principal task has been to promote musical development in Sweden. This is done through things such as repertoire development, quality assurance, role model activities, and method development, both nationally and internationally.

The artistic grounds are based around a number of keywords, which form the core:

- Passion: we shall inspire each other and others with our enthusiasm
- Highest quality: our goal shall be to strive to achieve the highest level of quality
- Integrity: we shall be honest and true to ourselves
- Learning: we take every opportunity to learn more and from each other
- Respect: we treat everyone with respect
- Responsibility: we take responsibility for our actions

The following eight different levels of musical knowledge are implemented from Venezuela are currently used in Sweden:

- Pre-school
- Beginner
- Basic
- Intermediate
- Upper intermediate
- Pre-advanced
- Young leaders
- Advanced



# Goals and Activity Plan 2019-2021

## **Goals**

During the period, El Sistema Sweden shall work to ensure that:

- More locations in Sweden offer the El Sistema method in their cultural schools
- More children in Sweden have the opportunity to experience El Sistema teaching
- The musical quality of El Sistema students increases
- Awareness of El Sistema within the music area and in society in general increases
- A national map and analysis of El Sistema throughout Sweden is produced
- A common repertoire for the various levels is developed
- Regional music camps take place
- A national youth symphony orchestra for higher level El Sistema students is set up
- International exchanges and support for El Sistema programmes in other countries is actively created and developed

Internal goals during the period for El Sistema Sweden:

- The organisation shall be developed
- Financial criteria shall be improved

In the long term, El Sistema Sweden shall work to:

- Initiate an infrastructure for talent exchange in collaboration with professional orchestras
- Ensure more children and young people go further in their musical education at upper secondary and post-upper secondary level
- Ensure that established "role model" orchestras within all knowledge levels are available throughout Sweden
- Continually develop the repertoire bank
- Ensure that young people with an El Sistema background achieve the same level as a professional musician
- Develop a national network with a common repertoire and good contact with former El Sistema students as ambassadors and mentors
- Establish an extended range of genres within El Sistema and music therapeutic activities in several locations

## **Strategies**

In order to achieve the goals, activities in the plan must be implemented, evaluated and continually reviewed and developed.

All activities must be permeated by the following keywords:

- Quality
- Relevance
- Efficient resource utilisation

The activities must be in line with the Foundation's vision and contribute towards the Foundation being viewed as the most competent and relevant organisation in Sweden in terms of raising awareness of, providing information about and development of the El Sistema method.

### ***Target groups for the various activities***

- Children and young people within El Sistema
- Children and young people outside El Sistema
- Existing El Sistema organisations
- New, prospective El Sistema organisations
- Managers and leadership teams of music and cultural schools
- Educators, teachers
- Higher education colleges, universities
- The music and culture sector
- Financiers

### ***Activity plan***

#### *Role models*

Continual development of role models through actively working on quality and extending existing activities. Currently, the cultural schools in Södertälje and Malmö, as well as the pre-schools in Hammarkullen in Gothenburg and Gothenburg's Drömorkestern are designated role model organisations. The purpose of this is to exemplify and invite other cultural schools to be involved in the work and enjoy its effects. The goal is to develop more role models and to initiate new collaboration projects, e.g. Solorkestern for children with special needs.

#### *Conferences/seminars*

Active participation in conferences, courses, workshops, both national and international. The purpose of this is to increase awareness about El Sistema in a range of different contexts in order to ensure that as many people as possible know about El Sistema and are inspired. In a national context, Almedalsveckan (Almedalen Week), Folk och kultur (People and Culture), Riksting för västerländsk konstmusik (National Council for Artistic Music in Västerland), Kulturskoleträffar (Culture School Meetings), and the Swedish Arts School Council may prove to be interesting. In addition, active participation in international conversations concerning musical development within Sistema Europe should be in focus.

#### *Mapping*

Initiation of a national mapping process that increases knowledge concerning expansion, results and effects in order to highlight 10 years of El Sistema activity in Sweden. Musical level and development must also be mapped.

#### *Workshops/inspiration days*

The Foundation continually organises and tailors continuing education, information days and inspiring workshops for both teachers and students at cultural schools, schools, and pre-schools that run or are starting courses using El Sistema methodology.

#### *Teacher network*

The teacher network contributes to knowledge and experience exchanges. It aims to share repertoires and develop a repertoire collection for various knowledge levels on a national level. The Foundation shall establish a repertoire bank and also produce new compositions and arrangements.

#### *Network meetings*

These shall be staged twice a year at different locations in Sweden and in collaboration with local organisations. Leaders and managers within El Sistema are offered the opportunity to exchange knowledge and experience.

#### *El Sistema Academy*

Shall take place once a year. Offers in-depth skills and method development for teachers and educators. Even greater international dissemination for both teachers and participants shall be sought.

### *El Sistema Day, 9 May*

Celebrated nationally every year in order to commemorate Gustavo Dudamel's initiative to start El Sistema in Sweden. Local celebrations shall be encouraged and publicised, and activities shared and highlighted, primarily via social media. The Foundation contributes with an event of its own.

### *El Sistema Play*

The purpose of this is to spread knowledge, tips and ideas about El Sistema's teaching methods by making instructional films, which can be viewed free of charge via [www.play.elsistema.se](http://www.play.elsistema.se). Continuous development, production of films and distribution, 4-6 films per year.

### *International training trip*

In order to disseminate knowledge and contribute towards method development, an annual training trip should be arranged to visit an international role model organisation. Local El Sistema representatives from throughout Sweden shall be offered the opportunity to participate. Alongside this, individual teachers may be invited to go on work-related trips.

### *Anniversary - 10 years of El Sistema in Sweden*

To be celebrated in accordance with plans in the sports hall of Hammarkull School in Angered in autumn 2020, with an anniversary concert and associated seminar. The celebration will be organised by the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra and the El Sistema Foundation Sweden, in collaboration with the cultural schools in Gothenburg and Göteborg & Co. A book/publication will be produced to mark the anniversary.

### *El Sistema Sweden's National Youth Symphonists*

The aim is, during the period, to create a new national youth orchestra with talents drawn from El Sistema programmes throughout Sweden in order to demonstrate the power of music and to inspire children and young people to reach their full potential. A number of youth symphonists shall have per year, and value shall be created by rotating them between the various programmes that are invited to their cities one at a time.

### *Regional music camps*

The Foundation shall promote the organisation of regional music camps around Sweden. The purpose of this is to give committed students the opportunity to intensify their musicianship and to motivate the various local El Sistema students.

### *Side by Side by El Sistema*

The biggest music camp in Northern Europe takes place in June each year in Gothenburg. Since 2016, it has been organised by the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra in collaboration with the El Sistema Foundation Sweden and Gothenburg cultural schools. The Foundation shall continue to be closely involved and sit on the artistic council and steering group. Ron Davis Alvarez also acts as one of the principal conductors at the camp.

### *Lobbying*

Happens continuously through meetings and gatherings, at conferences and seminars (see above), as well as in meetings with politicians, other decision makers and potential financiers.

### *Communication and PR*

Communication of own activities and news about the activities in Sweden as well as other matters that concern El Sistema nationally takes place at [www.elsistema.se](http://www.elsistema.se), on social media (Facebook and Instagram), as well as in blogs and newsletters. Media contacts are maintained locally, nationally and internationally in order to spread word about news of general interest.

Communication also takes place direct to El Sistema practitioners, both locally and globally, via the digital El Sistema Play platform, where information films for free use are published.

### *Financing*

Active initiatives to secure long-term public financing, as well as financial support from sponsors, private individuals, funds, trusts and other players shall be initiated.