

**Elements of Organizational Success: Understanding Differences in Structure and Values in EI
Sistema USA Programs**

(working paper)

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El Sistema USA
A NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF EL SISTEMA INSPIRED PROGRAMS



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Executive Summary

This study explores key factors linked to the organizational success of members of El Sistema USA (ESUSA), a network of organizations that are expanding access to high quality music instruction to children with the fewest resources and greatest need. Our research examines the organizational structure and values of each organization that is affiliated with ESUSA to better understand the entire ESUSA network and highlight if and how these factors relate to the future trajectory of ESUSA. Three key research questions guided our inquiry on ESUSA-inspired organizations:

- Do ESUSA members differ from non-members in organizational success outcomes?
- Do programs with differing organizational structures have different success outcomes?
- Are differences in organizational values associated with different success outcomes?

We used ESUSA Census data collected between 2012 and 2016, the organizational survey administered by Duke University in 2016-2017, website reviews, and IRS data from the National Center for Charitable Statistics. We measured organizational success in three main ways: budget and finance, staffing and programming, and values. Operational elements of budget and finance consist of a program's total operating budget and costs per child. Staffing and programming include information about the number of teaching artists, administrative staff, and board members at each program, along with the number of students served, classes offered, operating hours, and hours spent per week in the program. Values represent the degree to which programs feel aligned to ESUSA's *Guiding Principles*.

Participants

There are several key groups in our analysis of ESUSA organizations. First, the total population frame, which includes all 161 organizations identified through ESUSA mailing lists, Census reports, and a review of all websites linked to the ESUSA website. The majority of analyses focused on the study sample of 111 organizations that completed at least one ESUSA Census or the organizational survey. In addition, we compared:

- ESUSA members as of January, 2017 ($n = 63$) versus non-members ($n = 48$)
- Independent 501c3 organizations ($n = 58$) versus programs nested within larger nonprofit organizations ($n = 53$)

- Programs with higher alignment to the *Guiding Principles* ($n = 16$) versus those with lower alignment to the *Guiding Principles* ($n = 23$)

Key Findings

We have gained significant knowledge in understanding ESUSA through examining their organizational constituencies' similarities and differences.

Finding I: *El Sistema*-inspired programs in the U.S. vary in considerable ways across indicators.

Research findings highlighted differences in structural elements across programs including budget, staffing, and programming. The average program's budget was about \$300,000 with the largest operating budget nearly 4 million dollars. On average, organizations had about 3 administrators and 11 teaching artists supporting 191 students. However, this varied significantly from program to program. Organizations most frequently operated out of public schools. Across organizations, an average of 7 classes was offered, most prevalently string orchestras and sectionals.

Finding II: ESUSA members showed signs of greater organizational performance compared to non-members.

On average, members had operating budgets that were 2.5 times larger than non-member organizations and spent more of their budget on each child. Members also generally employed one more music teacher and provided three more classes compared to non-members. Lastly, members were more likely to use and endorse keywords such as *achievement* and *social change* in their mission statements but less likely to use *El Sistema* and *access* compared to non-member organizations.

Finding III: Independent 501c3 status was related to organizational success.

There was a trend toward significant differences in operating budgets between individual 501c3 and other organizations, with independent organizations more likely to have higher operating budgets. Independent nonprofits served nearly twice as many students in their organizations. They were also more likely to have larger administrative staff and smaller boards. There were no other differences between independent nonprofits and other organizations in terms of organizational structure, programming, or alignment to the *Guiding Principles*. However, independent nonprofits were more likely to use and endorse *excellence*, *social change*, and *children* in their mission statements but less likely to use *El Sistema* compared to programs that operate within larger nonprofits.

Finding IV: Higher alignment to ESUSA's *Guiding Principles* was associated with more outcomes of organizational success.

Although most of organizations felt their work was strongly aligned with ESUSA, those organizations with higher alignment to ESUSA's *Guiding Principles* operated more weeks per year. There was also a significant finding between alignment to ESUSA's set of ideals and the importance of the public/audiences to their organization. Programs with higher alignment to the *Guiding Principles* were less likely to focus on audience satisfaction and saw public audiences as less important stakeholders to their success.

Introduction

Researchers have suggested positive associations between music education and child development in terms of enhancing academic performance (Cabanac, Perlovsky, Bonniot-Cabanac, & Cabanac, 2013), short-term cognitive gains (Costa-Giomi, 2015), and self-esteem (Rickard et al., 2013), yet arts education programs are perennially threatened in public education, particularly in schools serving low-income students (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012). Although the National Endowment for the Arts has contributed leadership and invested heavily in building an infrastructure to sustain arts activity, particularly in underserved areas (Americans for the Arts, n.d.), little research exists on factors that contribute to programs' success in becoming part of the communities they serve and promoting artistic excellence. By examining program implementation within the network of El Sistema USA (ESUSA), an arts program designed to effect social change through the ambitious pursuit of musical excellence among children with the fewest resources and greatest need, this study aims to understand the types of organizational structures and values that lead to strong organizational performance. The project has grown out of a partnership between ESUSA and researchers at the Social Science Research Institute at Duke University, and will produce data particular to ESUSA that can inform arts organizations and arts program implementation.

Programs geared towards providing afterschool art and music lessons to children and adolescent youth are proliferating in communities across the United States. Cabanac and colleagues (2013) examined students who voluntarily enrolled in music classes and found that they outperformed their peers in Math, Science, and English. Using these findings, the authors concluded that students who studied music obtained better grades because music helps students overcome the stress associated with learning and processing new or conflicting information. Rickard and colleagues (2013) examined the effects of a musical intervention on the psychosocial well-being of students across ten primary schools in Australia. The researchers found that while music education had little impact on children's social skills, it had a positive effect on self-esteem. They attributed this outcome to four main elements of the music intervention program: ensembles, rigor, peer instruction, and community engagement (Rickard et al., 2013).

Few studies focus on a holistic exploration of the structure and impact of music-based groups on the development and well-being of students living in under-resourced communities. While over 90% of America's public primary and secondary schools offer music classes, a gap in access exists that disproportionately affects students from low-income families (Parsad & Spiegelman, 2012). According to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2012), fewer public schools are offering a music-based curriculum, and the decline is more acute in high poverty schools. The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is among the few organizations to address this discernible inequality in arts exposure. Catterall and colleagues (2012) detail findings on the academic and civic behavior of youth engaged in arts programs. Trends suggest that engagement in the arts, including enrollment in music courses, involvement with after-school arts programs, and leadership in arts-based organizations, leads to positive outcomes for adolescent youth from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. They found that youth from lower socioeconomic status families that engaged in arts activities were more likely to obtain higher GPA's, participate in extracurricular activities, and graduate from high school. These patterns not only substantiate existing research on the benefits of studying music but suggest that musical experiences may have important implications for access, social justice, and equity in education.

History of El Sistema USA

El Sistema USA (ESUSA) has existed as a loose confederacy of programs scattered across the United States since 2007. Replicated after musician and social activist José Antonio Abreu's Venezuelan model, ESUSA was established by music education leaders and experts who are passionate about bringing the arts, more specifically ensemble music, to underserved communities. In response to the expansion of El Sistema-inspired programs in the US, early adopters formulated a set of guiding principles to help organizations as they developed their own programs (Booth, 2013). Operating on a budget of \$12,000 in 2015, the central ESUSA entity has had little capacity to do more than provide a website (www.elsistemausa.org/) and gather basic program information. Limited centralized capacity has led to a paucity of information about how programs operate, including how they are organized internally, what values they endorse, and how this leads them to be successful programs.

Although ESUSA programs differ in their organizational structure, programming, and mission statements, most programs have adopted ESUSA's *Guiding Principles* (Booth, 2013; see Appendix B for a complete list). More specifically, programs aspire to foster positive child development and promote social change by expanding access to high-quality ensemble instruction to students from under-resourced schools and communities. Students are encouraged to strive for artistic excellence through hours of intensive practice within the ensemble, guidance and modeling by their musician-artist teachers, and the support of their family, community, and other essential networks. As one program explained, "(We hire) teachers with not only a great amount of teaching and performing experience but also a commitment to the social aspects of our program" (Nechyba et al., 2017). By establishing sites, or nucleos, that are embedded within their students' communities, ESUSA programs seeks to promote and support children's development over time, and inspire lifelong musicians who become agents of social change within their own communities.

In light of research illuminating associations between music involvement and positive child development, ESUSA programs are uniquely positioned for exploration. Unlike other music education programs that center on classroom-based music instruction or private lessons, ESUSA programs primarily operate after-school, providing services to students outside of the traditional classroom environment. As one respondent expressed, "...the current logistics of [the program] as a continuation of the school day (after-school program at the elementary school) make transportation a non-issue. It is convenient for parents because the students stay at [the program] for hours after school, eradicating the need for child-care for working parents" (Nechyba et al., 2017). Additionally, with the goal of advocating access to high-quality music training, ESUSA serves as a model from which to expand understanding on the impact of music education on the development of children from underprivileged backgrounds through an examination of various factors, such as the organizational structure, core values, principles, resources, and networks of El Sistema-inspired programs.

Structure of the Report

Chapter 2 focuses on organizational ecology, which is the key theoretical framework that underlies this study. Empirical support for the components of the literature review, including organizational structure, organizational values, and organizational success, are also considered. Chapter

3 includes the methods of the study and a description of the three main data sources: website review, ESUSA Census, and an organizational survey conducted in support of this grant. An overview of the three key samples: population, study sample, and ESUSA members, will be undertaken. Additionally, a brief description of missing data, consolidated variables, and the data analysis plan are included. Chapter 4 focuses on the results of the study and includes a detailed description of the organizational success outcomes measured, including: budget and finances, staffing and programming, and organizational values. Specific emphasis is placed on a comparison between ESUSA members and non-member programs, independent 501c3 organizations and programs within other non-profit entities, and ESUSA organizations with high and low alignment to the *Guiding Principles*. Chapter 5 provides a conclusion of key findings, limitations of the study, and future directions for this research and ESUSA.

Literature Review

Organizational Ecology

This study uses organizational ecology as a theoretical and methodological lens to understand the growth of El Sistema USA (ESUSA) and its constituent programs. Organizational ecology examines organization entry, change, maintenance, and exit through studying populations of organizations to assess members, individual organizations, the overarching organizational structure, and communities surrounding the population (Hannon & Freeman, 1977). By gathering complete population information on a set of organizations, researchers can better understand changes in the structure, composition, values, and diversity of individual programs and the broader population of organizations (Hannon, 2005). For this study, we examined all ESUSA programs to understand how they are developed, sustained, change, and grow within the development of ESUSA as an umbrella advocacy and resource support organization.

Organizational ecology also specifies methodologies to best ascertain stability and change in individual programs and groups of programs by analyzing the population of organizations through a complete census. Hannon (2005) notes that gathering complete population information usually uncovers more data than program staff and researchers expect, which was the case in this study. Furthermore, organizational ecology looks to understand the inertia and diversity of organizations in the population through understanding each organization's structure, values, decision-making, and identity. Stability and growth can be determined from mission statements and decision-making processes, and how

organizations decide to organize themselves (Hannon, 2005). These practices do not develop in a vacuum, however, since the organizations are simultaneously determining how they fit into a broader community of organizations and aligned practices. Thus, organizations must determine how to gain authority and legitimacy from the broader community, as well as balance needs for general versus specific areas of concern (Hannon & Freeman, 1977).

To better understand ESUSA and its network of affiliated programs, we focused on examining the structures and values of the entire population of El Sistema-inspired programs. Next, we examine the literature on organizational structure, organizational values, and organizational success. In the next few sections, we will examine the affiliated organizations' budget and financial data, staffing and board composition, programming, classes, students served, mission, and values.

Organizational Structure

There appears to be a relationship between how organizations structure their work and their ability to succeed over time, but it is not clear if there is a single way to best achieve success (Kushner & Poole, 1996). It may be that certain organizational structures are related to improvements while others lead to declines (Brown & Iverson, 2004). Structure includes personnel types (i.e., volunteer, paid staff, board members); formalized and informalized rules and procedures; and how information, decision-making, and influence flow through the organization (Brown & Iverson, 2004; Kleinbaum et al., 2013). By examining program implementation within ESUSA, this study aims to understand the organizational characteristics that enhance and promote organizational success. Below, we focus on the organizational structure of established nonprofits, particularly on personnel and decision-making, and then briefly, on organizational structures for emergent entities.

Organizational structure provides a framework for understanding the roles that personnel play in decision-making and influence processes (Kushner & Poole, 1996). Four main structural configurations have been observed within the nonprofit arts sector: grassroots, coordinating, institutional, and directional (Kushner & Poole, 1996). A *grassroots* organization relies on volunteer decision making and diffused influence, allowing a significant number of volunteers the authority to make decisions independently, although these decisions may not be in concert with one another. A *coordinating* organization still allows volunteers to have significant influence but also has staff to handle the administrative implementation of

duties. This organizational structure may grow out of a grassroots organization and staff members' primary role is to facilitate communication and consensus among volunteers. The other two structure types entail more centralized, directed control and decision-making processes. A *directional* organization includes strategy and programming decisions offered by staff, with board members providing legitimization and resource support. Finally, in an *institutional* organization, volunteers decide on key components while staff implement their decisions. All organizational types, with the exception of *grassroots*, appear to work best when participants have agreed on the purpose and structure of the organization. This comes from shared understandings of who is leading and implementing key components.

To best understand the ecology of organizations, it is necessary to examine the emerging organizations that make up the member constituency. Many ESUSA-inspired programs have developed in the past ten years and there are currently new organizations being developed. Examining the properties of emergent organizations can help us understand how ESUSA is changing and growing. As alluded to in the organizational ecology framework, new organizations emerge from active agents -- whether individuals, groups, or other organizations -- and how they form can be examined through key organizational properties (Katz & Gartner, 1988).

Four key properties of organizations are relevant: intentionality, resources, boundary, and exchange. *Intentionality* is defined as organizational agents who seek targeted information that will help to create their new organization. This not only reflects the goals of the agents but the environment/industry sectors. *Resources* indicate the physical components (e.g., staff, capital, property, and credit) that, when tied to the intentional component above, form the organization. *Boundary* is defined as the physical and legal parameters which situate the organization, and can best be understood through the organization's intentionality and resource allocation. The development of a boundary may directly relate to elements of an organization's structure, such as a decision to operate as a fully independent organization or develop within an existing parent organization. *Exchange* is defined as cycles of transactions, both within the organization and between organizations. For example, a financial officer makes monthly reports to other organizational stakeholders so they know what resources are available. Exchanges, over time, become routine, but for emergent organizations these transactions may not yet be efficient.

Researchers theorize that these four characteristics or properties define an organization but may not all be activated at once for emergent organizations (Katz & Gartner, 1988). Typically, emergent organizations are led by a single or set of entrepreneurs with an idea and develop from a conceptual understanding of a problem and solution (Andersson, 2016; Katz & Gartner, 1988). However, emergent organizations often lack the tools required to implement the lofty plans they have created, including elements of formalized structures, procedures, and systems. For long-term success, organizations need to develop a clear and shared understanding of their leadership, mission, and relationships with other nonprofit entities (Andersson, 2016).

Organizational Values

Organizational values are one way in which to understand how individuals and organizations perceive their mission and abilities, and as a result, how they use their resources. It is believed that strong alignment across individuals within an organization leads to more positive outcomes for that organization, but little research has focused on whether or not those values are shared within and across organizations. Organizational values can be used as a lens to understand issues and problems within organizations and how they are resolved (Glynn, 2000; Guillon, 2017; Voss, Cable, & Voss, 2000). One study focused on an arts organization and the tension between artistic excellence and economic utility (Glynn, 2000). Having a shared understanding of the organization and its values can be difficult, especially during periods of change, because artistic organizations have multifaceted identities. These include normative values, such as “artistic excellence” and “social change,” and utility values, such as “balanced budgets” and “growing endowments,” which can lead to symbolic and structural differences. Glynn’s work (2000) problematizes the idea that resource allocation or organizational identities are impersonal or enduring. Organizational identity is constructed from individual and group values; in short, what they find to be most central, enduring, and distinctive, although this may not be the same across individuals, groups, and time (Glynn, 2000). Decisions can alter organizational identity over time and misalignment can occur between the mission and reality (i.e., the “ought” versus the “what is”). If all individuals and groups within the organization endorse these changes, the organization can flourish; however, if changes occur and all individuals do not readjust, the resulting organization may deal with conflicts over talents and resources.

Organizational identity has been reviewed as essential to workplace conditions and unity around key missions (Glynn, 2000; Guillon, 2017). An often understudied question is whether employees in artistic organizations align themselves to their organizations' mission and goals more frequently than those in other industry sectors. Guillon's work (2017) aimed to examine whether arts organizations have a greater likelihood to attract, select, and retain individuals who are aligned with the organization's key goals. Contrary to her hypothesis, she found that individuals who work in artistic organizations are no more aligned to their mission's goals and values than workers in other industries. This indicates that there might be wide differences between staff in terms of mission statements, goals, and activities.

Although little has been written about organizational values in the arts, one study that examined the link between organizational values and external partners found that the more alignment between organizational values -- defined as enduring beliefs about the organization that are unaffected by external forces or constituents -- the more likely they are to be frequently tied to one another, build and maintain relationships, and provide financial support (Voss, Cable, & Voss, 2000). Five core values were relevant in their study: *prosocial*, defined as expanding community access and appreciation of arts; *artistic*, defined as intrinsic artistic vision and creativity; *financial* and financial stability; *market* and consumer satisfaction; and *achievement*, defined as publicly-recognized excellence. When these values were aligned among partners, organizations were more likely to make decisions that supported their partners and maintained relationships. They also made artistic and programmatic decisions that signaled their values to and promoted the leveraging of financial resources among similar partners (Voss et al., 2000).

Key organizers of the El Sistema movement in the United States continue to develop and refine the core principles that make up ESUSA (Booth, 2013), aligning them with the El Sistema movement developed out of Venezuela but taking into account differences in the US. Most notably, the Venezuelan program is more centralized and entirely funded by the government whereas ESUSA has developed in a more piecemeal fashion using more diversified funding (Wyatt, 2017). The overarching structure of the *Guiding Principles*, and ESUSA more generally, is "a set of inspiring ideals which inform an intensive youth music program that seeks to effect social change through the ambitious pursuit of musical excellence. El Sistema focuses primarily on children with the fewest resources and the greatest needs" (Booth, 2013, p.1). The core elements specified in the *Guiding Principles* can be found in Appendix B.

Organizational Success

Researchers and practitioners have struggled to define program and performance success in nonprofit organizations, and more specifically, organizations in the arts sector (Lee & Nowell, 2015; Sawhill & Williamson, 2001; Turbide & Laurin, 2009). Although performance measurement primarily started as a financial practice, researchers indicate that it ought to be a multidimensional process including financial indicators, internal management systems and processes, and alignment to the strategic initiatives derived from mission statements (Kaplan, 2001; Lee & Nowell, 2015). The crucial element is *how* to measure alignment to the mission statements. Different researchers have conceptualized alignment to mission goals in different ways. Some research focuses on overarching concepts that can relate to any organization, such as organizational perceived performance, goal attainment, quality of services provided, growth, and balanced budgets (Brown & Iverson, 2004). Others have focused on creating goals that directly align with elements found in the mission (Sawhill & Williamson, 2001). However, as Kaplan (2001) reminds us, the key accountability component has to be tied to the relationship between the organization (i.e., service provided) and the environment (i.e., those served).

Two key performance measurement frameworks that guide this study are the review of a nonprofit organization assessment completed by Lee and Nowell (2015) and the empirical study of performance measurement in the Canadian arts sector conducted by Turbide and Laurin (2009). More generally, Lee and Nowell (2015) review the research surrounding performance measurement in nonprofit organizations and identify seven key components that can be used to determine organizational success. The first, *input*, is defined as the resources an organization acquires and utilizes. This includes money, infrastructure, human capital, and services/products. *Organizational capacity* focuses on internal processes and innovation, in addition to the ability to generate more and better quality services and products. This includes elements of personnel management and employee training and retention. *Output* elements should link to a program's mission and include counts of services, activities, programs, and products. Corporations may focus primarily on outputs but in nonprofit organizations the goal might not be the output; rather, there might be more interest in outcomes. *Outcomes* are defined as the resulting changes to the environment as a process of receiving the outputs. Two types of outcomes are defined by

the authors: *behavior and environment*, and *change* and *customer satisfaction*. Finally, these outcome changes should lead to *public value*, defined here as the broader benefits to society (Lee & Nowell, 2015). Although this framework is comprehensive, it is difficult to determine how organizations would develop measures to assess these elements. Turbide and Laurin (2009) focused on the practice of performance measurement among performing arts organizations in Quebec, primarily looking at measures of financial solvency, artistic excellence, and internal management and associated processes. To do this, they asked arts organizations to provide general information regarding the organization, such as stakeholder accountability, organizational strategies, performance measures used, and how the performance indicators were disseminated internally and externally. Although organizations typically felt that the goals of artistic excellence were most important, they were more likely to include both financial indicators and some measure of artistic excellence (Turbide & Lauren, 2009).

Reflecting on this review of performance measurement and the resulting ideas of defining organizational success, indicators must be multidimensional, focusing on financial elements, internal processes, artistic excellence, and alignment to mission statements. Originally, for this study, we planned to focus primarily on how elements of artistic excellence and community engagement support social change. During the research project, we determined that other indicators were also important to describe, including: financial and budget components, staffing and stakeholders, programming and classes, and organizational values and missions.

Current Study Research Questions

This study explores ESUSA programs to first, identify the organizational ecology of the network; second, assess the similarities and differences between the organizations; and lastly, highlight if and how these factors reflect on the mission and future trajectory of the national ESUSA organization. Although exploratory, some key questions and planned areas of interest have been identified. They are: 1) ESUSA members will differ from non-members in key organizational structure, values, and success outcomes; 2) Distinct organizational structures among El Sistema-inspired programs are associated with specific organizational success outcomes; 3) Differences in organizational values and mission statements are associated with disparate organizational success outcomes; and, 4) Alignment to ESUSA *Guiding Principles* is associated with different organizational success outcomes.

Methods

A mixed method design employing both qualitative and quantitative research methods was used in this study. The methods section includes information on all of the organizations that might be identified as El Sistema USA-inspired programs, the final sample and characteristics of those organizations, the data sources and measures used to complete this study, issues with missing data, and finally, the analysis plan and process for reporting the results.

Defining ESUSA Programs and Their Organizational Characteristics

One of the project's research questions was determining which organizations to include in the analysis. We decided on three main units of analysis: the *total population* frame ($n = 161$), which were identified through the process described below; the *sample* population ($n = 111$), which included programs that were identified in the total population frame but also participated in some ESUSA component – either the Census, organizational survey, or as an ESUSA member; and finally, the current ESUSA *member* list ($n = 63$), which signifies programs that have financially and conceptually supported the goals of ESUSA.

We assembled a list of ESUSA programs from mailing lists compiled by ESUSA, current and previous Census data, and organizations that linked to the ESUSA website either as members or non-members. This dataset was difficult to clean and fully de-duplicate due to changes in program names over time. Although the majority of programs appeared to have a single name ($n = 127, 79\%$), a sizeable set of programs had two ($n = 28, 17\%$) or more ($n = 6, 4\%$) significant name changes. In addition, we learned from a variety of sources, including IRS 990's, website data, and program representatives, that some of these programs were established as part of larger nonprofit organizations but later began operating as independent organizations. De-duplication was undertaken by examining various program-related elements, including the name of the organization, a contact person for the organization, and the city and state in which the organization is located. In several cases, programs moved from one city to another, so all these data elements were needed to identify changes in both existing and newly established programs. We also decided to adopt a conservative approach to de-duplication, keeping only

those organizations that we could not fully confirm were duplicates.¹ Altogether, we identified 161 unique organizations with up to 3 different program names used. We have shared this information with the Executive Director of ESUSA.

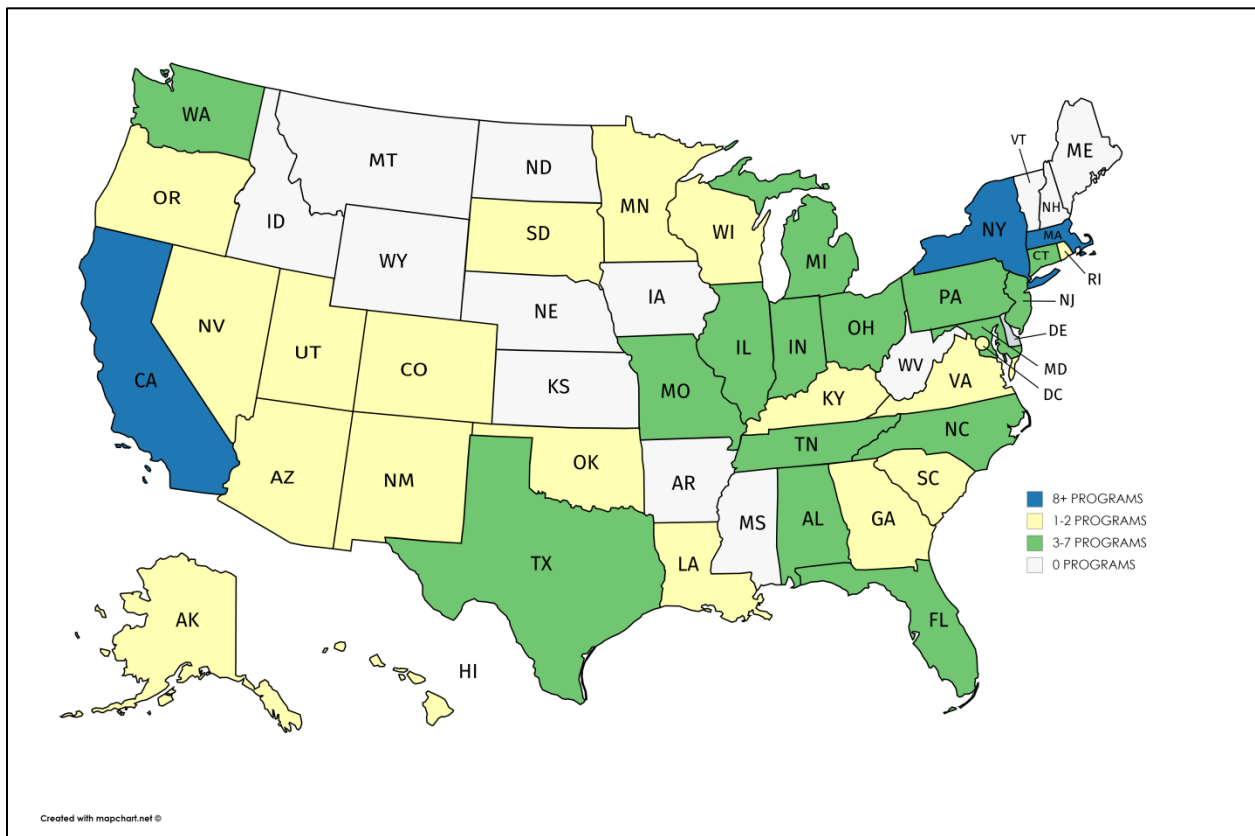
Below is a description of each of our three study groups: the *total population* frame, the *study sample* that we used derived from minimal involvement with ESUSA, and *ESUSA members*. We provide a general overview of the programs representing each group by describing their geographical data, and other pertinent information not covered in the *Results* section of this paper where only findings from the sample and member groups are described.

Total Population Frame. The total population frame consisted of 161 programs that were identified through the ESUSA website, mailing lists, past Census surveys, and website coding. Although limited data was available on these programs, we were able to obtain geographic information on 157 of them (98%), indicating that they were in 37 different states, along with the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Figure 1 shows a map of the United States and the number of programs in each of those states. ESUSA has limited outreach in a number of states, with 13 states lacking ESUSA presence and another 18 states providing only 1 or 2 programs. Two states, California and Massachusetts, have more than 10 programs each.

We identified and reviewed websites for 141 programs, which represented approximately 88% of our total population frame. We analyzed the following elements from their websites: whether they included a mission statement, had an events calendar, asked for donations, and/or posted an annual report. Eighty-four percent of organizations had a mission statement and 54% of websites included a list of events. Ninety-one percent included a way for individuals and groups to provide donations but only 16% had annual reports available for download on their website. Additionally, we wanted to ascertain how organizations were linked to ESUSA by examining if the organization had a correct link to their website on the ESUSA website, and whether they had an email address that would not bounce back to us. We observed that 55% of the organizations had a correct link on the ESUSA website and 67% had a useable email address.

¹We are not 100% confident that this list is fully de-duplicated, but have attempted using our best judgment and all technology that we possessed at the time.

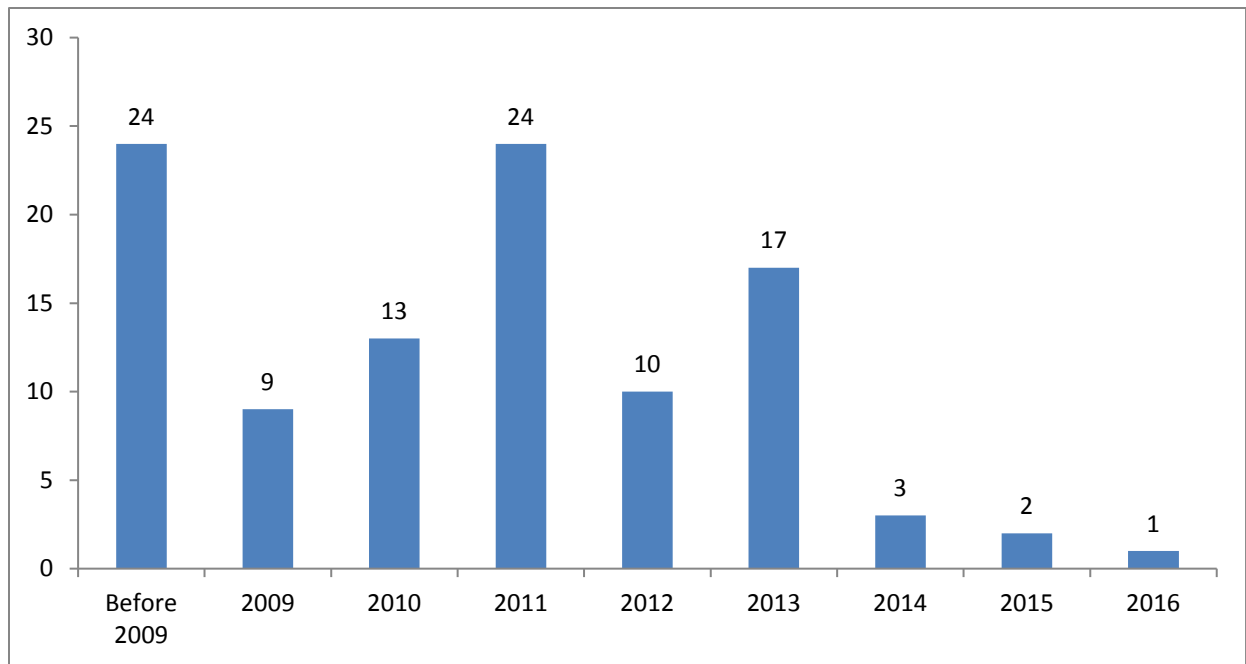
Figure 1. Map of ESUSA Programs in Each State ($n = 157$)



Study Sample. The sample group consisted of 111 organizations that were either ESUSA members, participated in at least one ESUSA Census survey, and/or participated in the organizational survey conducted by Duke University for this study. It is important to note that we do not have complete data across these elements; thus, the number of organizations reporting on different elements will be stated throughout. Figure 2 represents the year organizations were founded. The majority of organizations (68%) were founded after Dr. Abreu, founder of the EI Sistema program, visited America and won the TED prize, with most of these founded between 2010 and 2013 ($n = 64, 91\%$).

We were able to obtain geographical information across all of the organizations in our sample. This included programs in 94 unique cities and 33 states, in addition to the District of Columbia.

Figure 2. Founding Date of ESUSA Organizations ($n = 103$)



ESUSA Members. Members included organizations that provided financial support to ESUSA and in return received various services, such as financial tools and resources, professional development opportunities, technical assistance, and other organizational opportunities and activities (Wyatt, 2017). As of this year, there were 63 organizations that opted into membership with ESUSA. We hypothesized that significant differences may exist between the sample and member populations. All members provided geographical information. Their organizations represent 55 cities and 26 states, including the District of Columbia.

Data on staff members and teaching artists was available for approximately 84% of ESUSA members. The average number of full time employed staff was 3.44 ($SD = 5.69$), ranging from 0 to 35 FTEs. The average number of teaching artists was 14.69 ($SD = 13.88$), with a wide range between 1 and 72 teaching artists. As before, fewer organizations informed our understanding of board composition ($n = 34, 54\%$). The average number of board members was 12.94 ($SD = 8.57$), with a range between 3 and 42 members. Across 51 programs (81%), the average number of children served was 231.76 ($SD = 324.04$), with a large range between 10 and 2,140 students. A subset of 31 member organizations participated in the 2015-2016 Census (49%), providing information on student demographics. Across these

organizations, students were more likely to be female (58%) than male (42%). In addition, most programs primarily identified the children they served as Hispanic/Latino (42%) or African American (37%). Finally, organizations were most likely to provide programming to upper elementary school students, with a majority of participants coming from the 3rd (35%), 4th (40%), and 5th (41%) grades.

Data Sources and Measures Used

Three main sources of information were collected and used to support this project. First, we collected and coded information on all possible organizations using their websites and social media. Second, we received and compiled Census data collected by ESUSA across programs each year from 2012-2013 to 2015-2016.² Finally, we conducted a survey of organizations to inquire about staffing, board composition, organizational values, and alignment to ESUSA *Guiding Principles*, as well as components of artistic excellence and organizational support. We refer to this instrument throughout this paper as the *organizational survey*. Below we provide more detailed information about each of the core data measures, instruments used, and variables collected.

Review of Websites. One of the best and often underutilized sources of information about an organization's values and programming is their websites. First, we reviewed several of the websites to determine what kind of information ESUSA organizations provide to the public. From these observations, we developed a data collection and coding process to identify and standardize website information across programs. All 141 organizations were coded using this framework. The variables included contact information for the organization, information about website links and last updates, general headings from the websites, mission statement text, staffing and board member data, event descriptions, annual reports, and budget information, including budget descriptions, donation opportunities, and whether we could access the organization's IRS Form 990 from the National Center for Charitable Statistics' website (NCCS, 2017). Whenever possible, we downloaded information (e.g., annual reports) from these sites for use in future studies.

ESUSA Census. The ESUSA Board conducted Census studies from 2012 to 2016. Participants were given the option to access the Census using a direct link sent to them by ESUSA or complete it using a link provided on the ESUSA website. The early assessments were conducted in Google

² It is important to note that all organizations did not respond to each and every ESUSA Census. Only 12% of the 161 programs completed the Census each year across 2012-2016.

documents and the resulting data was analyzed by George Mason University (2012-2015). The final assessment (2015-2016) was conducted in Qualtrics and analyzed by Duke University. Each Census survey asked a variety of questions, indicating changes in the organization over time. However, some of the question items stayed the same across each Census, including a numerical count of El Sistema-inspired programs, and for each, the total number of students served, total number of hours and sites the program operated, staffing information, budget statistics, in-kind donations, and classes offered. In addition to the cross-sectional yearly analysis previously conducted, the research staff at Duke University also cleaned and standardized all four years of the Census data to elucidate and support the findings of this report.

Organizational Survey. In addition to the Census data, we conducted a separate web-based survey of ESUSA programs in Qualtrics between October 2016 and January 2017. The web survey asked program directors or other key administrative staff to respond to a series of questions regarding their program's operations, alignment to El Sistema's core values, most influential stakeholders, and sense of belonging in the larger ESUSA network, in addition to elements that we used to conduct social network analysis and assessment of key players in programs. We also constructed open-ended questions to tap into components of artistic excellence and community engagement. The survey was emailed to the 111 organizations in our study sample. We had a total response rate of 52%.³

Several instruments were modified for use in this survey. First, we included several key questions on operations, budgets, students served, and programming hours that could map onto questions asked in the ESUSA Census surveys. Thirty-one percent of the organizations that responded to the organizational survey did not complete the 2015-2016 Census, making this a useful exercise. Additionally, we decided to look at the organizational structure of programs using social network analysis. The questions created to identify staff and board networks were aligned with Oehler et al. (2007) who developed a similar methodology to assess cultural arts organizations.

A key component of this survey was to better understand stakeholder and organizational values. We developed questions modified from Turbide & Laurin (2009) that asked respondents to identify which stakeholders their program feels most responsible to serve and rank order a set of arts-based

³ This response rate includes the web survey and phone follow up respondents. See below for the process used for follow up.

organizational goals. Another key component of this survey was to determine if and when programs aligned their mission with the primary mission of El Sistema USA. Modified from Booth (2013), this set of questions asked programs to determine alignment with core ESUSA principles, along with a few different (but aligned) principles. Finally, we asked a series of questions to better understand each program's sense of team and community building based on Chavis et al.'s (2008) measure.

Phone Interview. In an effort to increase response to the study, we conducted phone interviews with several program representatives. We sent several rounds of emails to 31 programs that were selected based on their completion of the 2015-2016 Census survey, membership status, and other pertinent information gleaned from the website review. We invited program members to either complete the organizational survey online or participate in a phone interview with a Duke University staff member. Of these 31 programs, sixteen responded by either completing the web-based survey ($n = 9$) or taking part in a phone interview ($n = 7$). During the phone interview, participants were asked a modified series of questions based on the organizational survey.

Missing Data and the Creation of Consolidated Variables

When we began preliminary analysis on this study, we found a significant amount of missing data across programs (see Table 1). Organizations which made up the study sample and ESUSA members did not respond to all survey requests. To leverage our analytical power, we decided to create consolidated variables from the questions asked in multiple surveys using the same or very similar measures.

We constructed consolidated variables across each measure using the most recently administered or updated data, and only used information from each successive source where data was missing. We used the following sources, successively: the organizational survey, 2015-2016 Census, 2014-2015 Census, 2013-2014 Census, 2012-2013 Census, and the program's website. The resulting dataset included information about the organization's budget and finances, staffing and programming, structure, values, and other information needed to aid our understanding of these organizations. The following section focuses on the consolidated variables, as well as the original survey elements, centering on our three areas of interest for this research study: organizational structure, organizational values, and organizational success.

Table 1. Participants in Data Collection: Population, Sample, and Members

# participants	Population		Sample		Members	
	<i>n</i> = 161		<i>n</i> = 111		<i>n</i> = 63	
	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%
Website Coding	142	88.20%	110	99.10%	63	100.00%
No Census	42	26.09%	12	10.81%	7	11.11%
1 Census	41	25.47%	28	25.23%	15	23.81%
2 Census	31	19.25%	25	22.52%	11	17.46%
3 Census	25	15.52%	25	22.52%	14	22.22%
All Census	22	13.66%	21	18.92%	16	25.40%
Org. Survey	50	31.06%	50	45.05%	30	47.62%

Organizational Structure Indicators

Four indicators were examined to understand differences in organizational structure: membership in ESUSA, type of organization, staff and board characteristics, and stakeholder accountability. First, we examined those programs who opted into ESUSA membership ($n = 63$) compared to those who were part of the sample and did not become members ($n = 48$). Second, we coded 89 of the sample organizations (80%) using data provided on their websites, IRS reporting, and responses to the ESUSA Census. Roughly half were independent 501c3 nonprofit organizations ($n = 47$, 52.81%) with all others operating programs inside an orchestra ($n = 22$, 24.72%), community partnership ($n = 12$, 13.48%), or school ($n = 8$, 8.99%). Additionally, we were interested in better understanding the number and types of staff working in these organizations. As part of the organizational survey, we asked respondents to identify their staff members, their job title, how long they had worked for the organization, the number of hours they worked per week, and how essential they were to the functioning of the organization. In addition, limited information was also collected on each organization's Board of Directors, including their number of years of service and their essentialness to the organization. The final indicator, stakeholder influence, was also collected in the organizational survey. Respondents were asked to rank order various program

stakeholder types (e.g., general public, students, funding agencies, etc.) that they feel their organization is most accountable to (Turbide & Laurin, 2009).

Organizational Values Indicators

To assess organizational values, four elements were examined: program mission statements, the importance of different elements to program missions, alignment to ESUSA *Guiding Principles*, and the organization's sense of community. We first analyzed mission statements across each sample study organization which was compiled from self-reported measures, website reviews, and/or IRS 990 filings. Mission statement length and keywords used were examined. Secondly, organizations were asked to rank in order of importance the key elements of their organization's mission, including: artistic excellence, creativity and innovation, balanced budget, audience commitment, student/family commitment, good working conditions, and strong reputation in the community (Turbide & Laurin, 2009). Next, we wanted to determine program alignment to ESUSA's *Guiding Principles* (Booth, 2013). ESUSA has been working on revising their membership criteria to align specifically to the *Guiding Principles* and one crucial component of success for ESUSA is a shared understanding of what it means to be an ESUSA member (Wyatt, 2017). We developed a Likert scale for this study, asking respondents to report their alignment from 1 "no alignment" to 5 "exact alignment". All ten *Guiding Principles* were represented. See Appendix A for a list of all questions asked. We denoted programs with "higher alignment" as those whose summed alignment score was equal to or above the median ($Mdn = 43$). Lastly, we modified an instrument on community support that was previously used in another evaluation of arts organizations (Chavis et al., 2008). All items were on a Likert scale where 1 was "not at all" and 4 was "completely". An example item is "program members value the same thing."

Indicators of Organizational Success

The plan for this study was to focus primarily on artistic excellence and community engagement processes across individual programs using information collected through our organizational survey of ESUSA programs. However, when reviewing the data collected from each organization's website and the ESUSA Census, we determined other indicators of success were important to describe, including: financial and budget components, staffing and stakeholders, and programming and classes. Operational elements relating to budgets were acquired from the ESUSA Census surveys and IRS form 990s (NCCS,

2017). This included data on operating budgets, net assets, proportions of funding received by different funding streams, and amount spent per child. Operational elements related to staffing included counts of board members, administrative staff, and teaching artists. Elements regarding stakeholder influences were asked in the organizational survey where respondents were asked to rank order the entities that programs felt most responsible to serve. Programming elements encompassed the number of sites operated, number and types of classes offered, program hours of operation, number of students served, and average number of hours students spent in the program each week.

Data Analysis Plan

Our analysis included both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative analysis was conducted using NVivo 11 to help identify themes across two questions: (a) How does your program strive for artistic excellence? (b) In what ways does your program engage with the community and its members? Additionally, a textual analysis of the organizational mission statements was undertaken. For all of these elements, we ran a series of word frequencies and matrix coding queries to extract major themes, patterns, and ideas across the data. Key codes and keywords were counted and used in quantitative analyses. Analytic narratives and direct quotes were used to present the findings whenever possible.

Quantitative analysis was conducted in SAS using organizational structure, organizational values, and organizational success indicators created from the website analysis, organizational survey, and ESUSA Census. The analysis included univariate descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and means on all quantitative elements. We used consolidated variables whenever possible to maximize our sample size. Chi-square tests and *t*-tests were undertaken to assess differences in means between members and non-members, as well as independent nonprofits and programs within other nonprofits. We also conducted an analysis of quantitative elements derived from qualitative analysis (e.g., counts of keywords in mission statements) to help us explore associations between these elements and their relationship to organizational structure, values, and success.

We used social network analysis (SNA) to investigate how ESUSA programs are connected to their staff and boards. SNA is a statistical and visualization method used to understand relationships between individuals or groups within a shared environmental context, and help explain complex structural

groupings, such as nonprofit organizations (Hoppe & Reinelt, 2010; Oehler, Sheppard, Benjamin, & Dworkin, 2007). In this study, we focused on the number of partner relationships, the type of partnership/role played in the organization, the strength of the relationship tie, and the density of ties. Two different software packages were used to analyze and/or visualize network data. The first, Ucinet, was used to conduct most of the significant ego network analysis (Borgatti et al., 2002). The second software package, Pajek, is a visualization program used to explore large and dense networks (Batagel & Movar, 2011). See Appendix E for the results of the social network analysis.

Results

Descriptive statistics focus on key areas of organizational success including budget, staffing and programming, stakeholder influences, mission statements, alignment to the *Guiding Principles*, and sense of community. The results shown here include all sample participants ($n = 111$) whenever possible. Due to the amount of missing data, respondent numbers are typically given throughout. In addition, information regarding artistic excellence, community engagement, and social network analysis can be found in Appendices C-E, respectively.

Budget and Finance

First, we examined key budget indicators including operating budgets, funding percentages, cost per child, and net assets (see Table 2 for all results). There was considerable variability across all budget components, indicating that organizations have different operating and programming budgets. The average operating budget for ESUSA organizations was almost \$300,000 with a standard deviation of over \$500,000. Examining this more closely, the majority of organizations ($n = 62$) have budgets up to \$300,000, while 21 other organizations have higher budgets, with five of these having one million or more dollar budgets. Net assets also reflect a small number of organizations with large assets, ranging upwards of \$26 million dollars. In addition, there was wide variability in the amount of dollars programs spent per child, ranging from \$12 to \$7,000 dollars. We theorized that perhaps organizations with larger budgets were spending more dollars per student and that those with more modest budgets were spending less per student. To test this, we conducted a correlation to look at the association between these two indicators and found that there was a small positive correlation ($r = .22$). This reflects some

greater spending by organizations with larger endowments; however, it was not as robust as we anticipated.

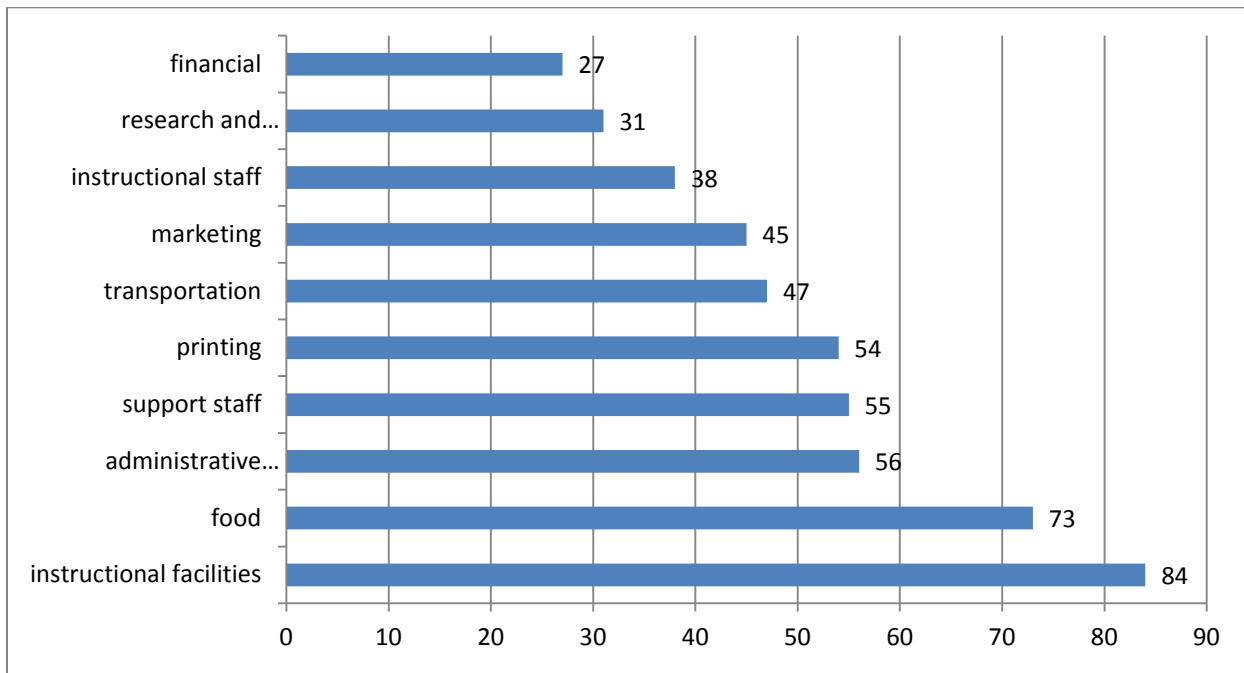
Table 2. Key Budget Indicators

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Operating Budget	91	\$286,124	\$512,990	\$2,500 – \$3.9M
Net Assets	73	\$13.3M	\$4.9M	\$2 – \$26.3M
Funding % – Corporate	69	13%	19%	0% – 100%
Funding % – Foundation	84	40%	26%	0% – 100%
Funding % – Individual	77	28%	24%	0% – 93%
Funding % – Performance	48	22%	24%	0% – 97%
Cost per Child	87	\$1,685	\$1,355	\$12 – \$7,000

Note: M equals million

Programs that completed the organizational survey ($n = 45$) indicated that their budgets were growing. Seventy-one percent of programs felt that their budgets were somewhat or much larger than the previous year and an additional 24% indicated that their budgets were about the same compared to the previous year. Organizations in the ESUSA were also asked about the types of in-kind support they received, including services and non-monetary assistance that they received from external agents to help further their goals (Taproot Foundation, 2012). We aggregated the results across all years to allow the largest number of organizations to be included in our analysis. The most prevalent in-kind supports were instructional facilities and food supplies for children. See Figure 3 for the entire list of the types of services and supplies received through in-kind support and the number of organizations that received each type of support.

Figure 3. In-kind Support Received by Service Type



Note: Counts represent the number of organizations that received the service

Staffing and Programming

Next, we examined staffing and programming indicators including the number of staff members, students, classes, sites, and operational hours. These indicators primarily came from the ESUSA Census and were supplemented whenever possible by the website review or the organizational survey. On average, organizations had 2.7 administrative staff and 11.4 teaching artists supporting around 191 children. However, there was wide range between organizations, with 1 to 72 staff supporting 7 to 2,140 children. On average, students received 8 hours of instruction per week.

Table 3. Key Staffing and Programming Indicators

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Number of Board Members	57	12.14	8.98	3 – 50
Number of Staff Members	97	2.68	4.37	0 – 35
Number of Teaching Artists	95	11.37	11.65	1 – 72
Number of Students	87	190.95	285.12	7 – 2,140
Number of Sites	88	2.72	2.76	1 – 15
Number of Classes	87	7.26	3.51	1 – 15
Operating Hours	87	16.14	14.25	1 – 69
Operating Weeks	88	34.32	7.19	5 – 52
Student Hours per Week	77	7.75	4.37	1.5 – 30.0

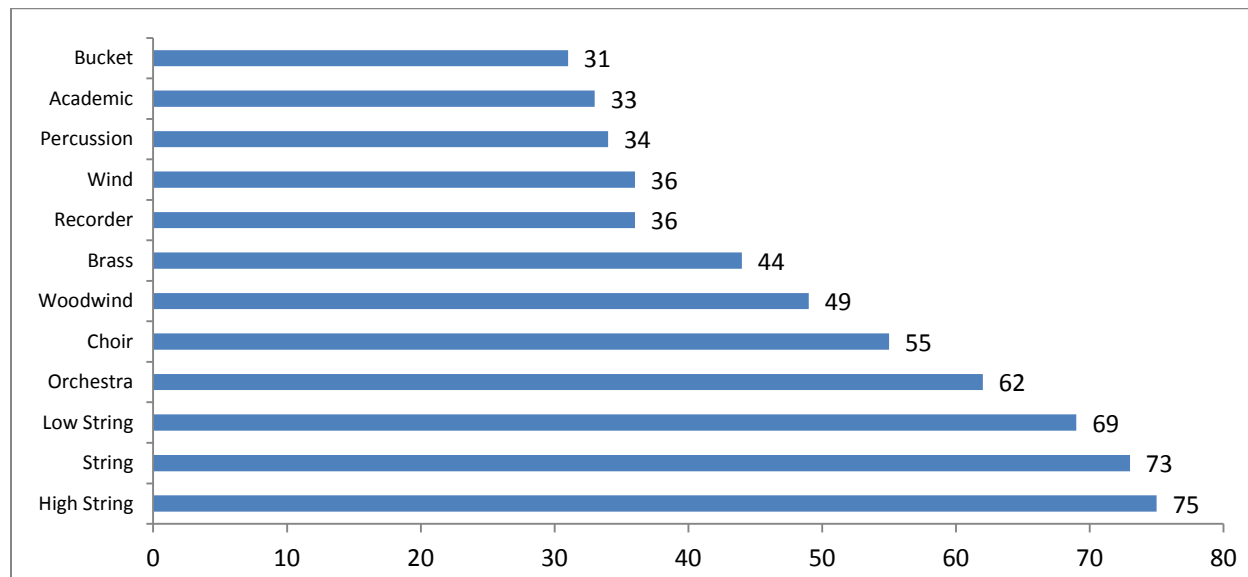
There was significant variability among organizations in terms of their number and types of staff, which can also be found in other staff characteristics. A subset of organizations provided more detailed information about their administrative and instructional staff ($n = 26$). Due to the small number of programs that reported on number of hours worked, number of years at the organization, and essentialness to the mission, only data on administrative staff and teaching artists is reported. On average, most administrators worked about 31 hours per week ($M = 30.89$, $SD = 14.90$), ranging from 1 hour to 55 hours. Most had worked for the organization for about 4 years, ranging from less than 1 year to 11 years. Finally, administrative essentialness was high, averaging a 4.72, illustrating that programs viewed administrative staff as extremely vital to their day-to-day operations. Most teaching artists (TAs) worked about 10 hours per week for the organization ($M = 9.77$, $SD = 7.37$), ranging from 1 hour to 39 hours. Most had worked for the organization for about 2.5 years, ranging from less than 1 year to 9 years. Finally, the essentialness of teaching artists was lower than those of administrative staff, averaging a 3.75 on the 5 point scale, illustrating that programs viewed teaching artists as somewhat to very essential to the operational success of their programs.

Table 4. Mean Number of Staff by Type as Reported in the Organizational Survey

	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Board members	23	10.43	7.54	1 – 72
Admin	29	4.03	7.53	1 – 35
Teaching Artists	31	11.22	15.45	1 – 72
Volunteers	37	14.04	15.20	0 – 50

Organizations most frequently operated out of public schools ($n = 74$), followed by community agencies and organizations, such as the Boys and Girls club ($n = 36$); other school settings, including charter and private schools ($n = 28$); and, churches ($n = 12$). In addition, organizations were asked when they offered programming, and most commonly held ensembles after school ($n = 44$), during school ($n = 11$), on the weekend ($n = 10$), or before school ($n = 3$). For those groups that completed the organizational survey ($n = 43$), most felt that the number of students they served grew somewhat or much more than previous years (77%), with an additional 21% indicating that student growth was about the same as previous years.

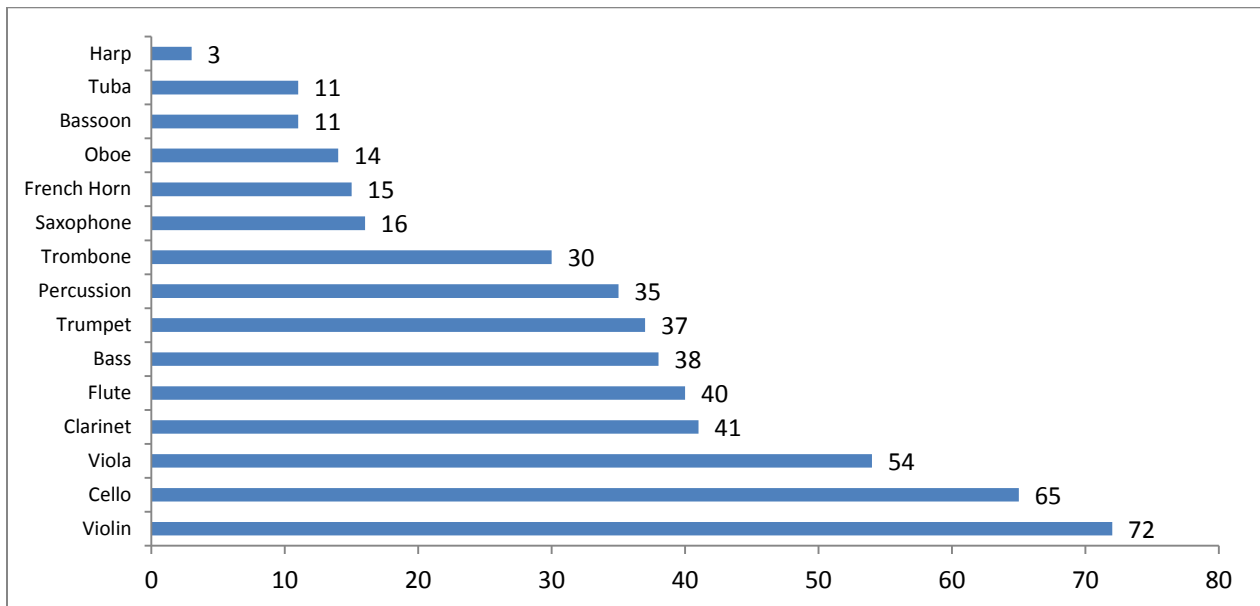
Figure 4. Class Offered by Number of Organizations



Note: Counts represent the number of organizations that offered the class

Additionally, we were interested in the number and types of classes offered to students. The average organization offered 7 classes to students, ranging from 1 class to 15 classes (see Figure 4). The most frequently offered classes were string sectionals and orchestra, followed by choir. Additionally, in the 2013-2014 Census, organizations were asked about the instruments they used to provide ensemble instruction (refer to Figure 5). Not surprisingly, the most prevalent instructional tools were string instruments (e.g., violin, viola, and cello).

Figure 5. Instruments Offered by Number of Organizations



Note: Counts represent the number of organizations that offered the instrument

Stakeholders

We asked organizations ($n = 37$) to identify their primary stakeholders, or who they felt most responsible to serve through their program and the results are shown in Table 5. Organizations overwhelmingly felt that their first priority was to student participants and their families ($M = 1.05$). Programs also felt strongly accountable to the teaching artists who instruct the students ($M = 3.05$).

Table 5. Importance of Key Stakeholder Influence

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Student and Families	1.05	0.23	1 – 2
Teaching artists	3.05	1.58	2 – 7
Funders	4.32	1.31	2 – 7
Donors	4.38	1.34	1 – 7
Board members	4.45	1.86	1 – 7
Public / Audience	5.16	1.65	2 – 7
Volunteers	5.57	1.50	3 – 7

Note: Ratings from 1 to 7; 1 = More important and 7 = Less important

Mission Statement

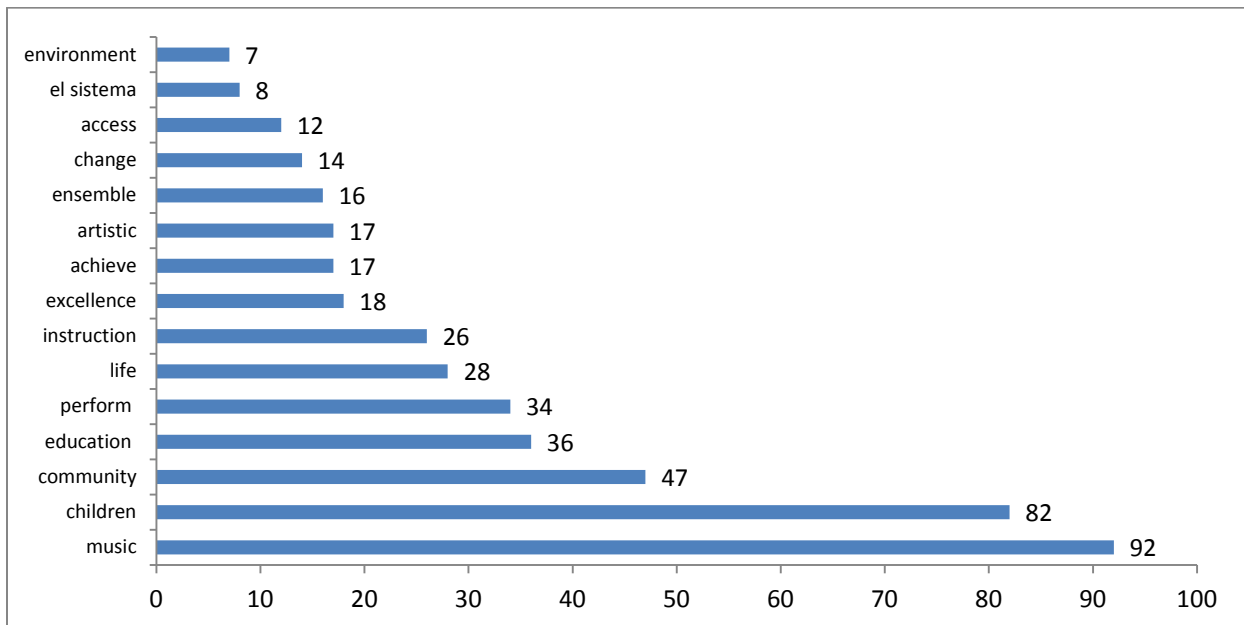
We analyzed the mission statements from sample organizations. This was an element almost all organizations had, with 92% of study sample organizations ($n = 111$) providing a mission statement either from the Census, website review, or IRS 990 filing. Across all mission statements, the average word length was 34.43 ($SD = 22.37$), ranging from 4 to 153 words. Figure 6 below illustrates the words most commonly used in the mission statements.

As seen visually through the word cloud, some of the most common words organizations used in programs' mission statements include *music* ($n = 92, 90.20\%$), *children* ($n = 82, 80.39\%$), and to a lesser degree, *community* ($n = 47, 46.08\%$), *education* ($n = 36, 35.29\%$), and *perform* ($n = 34, 33.33\%$). A list of the fifteen most commonly used words, which we further analyzed, and the proportion of organizations that used each word, is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 6. Mission Statement Word Cloud (n = 102)



Figure 7. Mission Statement Keywords



Note: Counts represent the number of organizations that used this keyword in their mission statement

Elements of Core Mission

More generally, we examined the endorsement of nonprofit arts mission elements to determine which were most salient to these organizations. Organizations were asked to rank order the mission elements described in Table 6 below. Across the 37 organizations that provided information, the most important element was a balanced budget ($M = 2.76$), followed by fostering creativity and innovation ($M = 3.78$), and finally, student and family satisfaction ($M = 3.88$). Less important were elements of artistic excellence in productions ($M = 4.30$), staff working conditions ($M = 4.54$), and audience satisfaction ($M = 4.73$).

Table 6. Importance of Mission Elements

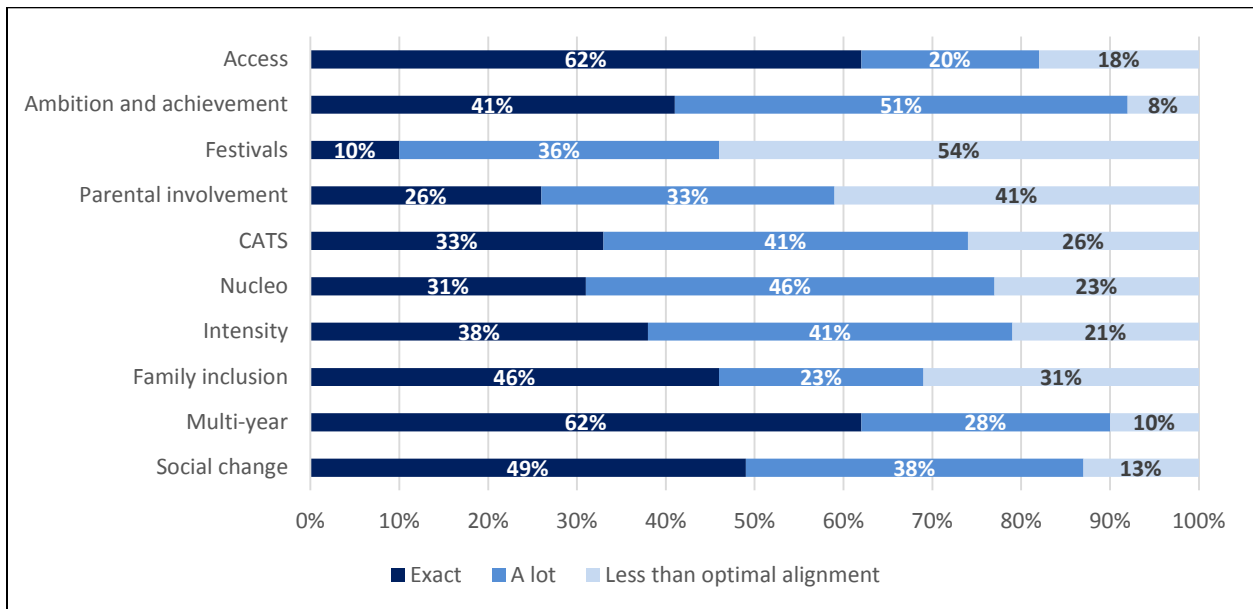
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Balance budget	2.76	1.92	1 – 6
Creativity and innovation	3.78	2.33	1 – 7
Student satisfaction	3.88	1.96	1 – 7
Reputation in community	4.05	1.54	1 – 7
Artistic excellence	4.30	1.47	1 – 7
Personnel working conditions	4.54	1.86	1 – 7
Audience satisfaction	4.73	2.27	1 – 7

Note: Ratings from 1 to 7; 1 = More important and 7 = Less important

Alignment to the *Guiding Principles*

A subset of sample organizations ($n = 39$) completed questions on alignment to the *Guiding Principles* as part of the organizational survey. We were interested in determining the number of organizations that align themselves with each aspect of the ESUSA *Guiding Principles* (Booth, 2013). The majority of organizations endorsed most or exact alignment with all of the principles except for festivals (46%). Most importantly, 92% of organizations supported ambition and achievement, and 90% endorsed the multi-year continuum. See Figure 8 for a list of all of the *Guiding Principles* and the proportion of programs that demonstrated alignment with each.

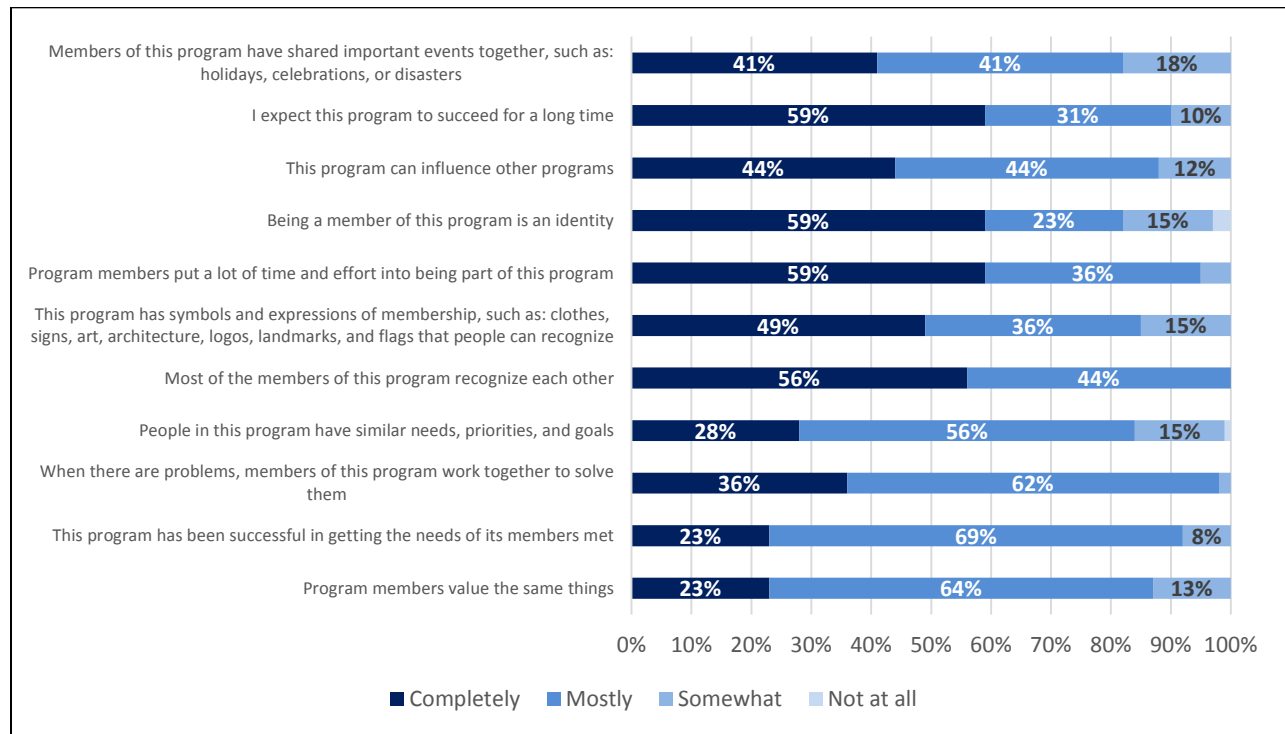
Figure 8. ESUSA Guiding Principles and Alignment (n = 39)



Organizations' Sense of Community

Additionally, the same subset of organizations was asked to respond to a series of questions regarding their perceptions of how well the organization operates as a social community. In general, all organizations mostly or completely expressed support for these statements (see results in Figure 9). Organizations were more likely to endorse items focused on member recognition, time, and effort (59% completely endorse) compared to questions of organizational priorities and values, where 23% to 28% completely endorsed. It may be that priorities and values are still being constructed, making it difficult for a shared understanding to grow.

Figure 9. Sense of Community within Organizations (n = 39)



Differences in Organizational Structure and Values

We examined differences between programs based on their affiliation with ESUSA, nonprofit status, and alignment to ESUSA *Guiding Principles* across the different indicators of organizational success. In particular, we wanted to determine if and how members differed from non-members, independent nonprofits differed from other nonprofits, and programs with high alignment to the *Guiding Principles* differed from those with lower alignment to the principles in terms of: a) budgets, assets, and funding proportions; b) board, staff, students, programming, and stakeholder concerns; and, c) mission, *Guiding Principles*, artistic excellence, and community engagement. To assess differences, *t*-tests and chi square analyses were conducted to examine differences by groups.

ESUSA Members are Different from Other Affiliated Programs

Differences in organizational success elements by membership status were examined. There was a significant difference in operating budgets indicating that ESUSA members, on average, had more robust budgets ($M = \$388,901$) compared to non-members ($M = \$149,087$; $t(89) = 2.26, p < .05$). When reviewing the IRS 990 tax documents, we found no differences between members and non-members in

terms of net assets. We also examined the proportions of funding received through different mechanisms (e.g., corporate, public) and detected no differences between members and non-members. Finally, we were interested in understanding how much of their budget organizations allocated to students and differences between members and non-members were found ($t(85) = 3.00, p < .01$), with ESUSA member organizations spending more per child ($M = \$2,052$) compared to non-member organizations ($M = \$1,211$).

Next, we examined if there were any differences in means by staffing and/or programming. There were no significant differences in the number of board or staff members by membership status. However, there were differences in the number of teaching artists ($t(93) = 3.29, p < .01$), with member organizations averaging 8.17 staff positions and non-members averaging 7.17 staff positions. We also examined the number of students served by membership status and found no significant differences. Although members and non-members did not differ in the number of sites they operated, they did differ by the number of classes they offered ($t(85) = 4.41, p < .0001$), with members offering an average of 8.53 classes and non-members offering an average of 5.47 classes. We also examined potential differences in the number of operating hours per week, number of operating weeks per year, and number of hours students spent in programming and found no significant differences.

Almost all of the participants in the organizational survey were members (95%); therefore, unfortunately, it was not possible to assess differences in members and non-members in terms of stakeholder influences, *Guiding Principles*, artistic excellence, or sense of community. However, we found differences across membership affiliation and mission elements with ESUSA members and non-members differing in their usage of certain words in their mission statements.⁴ Of the 8 organizations that used *El Sistema* in their mission statements, 7 (87.5%) were ESUSA members ($\chi^2 = 3.32, p = .07$). Of the 17 organizations that used *achievement* in their mission, 13 (76.47%) were members ($\chi^2 = 3.19, p = .07$). Of the 14 organizations that used *social change* in their mission statements, 11 (78.57%) were members ($\chi^2 = 3.12, p = .08$). Interestingly, of the 12 organizations that used the word *access* in their mission

⁴ Note that all findings regarding mission statements and membership status are trending toward significance; sample size is too small to show full differences.

statements, only 4 (33.33%) were members ($\chi^2 = 3.07, p = .08$). This seems to run counter to ESUSA's emphasis on promoting equity in music education regardless of background.

Comparing Independent 501c3 Organizations with Other Programs

There are clear differences between independent 501c3 nonprofits that were developed for the express purpose of providing ESUSA programming and other nonprofits that started an ESUSA program within an existing organization. Roughly half of the study sample organizations were 501c3 while the other half were part of a larger nonprofit entities such as an orchestra, school, church, or other social organizations. There was a trend toward significance in larger operating budgets occurring in independent organizations compared to all others ($t(89) = 1.74, p = .08$), indicating that independent organizations, on average, had more robust budgets ($M = \$714,292$) compared to all others ($M = \$245,070$). However, when examining the IRS 990 net assets, we found no differences between independent organizations and all other organizations. We also examined the proportions of funding received through different mechanisms (e.g., corporate, public). Programs in larger organizations were more likely to have a significant proportion of their funding coming from public support ($M = 0.31$) compared to independent organizations ($M = 0.14; t(46) = 2.74, p < .01$). However, none of the other funding proportions were significantly different by organization type. Finally, we were interested in understanding how much of their budget organizations allocated to their students. No differences were found between independent organizations and all other organizations.

Next, we examined differences in staffing and programming. There was a trend toward significance in the number of board members with independent organizations having, on average, smaller boards ($M = 10.16$) compared to all others ($M = 14.68, t(55) = 1.93, p = 0.06$). While independent organizations typically had smaller boards, they were more likely to have larger administrative staff sizes ($M = 3.72$) compared to programs within larger organizations ($M = 1.95, t(95) = 1.99, p < .05$). However, there were no significant differences in the number of teaching artists by organizational structure. Student size differed by structure, with independent organizations serving more students ($M = 261.20$) compared to all other organizations ($M = 136.5, t(85) = 2.06, p < .05$). There were no significant differences in the number of classes offered, operating hours, or operating weeks by organizational structure.

We examined how organizations differed in terms of mission elements, alignment to ESUSA's *Guiding Principles*, and sense of community. First, we reviewed the subset of organizations ($n = 39$) that completed questions from the organizational survey regarding their alignment to ESUSA *Guiding Principles* (Booth, 2013). Surprisingly, there were no differences between organizational structure and alignment to the *Guiding Principles*. Researchers theorized that independent organizations might align more closely with the ESUSA principles since they were primarily constructed to serve this purpose. Finally, in terms of a sense of program community, there were significant differences between different organizational structures regarding the item, "Members of this program have shared important events together," with independent organizations more likely to strongly endorse this value ($M = 3.50$) compared to all other organizations ($M = 2.91$; $t(38) = 2.43$, $p < .05$).

Programs that differed in organizational structures also differed in their mission statements. Independent organizations were more likely to use the word *excellence* (66.67%; $\chi^2 = 4.93$, $p < .05$) and *social change* (64.29%; $\chi^2 = 2.96$, $p < .01$). Additionally, of the 44 independent organizations assessed, 41 (93.80%; $\chi^2 = 8.03$, $p < .05$) included the word *children* in their mission. None of the independent organizations used *El Sistema* as part of their mission statements ($\chi^2 = 6.58$, $p < .01$). This again runs counter to the theory that independent organizations align their specific mission to *El Sistema*.

Alignment to ESUSA *Guiding Principles*

The subset of organizations ($n = 39$) that completed questions from the organizational survey regarding their alignment to ESUSA *Guiding Principles* (*GPs*) were divided into two groups at the median score: high alignment ($n = 16$) and low alignment ($n = 23$; Booth, 2013). There were no differences in budget variables across organizations based on their alignment to the *GPs*. Additionally, there were no differences found in the number of staff or students served by low-high alignment to the *GPs*. There was, however, a trend toward significance for the number of weeks programs operated during the year. Organizations with high alignment to the *GPs* operated more weeks per year ($M = 35.77$) compared to those with low alignment to the *GPs* ($M = 31.23$, $t(33) = 1.94$, $p = .06$).

In addition, we were interested in seeing how alignment with the *GPs* was associated with other values, such as mission elements and stakeholder support. In terms of mission, organizations were asked their support for mission elements, with lower scores indicating more important components. There were

no differences in organizational alignment to the *GPs* and mission elements. Next, we assessed differences between alignment to the *GPs* and the influence of stakeholder types. *Lower* mean scores generally indicate more *important* stakeholders. There was a significant finding between alignment to the *GPs* and the importance of the public/audiences to their organization ($t(35) = 2.19, p = 0.03$), with those with higher alignment having higher mean scores ($M = 5.81$) and those with lower alignment having lower mean scores ($M = 4.67$). This means that the general public plays a more important role for organizations that have a weaker alignment to the *GPs*.

Again, we assessed a specific set of words across program mission statements and examined them in terms of their alignment to the *GPs*. There was a trend toward significance with high alignment organizations being more likely to use *education* in their mission statements compared to low alignment organizations (62.50%; $\chi^2 = 3.32, p = .10$). However, organizations with higher alignment to the *GPs* did not use *El Sistema* or *achievement* in their mission statements at all (*El Sistema*: $\chi^2 = 3.60, p = .06$; *Achievement*: $\chi^2 = 5.76, p < .05$).

Discussion

This study explored the organizational characteristics of all *El Sistema*-inspired programs that are associated with the national *El Sistema* USA (ESUSA) network. Through our research, we endeavored to better understand the composition of these organizations by identifying aspects of their organizational structure and values that lead to the promotion of organizational success outcomes. By understanding each individual organization's structures and values, we can begin to better understand the development of the umbrella network, and how to best support its constituents and build its membership.

We conducted a complete organizational ecology of the organizations that make up ESUSA to better understand the complex and unique organizations that make up this network (Hannon & Freeman, 1977; Hannon, 2005). By utilizing different data sources to maximize our understanding, we were able to illuminate the structure of each of these constituent organizations. These organizations differ in terms of their stability, length of tenure, and how they are organized. Some programs are relatively long-lived ($n = 12$), but a sizeable proportion started operating in the past five years ($n = 43$). Organizational science has shown that emergent organizations tend to have different needs compared to more established organizations (Andersson, 2016; Katz & Gardner, 1988). As seen in this study, some organizations are

established members of the ESUSA network ($n = 63$) while others are not ($n = 48$). The organizations themselves may also differ in their structure, with a majority operating as independent 501c3 organizations ($n = 58$) and other programs opting to operate under a larger nonprofit ($n = 53$). Research findings have highlighted the differences in organizations in terms of budget, staffing, and programming. The average operating budget was about \$300,000 with the largest operating budget nearly 4 million dollars. On average, organizations have about 3 administrative positions and 11 teaching artists supporting 191 students. However, this varies significantly from program to program.

We found that organizations that have opted into ESUSA membership tend to have higher operating budgets, spend more per pupil, employ a greater number of teaching artists, and provide more classes compared to non-members. Higher rates of organizational success among members across these indicators may be attributable to their status in the ESUSA network. In exchange for their financial and philosophical commitment to ESUSA, member programs and organizations receive access to shared resources, such as webinars on startups and classroom management, professional development, performance opportunities, and funding and technical assistance, such as one-on-one mentorship (Wyatt, 2017). As these services are developed and rolled out to members, this will be further examined in future ESUSA Census and other research.

The results of this study also illustrate more outcomes organizational success among independent 501c3 organizations. Independent nonprofits are more likely to have larger budgets, serve more students, and have smaller boards. These findings were interesting because one could easily assume that organizations existing within an established entity, such as a symphony orchestra, would have access to more robust resources, leading to greater organizational success. There may be an interaction between the intentionality, boundaries, exchange, and resources (Katz & Gartner, 1988) that is unique to independent nonprofits. For example, do independent nonprofits manifest more indicators of organizational success because they have more flexibility in how they choose to allocate resources? Unlike member programs, there were no differences in nonprofit status across alignment to ESUSA *Guiding Principles* and none of the independent organizations included *El Sistema* in their mission statements.

Although we found differences in membership and nonprofit status among El Sistema-inspired programs, a large majority of organizations share programmatic and value-based elements. Most programs operate at school-sites and primarily offer string ensembles. Many organizations are also united in mission, emphasizing common themes of music, children, education, and community. A common focus on “children” is consistent with the idea that programs feel most accountable to students and their families. Furthermore, the shared emphasis on “music” and “community” bolsters the finding that programs engage with the community and strive for artistic excellence primarily through public performances. Differences in values and missions can lead to structural differences (Glynn, 2000) – many of which are evidenced by the varying composition of ESUSA-inspired programs – the commonalities that programs share in regards to their values and goals is an indication of a strong organizational identity. El Sistema-inspired programs in the U.S. are multifaceted – they differ greatly in the year in which they were founded, geographic location, financial and social capital, and structure – but appear to share a much larger vision and sense of purpose that transcends these barriers. This finding could have important implications for the sustainability of ESUSA as it continues to refine and develop its capacity as an umbrella advocacy and support network. Organizational unity, according to Glynn (2000), is an important precursor to “success,” particularly in relation to resource allocation and strategic decision-making.

Despite the findings highlighted in this study, some important limitations must be considered. First, it was difficult to locate and identify all of the programs that operate under the mission or vision of El Sistema in the United States. Without a solid database from which to comprehensively identify or de-duplicate affiliate programs, we were unable to create an exhaustive list of all El Sistema-inspired programs in the U.S. Therefore, it is possible that some programs were considered more than once in our analyses while programs that may also be representative of El Sistema USA were excluded from analysis. Second, as a result of low participation rates, particularly across the Census and organizational surveys (refer to Table 1), it was difficult to assess some of the relationships between different programs. For example, because so few programs provided information on the essentialness of their staff and boards, we could not fully deduce the nature of the relationships (i.e. statistical significance) between these indicators and our other outcomes of interest. Furthermore, although we imputed data across other measures (i.e. website review and IRS filings) in order to acquire a more robust dataset, there was still a

notable amount of missing data across some variables. For this reason, in addition to those enumerated above, some of the results of this study cannot be generalized to the population of nonprofit arts organizations that it represents.

Additionally, this grant proposal planned to focus primarily on artistic excellence and community engagement as indicators for organizational performance and success. Due to many different factors, some within our control (i.e., broader data collection including web site reviews and archival Census data) and some not within our control (i.e., less than optimal response rate for the organizational survey), we altered our planned purpose of focusing on artistic excellence and community engagement to broadening our focus to concepts such as budget, funding, staffing, and programming. In the end, a more robust understanding of the constituent organizations that make the ESUSA network was conducted. Although some understanding of how programs envision artistic excellence and community engagement was found, future work might again attempt to focus more closely on these components, especially now that an exploratory ecology of the organizations that make up the ESUSA network are better understood.

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