RaY

Research at the University of York St John

COVID-19 and Climate Change

Sustainability Report

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ETHNO RESEARCH

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What is Ethno?

Ethno is JM International's program for folk, world and traditional music. Founded in 1990, it is aimed at young musicians (up to the age of 30) with a mission to revive and keep alive global cultural heritage. Present today in over 30 countries, Ethno engages young people through a series of annual international music gatherings as well as workshops, concerts and tours, working together with schools, conservatories and other groups of youth to promote peace, tolerance and understanding. (https://ethno.world/about/)

What is Ethno Research?

Ethno Research has sought to study the value and impact of the Ethno pedagogy and the related social process on the lives of the participating musicians, and its impact on the society at large, over the last 30 years. Following the initial pilot studies and framing document released in early 2020, and the impact COVID-19 had on the data collection sites, Ethno Research began working within 8 focused areas: (1) Arts and Culture, (2) History, (3) Pedagogy and Professional Development, (4) Trauma-Informed Practice, (5) Ethno Organizers, (6) Sustainability/Covid-19, (7) Ethno USA, (8) Majority World.

Ethno Research exists to develop our knowledge and understanding of the Ethno programme. It provides a critical tool to help navigate the complexity of human engagement in 'non-formal' peer-to-peer learning, 'intercultural exchange' and 'traditional' music-making. Our purpose is to illuminate new understandings of what Ethno does to support future growth and development.

What Next?

As a collection, the reports from this phase of the research are multifaceted and rich in data reflecting the complexity and diversity of the Ethno programme. Paramount for the next phase is to ensure that the research touches those that are invested in its programmes, from participants to organizers. Following the publication of these reports we will be working on a range of dynamic dissemination points resulting in focused outputs that respond to this collection of reports.

The 3-year Ethno Research project, led by the International Centre for Community Music (ICCM) at York St John University in collaboration with JM International (JMI), is made possible through a grant from Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies.

JM International
Official Program

Contents

There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development.

(2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015 United Nations)

Executive Summary

The sustainability report focuses on two areas: the sustainability of Ethno musical practice, and Ethno World's response to the climate crisis. The urgency of this work package was recognized when the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in severe restrictions on travel and group gatherings during 2020, impacting the offline delivery of the Ethno programme.

Ethno World responded to the COVID-19 restrictions quickly with the Hope Sessions, free online tune learning workshops led by Ethno Artistic Mentors. The Hope Sessions were followed by a variety of online events including podcasts, music collaborations and further workshops. In this report I investigate three online programmes as case studies: The Hope Sessions, The Exchange Sessions and Ethno Chile 'onlive'. The methodological approach was a hybrid ethnography, combining online and offline ethnographic research.

The findings reveal that there is scope for an online Ethno programme. Ethno organizers responded proactively to the COVID-19 restrictions and devised some innovative events, each one building on the ideas of previous events. The online programmes provided an opportunity for Artistic Mentors to refine their practice, especially with regard to incorporating more information about the rudiments of their folk music practice and the cultural context of the music, two aspects of music sharing that there was not as much time for during the Ethno Gatherings. Online programmes also allowed organizers to utilize the translator tool on the Zoom streaming programme enabling participants who do not speak English to participate in the Gatherings. They also allowed people to attend a Ethno events without needing to pay for travel or apply for visas. In this respect, the online programmes provide greater accessibility and visibility to Ethno World.

Online Gatherings provided an opportunity for professional development for Artistic Mentors at a time when the livelihood of musicians was tenuous. Artistic Mentors were given guidance on presenting online workshops which helped them to gain confidence working on a virtual platform. However, there were some concerns surrounding the professionalization of Artistic Mentors and organizers, as for the Hope Session no one was paid for their time.

The COVID-19 pandemic drew stark attention to carbon emissions and intercultural exchange. A balance of online and offline programmes can help to balance some concerns with the extent of international travel sometimes required for intercultural exchange at an Ethno. Engaging in projects to offset carbon emissions may be another alternative for the Ethno Network. The conclusion is that encouraging intercultural engagement is vital as the climate crisis heightens, and that if Ethno is achieving this aim, then perhaps it justifies the cost of carbon emissions.

Introduction

Sustainability from the perspective of Ethno World focuses on how to ensure Ethno's continuation in the future, relating to Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies (MACP) aim of 'bolstering Ethno's long-term development strategy focused on sustainability, outreach and education through peer-2-peer learning' (Ethno, 2021). The urgency of this work package was identified when the COVID-19 pandemic affected the smooth running of Ethno World. Restrictions on large gatherings of people as well as international travel meant that Ethno events needed to be cancelled. Currently, many countries are still limiting entrance to foreign nationals based on their vaccination status or the number of cases in their home region. This could have a severe impact on the intercultural aims of Ethno.

This report responds to a discrete theme within Ethno Research, formulated in response to the Covid-19 pandemic: How has Ethno World responded to the Covid-19 pandemic? The research question relates to broader concerns within academic research of sustainability. Sustainability refers to two areas: the sustainability of a musical practice as it responds to socio-economic changes, and the relationship between musical practice and environmental sustainability.

Sustainable Futures (Schippers and Grant, 2016) highlight the many factors that influence the sustainability of a musical practice. Schippers and Grant (2016) divide their ecological approach to sustainability into five areas: systems of learning music, musicians and communities, contexts and constructs, regulation and infrastructure, media and the music industry. When one area within a practice becomes at risk, this can impact its sustainability. In relation to COVID-19, Ethno was impacted in the areas of musicians and communities, contexts and constructs, and regulation and infrastructure. Musicians within the Ethno network were unable to attend offline Ethno Gatherings, impacting the livelihood of Artistic Mentors and organizers, and the musical practice of Ethno participants. The Ethno organization was impacted by being unable to meet for peer-to-peer sharing in the context of an Ethno Gathering affecting their context and construct. Finally, governmental regulations that enforced stringent travel regulations and isolation policies during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 impacted the smooth running of the Ethno programme.

The United Nations (UN) Mandate on sustainable development considers environmental sustainability and sustainable development as mutually reinforcing one another. In response to climate change, they write, 'sustainable development cannot be achieved without climate action. Conversely, many of the SDGs are addressing the core drivers of climate change.' (United Nations, N.D.) The UN adopted the Sustainable Development goals in 2015, with the aim to 'end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity' (United Nations, N.D.) There are seventeen goals, which

are interrelated including climate action (13), good health and wellbeing (3), and peace, justice and strong institutions (16). Based on conversations with members of the Ethno Environment sub-committee, there is a strong feeling that Ethno can respond to the objectives of Agenda 2030. Ethno could have an important role in promoting peace and wellbeing through music-making whilst also addressing environmental sustainability. As stated in the title of this report: 'There can be no sustainable development without peace and no peace without sustainable development' suggesting that mentoring intercultural relationships is as important as protecting the planet (United Nations, 2015). Furthermore, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic around the world underlines how essential it is that any organization considers their sustainability in relation to the climate crisis.

Dissemination

Ethno's swift response to COVID-19 resulted in an early dissemination of research due to an increased interest in how music communities were responding to restrictions imposed by COVID-19 regulations. Listed below are the dissemination outputs for this work package:

JOURNAL ARTICLES

Gibson, S. (2021) 'Shifting from Offline to Online Collaborative Music-Making, Teaching and Learning: Perceptions of Ethno-World Music Mentors.' *Music Education Research*, 23(2), 151–166. https://doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2021.1904865

Gibson, S. And Higgins, L. (2021) 'Taking "Ethno Gatherings" on-line: Sustaining inter-cultural musical exchange during the COVID-19 Pandemic.' *Journal of Music, Health and Wellbeing*.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Gibson, S. 'Covid-19 and research practice: From "face-to-face" encounters to online interactions,' BFE One Day conference, online (7 November 2020).

Gibson, S. 'Balancing global music networks with environmental awareness: the Ethno-World programme,' BFE Annual Conference, online (8–11 April 2021).

INVITED SPEAKER

Gibson, S. 'Taking a learning environment on-line: Ethno-World and their transition to on-line music sessions.' ICCM Presents Webinar Series, June 2020

Gibson, S. 'Ethno's Response to COVID-19.' Ethno Digital OAT conference, December 2020

This report draws on these dissemination outputs and includes new data relating to the Ethno Chile 'onlive' gathering.

Methodology

The methodology for this report is adaptive in approach (Hine, 2015). Both Ethno World and Ethno Research were responding to the changes necessitated by COVID-19 restrictions thus impacting the nature of 'the field'. Rather than attending Ethno Gatherings to conduct offline fieldwork, I was now engaging in fieldwork online. As my online research was influenced by my offline experiences, the method I used falls within hybrid ethnography (Przybylski, 2021).

A major limitation to this project has been accessibility to less visible participants in online activities (Hine, 2015) meaning my interview participants are predominantly Ethno organizers and Artistic Mentors, the people managing and facilitating programmes instead of participants engaging with the events (Gibson, 2021). Furthermore, Boellstorff, Nardi, Pearse and Taylor (2012, p. 92) write 'interviews in isolation are insufficient to constitute ethnographic research. In part this is because of the difference between what people "say" and what people "do"'. With this concern in mind, I have triangulated interview responses to YouTube videos documenting events that I could not attend, and participated as an online participant observer in the Hope Sessions and as a member of the Environment Sub-Committee of the Ethno Committee.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

I interviewed fourteen participants for this project. 7 male and 7 female. 5 spoke English as a first language. I shared my research questions with participants prior to interview, to support those who spoke English as a second or third language and allow them to prepare for the questions. All the names of research participants have been anonymized.

Interviews were semi-structured with open ended questions. They ranged from fifteen minutes to one hour and were all conducted online. One interview was a group interview comprising three participants. Two participants preferred to communicate via e-mail correspondence due to the time-difference between their region and where I lived. Of these participants, one responded to research questions via an email, whilst the other agreed to write field notes during a Hope Session and forward them to me. The following table lists a brief profile of the research participants who were interviewed.

Table 1: Research Participants

Pseudonym	Interview Date	English 1st / 2nd language	Gender	Role	Nationality	Online Event
Advik	04 Jun 2020	2nd	M	Co-ordinator / Artistic mentor	India	Hope Sessions
Rohan	12 Oct 2020	2nd	M	Co-ordinator / Artistic mentor	India	Hope Sessions and Exchange Sessions
Ryan	17 Sep 2020	1st	M	Co-ordinator	USA	Exchange Sessions
Keerthi	27 May 2020	2nd	F	Artistic Mentor	India	Hope Sessions
Andrik	05 Jun 2020	2nd	M	Artistic Mentor	Bosnia-Herzogovina	Hope Sessions
Pablo	26 Apr 2021	2nd	M	Co-ordinator / Artistic mentor	Chile	Ethno Chile
Isabella	26 Apr 2021	2nd	F	Co-ordinator / Artistic mentor	Chile	Ethno Chile
Maria	26 Apr 2021	2nd	F	Co-ordinator / Artistic mentor	Chile	Ethno Chile
Annya	21 May 2020	2nd	F	Artistic Mentor	Taiwan	Hope Sessions
Alice	12 Mar 2020	1st	F	Co-ordinator / Artistic mentor	England	Ethno England
Tara	17 May 2020	1st	F	Participant	New Zealand	Hope Sessions
John	26 May 2020	1st	M	Artistic Mentor	New Zealand	Hope Sessions
Eliise	29 May 2020	2nd	F	Participant	Estonia	Hope Sessions
Mason	21 May 2020	1st	M	Co-ordinator	New Zealand	Ethno Online

My research questions varied between participants depending on the purpose of the interview. Please see the appendix for the research questions.

THE FIELD

Most online data was drawn from the Ethno World Facebook page. Further Facebook pages investigated were Ethno USA, Ethno Brazil, Ethno Chile, Ethno Lebanon and Ethno England. I also cross-referenced information using the Ethno World YouTube page and observed Ethno World YouTube videos.

A unique element to this cyber-ethnographic fieldwork was my participant observation in the Hope Sessions, which occurred as 'real time' events hosted on Facebook between April and June 2020. These events were led by an Artistic Mentor who shared a tune online with the expectation that viewers would be playing along and learning the tune in their own homes. I participated in 9 sessions (1, 2, 10, 12, 20, 21, 24, 26) (Gibson, 2021, Gibson and Higgins, 2021).

Two other online programmes that received analysis were the Exchange Sessions (August- October 2020) and Ethno Chile (February-May 2021). These were selected as they represented a development of the Ethno World online context from teacher-led activities to more interactive activities.

Finally, I was also part of the Ethno Environment sub-committee of the Ethno Committee. Within this group I presented research findings and participated in designing proposals for responding to issues of environmental awareness for Ethno World. Through this group I learned about environmentally sustainable activities in which different Ethno Gatherings were engaging and received feedback on my research. I attended three online meetings.

TRIANGULATION AND DATA ANALYSIS

Data gathered from the interviews was triangulated with cyber-ethnographic data. Thematic analysis was undertaken making use of the NVIVO software tool. Analysis was progressive due to the concurrent dissemination of research, meaning that I first analysed the Hope Session field data, responded to academic feedback and disseminated the findings (Gibson and Higgins, 2021). Themes drawn from that analysis were: artistic practice in a new ecological environment, online engagement and collaborations, accessibility and inclusivity, and online engagement and intercultural exchange. I then began researching the Exchange Sessions which took place later in the year and repeated the process (Gibson, 2021). Themes drawn from this analysis were: the role of the artistic mentor, content driven not performance driven, process or product?, making sense of online music teaching and learning, and tensions between 'real-time' and 'recorded' musical practice, teaching and learning.

This final report includes an analysis of Ethno Chile, which took place in February 2021 with monthly sessions until May 2021. Themes for this report developed into: A New Space for Ethno World?, Professional Development, Carbon Footprints, and Intercultural Exchange and sustainable practices: What holds Ethno together?

I also shared research findings at an Ethno organizers training session (OAT) in December 2020 and at Environmental subcommittee meetings to receive feedback from Ethno organizers. This has resulted in a rigorous interrogation of key themes as Ethno World have adapted their online practice and academic scholarship has grown in understanding of musical practice during COVID-19. Ethical clearance for the project was granted by York St John University.

The Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

The closure of borders and restrictions to gatherings across the world has had a severe impact on Ethno World. Of the 23 Ethno Gatherings that were scheduled for 2020, 16 were cancelled or postponed. Four of these Gatherings, New Zealand, Winter Ethno Estonia, Ethno France, and Ethno India occurred prior to the introduction of COVID-19 restrictions. Of these three events Ethno India was the only one impacted by the introduction of Government restrictions on public gatherings. Ethno India performed without a live audience and streamed their final concert on-line. Participants also began re-scheduling their flights home over concerns of border closures.

Table 2: Impact of COVID-19 restrictions on Ethno Gatherings

Gathering	Delivery
New Zealand	Occurred
Winter Ethno Estonia	Occurred
Ethno France	Occurred
Ethno India	Occurred
Malawi	Cancelled
Tunisia	Cancelled
England	Cancelled
Sweden	Cancelled
EthnoFest	Postponed
Cyprus	Cancelled
Finland	Cancelled
Croatia	Occurred
Catalonia	Cancelled
Estonia	Occurred
Portugal	Cancelled
Denmark	Cancelled
Sicily	Occurred
Flanders	Cancelled
Brazil	Cancelled
Germany	Cancelled
Uganda	Cancelled
Solomon	Cancelled
Ethnofonik	Cancelled

Ethno's response to COVID-19 has been two-fold. A variety of activities were arranged online, and, as countries began to loosen restrictions, some Gatherings did occur with a focus on local participants.

Three types of online activities occurred: Workshops, podcasts, and collaborations. Workshops focused on on-line teaching of folk songs and included, The Hope Sessions, Ethno Chile, Cities in Tandem music workshops and Ethno Lebanon (Table Three: Online projects).

Table 3: Online Projects

What	Who	When	Name	Description
Collaborations	Ethno Brazil	During 2020	None mentioned	Ethno participants worked together to create online videos
	Ethno USA	August 2020	Ethno Exchange	
	Ethno participants	Ongoing	N/A	
Podcasts	Ethno Experience	May – July 2020	Ethno Experience Podcasts	"Chit chat session" while Gatherings were cancelled
	Ethno World	December 2020 ongoing	Ethno World Podcasts	Interviews with members of the Ethno network
Workshops	Ethno World	April – June 2020	Hope Sessions	online tune learning sessions
	Ethno Chile	February – May 2021	Ethno Chile 'onlive'	blended online / offline Gathering
	Ethno England	24 October – 5 December 2020	Cities in Tandem music workshops	Series of four musical workshops learning a traditional tune / song with a musician from one of the eight Twin cities of Oxford
	Ethno Lebanon	July 2021	Ethno Lebanon	Music workshop

The Hope Sessions were the only workshops that were presented for free via Facebook "live" stream. For the remainder, participants needed to apply, and sessions occurred on chat streaming services (such as Zoom). Podcasts comprised interviews and conversations with members of the Ethno Network, arranged by Ethno Experience, an organization of past Ethno participants, and Ethno World (Ethno World Podcasts, N.D.). Online collaborations involved the virtual creation of a piece of music. Two collaborations were initiated by Ethno Brazil and Ethno USA, whilst there were also independent collaborations between Ethno participants.

I focussed on three online activities as case studies: The Hope Sessions, The Exchange Sessions, and Ethno Chile.

THE HOPE SESSIONS

The Hope Sessions occurred from April 6 until June 28, 2020. Forty sessions took place over twelve weeks. They were the first online Ethno initiative and aimed to provide 'hope and good feelings' to the Ethno network (Advik Interview, 4th June 2020). The initiator of the idea, Advik, noticed that musicians were struggling with negativity due to the impact COVID-19 restrictions were having on their livelihood. He felt that 'if you are a musician and have something to learn, then that will keep your mind busy. But, if you don't have anything, then negative thoughts will come and trouble you (Advik, Interview, 4th June 2020).

The Sessions were streamed live via Ethno World's Facebook page. A workshop leader would teach a tune and participants would have a chance to ask questions or respond to the learning via the Facebook chat platform. The chat was facilitated by either Advik or Rohan to support the workshop leader. Folk tunes were presented from 27 countries. When the Sessions were completed, they were uploaded to Ethno World's YouTube page. They also remain available to view on Ethno World's Facebook page. Views of the videos on both Facebook and YouTube range from 35–6.8k.

Ethno World's YouTube page describes the objectives of the sessions as: To start online tune-learning sessions by experienced Ethno organizers and artistic leaders; To build a spirit of positivity during this time; To connect Ethno musicians worldwide via this initiative; To create a digital library of songs / tunes from around the world that people of all ages can learn from (Ethno World, 2020).

The Hope Sessions were free for anyone to view on Facebook, raising the online profile of Ethno. They were also an opportunity to showcase Artistic Mentors. But, for Advik, another motivation was to keep the Ethno connected and motivated during the COVID-19 lockdown of 2020 (Interview, 4th June 2020).

THE EXCHANGE SESSIONS

The first Ethno USA Gathering had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic and, in response, Ethno USA arranged the Exchange Sessions. US folk musicians were paired with musicians from a different folk musician in another part of the world. They were then asked to create a song that represented the musical cultures they embodied (Rohan, Interview, 12th October 2020).

Six musicians were selected: three male and three female. One pairing shared an interest in folk dance music from their respective musical cultures; another were both from an Indian heritage, but one was an Irish folk musician living in the US, and the other, an Indian vocalist living in India. The final couple were both indigenous musicians, but they engaged with popular and indigenous musical styles.

The Sessions all took place online. Participants used a scratch track technique, where one person sends a recording to another person and that person uses the first recording as a guide for their recording. The tracks were then merged by the Ethno organizer to create an ensemble performance. Participants were asked to prepare their arrangement within a specified timeframe. They received three facilitated sessions but were encouraged to arrange their own times to meet and work together. Upon reflection, Ryan, the organizer, explained that some groups met regularly, whilst others only a few times. Ryan's aim was to connect the musicians, but allow them autonomy in their collaborations, which he felt aligned with the Ethno Ethos (Interview, 17th September 2020). The organizers of the event felt that the final result was not what they were expecting. Rohan, one of the organizers, felt that the Ethno Exchange was an opportunity to enable people, rather than have predefined standards for the performance. He explained:

> **A young student may not be able to afford to travel from India to the United States to collaborate with a concertina player. This has now become possible [through the Exchange sessions]. When I listen to that music, I feel that you don't miss the fact that they didn't physically meet. [The composition is] young, it's a little bit tentative, but that's normal for the first meeting. But there is a story there and it's lovely to watch. We want to enable, we want to encourage, we don't have a predefined standards by which we are going to judge. But rather, we want to put it out and share with the world what is happening, and if that sparks dozens of other collaborations then I think we are on our way to doing what we do best, which is enabling (Interview, 12th October 2020).**

The Exchange Sessions drew attention to the role of the Artistic Mentor in steering participants towards a final performance goal. They also highlighted how digital audiences have a particular expectation regarding the standard of music they will watch and listen to, which challenged some of the participatory musical objectives of Ethno (Gibson, 2021).

ETHNO CHILE 'ONLIVE'

Ethno Chile was the first Ethno to hold an online gathering which they called Ethno Chile 'Onlive'. As this was to be the first official Ethno in Chile, it was important to the organizers to ensure that one happened because they did not want to 'lose the opportunity' (Interview, 26 April 2021). In prior years, they have held 'unofficial' Ethno's called ChilEtno. They had a few plans in place depending on the level of restrictions in the country, ranging from an Ethno without restrictions to one that would need to happen completely online. They were able to draw participants from local and international regions. According to their documentary, over forty people participated in the online event (Ethno World, 2021). Ethno Chile also tried to find international people based in the region to participate. One of their workshop leaders was Colombian and living in Chile at the time. She presented an offline workshop and participated in the offline event.

The Ethno comprised of three days of online sessions (via zoom) and two days of offline rehearsals. The offline rehearsals were to prepare for a concert at Parque Cultural de Valparaiso. There were six workshops learning tunes from Armenia, Estonia, Mongolia, Iran, Rapa Nui, and Haiti. A seventh offline workshop occurred, learning a song from Colombia. There were further sessions called 'section rehearsals / chill' each day, which allowed for a focus on socialising. Due to the time difference, not everyone could feasibly attend the third session. Prior to the first workshop, they had 'morning tunes' where everyone present could share some of their own music. Participants were also sent emails at the end of each session with links to tunes to help them learn them.

The event was not as peer-to-peer directed as an offline Gathering as not everyone in the workshop was sharing at tune, which was a decision made due to the limited time and schedule. However, there were some advantages to having an online Ethno. The organizers tried to use the online platform to their advantage and incorporate ideas that would not normally be possible at an offline Ethno. As Pablo explained, 'instead replicating every experience, you replace them, or try to bring some different concepts'.

One of the advantages were the opportunity to have an interpreter for people who could not speak English. The organizers recognised that some 'good Ethno candidates' are prevented from attending Ethno because they are not skilled in speaking English. During the online sessions, they invited a workshop leader from the Easter Island Rapa Nui. She presented her workshop in Spanish, which was focused on her culture, rather than learning a song. Pedro reflects that 'you cannot ask someone from Easter Island to have perfect English and tell the world how she lived' (Interview, 26 April, 2021). They had translators interpreting from Spanish to English during the session, using one of the tools available on zoom. They reflect that this was 'something that could not have been done at all in a normal Ethno' (Pedro, Interview, 26 April, 2021).

The Ethno Chile organizers also took the opportunity to innovate on the usual Ethno process. As they had asked people who were not based in Chile to teach tunes during the online workshops, they had local leaders (song leaders) who were 'in charge of making the tune work live'. The song leaders were responsible for making sure that the tune taught by the international workshop leader would be performed effectively during their live performance. The Ethno Chile organizers felt that this approach created a connection between the people who were engaging online and offline. They comment that it helped to 'blend the relationship' (Isabella, Interview, 26 April 2021). The song leader was not an Artistic Mentors, as they were not arranging the song. They were aiming to respect the wishes of the workshop leader and performing it in the same way it was taught. They were also only responsible for one or two songs, unlike Artistic Mentors who are responsible for an entire programme.

Organizers also noted that as tunes were being rehearsed with microphones off, participants could not hear each other make mistakes, which they felt helped create a 'safe space' as no one could be judged by anyone hearing them play. This was important to them, and they encouraged participants to keep their screens on, so that they could observe their facial expressions and see which participants looked confident to play extracts to the rest of the group. They planned for people to play extracts they were learning in front of everyone to encourage some group interaction. However, they did not want to put anyone on the spot so they 'checked in' with people via the chat to see if anyone wanted to share what they were playing and also watched people on their screens to take cues from their facial expressions. Participation was encouraged not by playing at the same time together but listening to each other play sections they were learning. They were also encouraged to play parts they had just learned while the workshop leader taught a harmony, which created a sense of ensemble, something that one participant had missed during the Hope Sessions, who wrote 'I love the feeling of playing with the comp section and the way that a tune takes off when the guitarists get their chords under their fingers, the bassist finds their line and the percussionists get into their groove' (Tara, e-mail correspondence, 17th May 2020).

Ethno Chile had one 'pop up' performance at a park in the gardens of Parque Cultural de Valparaiso. To manage numbers because of COVID-19 restrictions, they did not advertise the event so only people who were in the park at the time heard the concert. They had mentioned to friends that the event was happening, but participants only invited one or two people were to keep the numbers down. According to Isabella (Interview 26th April 2021) the concert surprised the audience and it was seen as a 'gift' and as a 'very friendly show'. Pedro adds that usually they focus on creating a high standard of performance in ChilEtno, but due to the circumstances they decided not to focus on an excellent concert, so the event did not feel pressurised in the way previous concerts have felt. They also only had a day and a half to prepare for the event, and felt they needed to be realistic about what they could achieve in such a short period. The feedback was that participants enjoyed performing in a concert again after the lockdown period and the audience were surprised to hear a concert in the park. For Pedro, it was 'a nice moment', whilst Maria felt that in the context of the pandemic and having not performed for a year, it was a great experience (Interview, 26th April 2021).

Due to the positive experience and feedback from participants, they decided to hold three more after-Ethno online meetings. They held one a month in March, April and May and have also created one online collaborative music video.

Upon reflection, the organizers say they were nervous about whether the people would feel the 'vibe' in an online event. Pedro recalls the start of the first session when an Ethno participant said, 'I've never been so excited about a zoom meeting'. That was a pivotal memory for him, because the 'zoom meeting' atmosphere and its relation to attending meetings for work switched from 'let's just meet by zoom because we have no alternative' to 'okay, I'm excited about it, I want to be here' (Pedro, Interview, 26th April 2021).

A sense of gratitude was also expressed during a film clip when one of the participants described the event as 'as close to an Ethno as possible, but online, and I appreciate that a lot'(Ethno World, 2021). It was a first Ethno experience for Maria. Upon reflection, she felt that even though it was a blended Ethno, and not the full offline Gathering, she still found it to be a powerful experience, saying,

> **Working this week with the team and meeting new people, learning music and organising. All that stress to organize it and it was like a little bubble, you know. For just a week we didn't think about the Coronavirus much and it was a really powerful experience (Interview, 26th April 2021).**

It appears that Ethno Chile were able to create an event that was appreciated by participants, especially those who were able to perform after such a long period without live performance opportunities during lockdown.

A New Space
for Ethno World?

A friend of ours, she has her own songs. And when she sings
[to us offline], she always makes us cry. But now, [during Ethno
Chile], she made it happen virtually and it was super special for
me. Because when she sang her song, I felt like we're doing the
Ethno, we're here, the people are here and everything's working.
And the whole year of preparation felt like it paid off at that
moment. Like, this is why we were doing this. This is a special
moment. This is the moment when we say it was worth it. And,
when she talked to us, she explained that she had two week's
vacation and had to be in lockdown. So, the Ethno was the best
thing that could have happened to her at that time. So, what I
can take from the Ethno online experience was that people felt
accompanied with someone in another part of the world, living the
same struggles and stresses of the pandemic. So, what was really
special was that we could actually be connected. Even though we
were not meeting in person, I felt we did feel the bubble, but with
everyone at home and safe. (Isabella, 26th April 2021).

The interview extract above reflects how Ethno Chile were able to create a feeling of
connection through their online Gathering. For a week they were able to connect with
friends and forget about the stress related to the pandemic. They had also managed to
hold an International Gathering whilst keeping all the participants safe. There are examples
in the literature of successful online folk music networks (Keegan-Phipps and Wright
2020; Tobias 2020; Kenny 2016; Waldron 2016; 2018; Waldron, Horsley, and Veblen
2020). Miller (2012) and Waldron (2018) both note the value of online musical practices
in that they provide access to people who may not have the resources to participate in
face-to-face music lessons or group activities. Academic research acknowledges that
they do not replace offline Gatherings, but they are able to keep musicians learning and
engaged with one another when they are not able to meet (Kenny, 2016; Waldron, 2012;
2016). As Keerthi reflected, 'it's beautiful to see that the community can come together
virtually and share knowledge' (Interview, 27th May 2020). Tara also mentioned that when
she said 'hello' to people in the chat box during the Hope Sessions and people responded
with an emoji, she was able to feel a 'connection to a friend in the Ethno community, albeit
momentarily' (e-mail correspondence, 17th May 2020).

For some participants the online learning can be a safe place to learn. Ethno Chile noted how some participants were not as worried about making mistakes because they were practicing in their own home and nobody could hear them (Pablo, Isabella, Maria, Interview, 26 April 2021). Another aspect about online learning brought up by Hope Session facilitators was that participants can watch videos at their leisure by pausing videos to practice sections of music, or, rewinding videos to listen to parts again. In this respect, online learning supports an informal learning style where participants have more control over the learning process (Green, 2002; 2008; Waldron, 2016; Higgins and Willingham, 2017). The freedom of access to information as well as general accessibility is one of the greatest advantages of an online community (Miller, 2012; Schippers and Grant, 2016; Waldron, 2018).

Online Gatherings allow participants access to Gatherings when they may not be able to attend in person. In some instances, this may be for financial reasons, but it can also be because of difficulty getting visas to attend Gatherings, another problem for participants from countries classified as in the 'Global South'. It was clear from the interviews that the online Hope Sessions also increased visibility of Ethno, as people who had not heard of the programme were watching the Hope Sessions on Facebook (Annya, Interview, 21st May 2020; Andrik, Interview, 5th June 2020). Online collaborations between people from different regions are already acknowledged as being beneficial (Josef, Nethsinghe and Cabedo-Mas, 2020; Klopper, 2010). The only caveat being the importance of skilled facilitators to support the technical complications (Josef, Nethsinghe and Cabedo-Mas, 2020; Klopper, 2010) and the necessity to provide some training in effective online engagement to participants (Tobias, 2020). These conclusions support the suggestion that the online platform is a new field in which people need to acquire skills to learn how to succeed (Gibson, 2021).

It has been interesting to follow the progression of online Ethno events since March 2021. Beginning with the Hope Sessions, where there was a recognition that the network missed collaborating with one another in the music-making process. As a consequence, Ethno participants began creating their own musical collaborations, which was attributed by some to having made a connection by seeing someone participating at a Hope Session. Ethno Exchange continued to explore online collaborations, with a realisation for the need for some facilitated support in the creation of musical pieces as well as the need for more training in studio recording work. Ethno Chile appears to be a combination of previous projects, managing to achieve a feeling of connection and liminality that participants refer to at the Gatherings.

Interviews reveal that organizers and artistic mentors are already imagining what a virtual Ethno might look like. Mason reflects that the COVID-19 restrictions allowed the network 'to sit for a second and say, what do these new technologies give us, and, when we go back to a normal now, how could we better utilise them?' (Mason, interview, 21st May 2020) Ideas include Exchange Session artists sharing their hybrid music on an accessible platform (Ryan, Interview, 17th September 2020); further opportunities for documenting and broadcasting Ethno's programme (Mason, interview, 21st May 2020) such as participants teaching songs they have taught at Gatherings online as a form of documentation; and, paid online workshop sessions (Keerthi, Interview, 27th May 2020).

A big question for Ethno will be the intention behind their music making, where participatory focus is more difficult (Gibson, 2021). The expectations of online audiences are for a more polished performance compared to their audiences at Gatherings, which impacts the peer-to-peer learning process of Ethno, where everyone is encouraged to participate rather than focus on achieving a particular standard. They also need to consider whether their intention is a music-making and learning experience, or one more focused on intercultural exchange, and arrange their workshops accordingly. Where it was possible to learn about the culture and background of different musicians at the periphery of music-making sessions at Gatherings (during meals, while walking to different events, or relaxing in the evenings) this needs more conscious scheduling during an online session. As Ryan reflects,

> I think that so much of the ethno experience is about being in person and it's about the food and these like, wonderfully in person experiences that are super important. And they really are part of making the magic but I also think that in putting things into a digital form, I don't want to say that it kind of like intellectualises things, but I think that it streamlines things in a way that could actually potentially make time and space to have some of the larger conversations around culture and identity because we're kind of more efficiently meeting and it's not so much about the literal journey, but if we have the time to be together and to use digital tools, I think there could be an enhancement of the ethnomusicological conversations that could be happening and are happening (Interview, 17th September 2020).

There are online folk music communities, such as the Online Academy of Irish Music (Waldron, 2016), that allow space for engagement both online and offline. This could be a positive innovation for Ethno World, should they decide to continue with their online programmes.

Professional Development

Another theme drawn from the data was the necessity to change pedagogical approach due to online platforms occurring in a digital environment, and, that the technical elements of an online platform often inhibited the experience. This could have been because artistic mentors felt that their microphone was not good enough, or because they only had access to mobile phones to make their recordings (Andrik, Interview, 5th June 2020; John, e-mail correspondence, 26th May 2020; Pedro, Interview, 26th April 2021). There was also difficulty with lag, and messages from participants taking time to be seen by the artistic mentor, slowing the pace of the Hope Sessions (Annya, Interview, 21st May 2020; John, e-mail correspondence, 26th May 2020). Organizers mentioned the length of time it took to prepare Sessions or manage the production of digital products. Generally, there was a call for more training in technological approaches. Indeed, Rohan reflected that technological training was becoming a 'felt need' for the folk musician because they were now being asked to record their work, which was previously done by a studio (Interview, 12th October 2020).

At the same time, the Hope Sessions in particular provided an opportunity for artistic mentors to develop their online teaching skills and improve their confidence with the delivery of such workshops (Gibson and Higgins, 2021). All the Artistic mentors in the Hope Sessions commented on the confidence the experience gave them, in spite of initially feeling nervous about presenting a session online. The Hope Sessions as an initiative is reflective of Bandura's notions of building collective efficacy (Bandura, 1995), providing some agency to the Ethno network and, supporting the wellbeing of their community (Welch, et al, 2020).

A final note regarding the Ethno organizers and Artistic mentors is that they were not paid for their facilitation of the Hope Sessions. The reliance on a voluntary network for a project of this scope is a large demand on people's time and needs to be equated into considerations regarding the professionalization of Ethno, should this be a direction stakeholders in the project wish to pursue. Two research participants did suggest that a donation be made towards Sessions should Ethno wish to continue with online programmes such as these. One felt it might help to engage people more, as they were making a financial investment (Keerthi, Interview, 27th May 2020) whilst the other felt it might be an initiative that needs a 'good intention' such as a donation towards planting trees to offset carbon emissions participants use by flying to different Gatherings (Advik, Interview, 4th June 2020).

Carbon footprints and intercultural exchange

On the one hand, I feel as though the social impact is a greater gain than the negative carbon impact if Ethno is really achieving what its aims. As the climate emergency gets worse, the social problems are only going to get worse as well, especially if we have climate refugees coming from India or Africa to Europe because it's the only land that's inhabitable anymore. Then we're going to need to be welcoming and peaceful and less divided than we are now to cope with it. But that really is only justifiable under the climate emergency if we're truly achieving intercultural understanding. The other feeling I have in totally the opposite direction is that we could be doing this project without anybody flying anywhere if we just got better at reaching out to the migrant communities where we are (Alice, Interview, 12th March 2020)

Alice highlights the conundrum that Ethno World faces. Meeting together in an offline setting is a key element to intercultural engagement for Ethno. Particularly as intercultural exchange occurs on the periphery of the musical activities, when participants are sharing meals together, jamming together, or relaxing with one another between sessions.

Meetings with the Environmental sub-committee of Ethno organizers revealed that environmental sustainability is contextual to the different Gatherings and their surrounding areas. The location of Ethnos in areas of natural beauty already enhances a connection to nature. Some Ethnos, such as Ethno New Zealand, elaborate on this further by encouraging composition activities inspired by nature. Regarding direct environmental sustainability, this is variable according to the size of the Gathering and sustainable infrastructure already embedded into local communities. Ethno England was particularly environmentally conscious. For their 2019 Gathering, they camped in a field in Oxford. They provided biodegradable shower gel and hired compost toilets. Food was collected from the food bank. The aim of the organizer is a personal aim of not making a huge environmental impact, and a hope that she makes participants more aware of their own impact on the environment (Alice, Interview, 12th March 2020). Ethno England also offers a reduced fee for people who do not fly to the Gathering.

The Mobility Grant has raised some questions over choosing sustainable options for travel. The co-ordinator explained that if 'we enable one person to travel ecologically with a £1000 train ticket and the flight is £300, then we've prevented two other people from travelling. So, we have to balance those considerations' (Rohan, Interview, 12th October 2020). Online programmes are one way to continue the Ethno programme and be conscious of carbon expenditures. Ryan reflects:

I think that over the next fifty years there's going to be need for justification of travel and carbon expenditures. So, I think that [these online projects] are a great way to enhance and enrich what's been happening and create some new tools and frameworks that can be disseminated across the [Ethno] network (Interview, 17th September 2020).

Some Ethno participants are personally motivated. Research participants shared anecdotal stories such as a woman who planted trees to offset the amount of carbon emissions her flight to India would use, or one who cycled from Belgium to Slovenia. However, as an organization there is no agreed response to carbon emissions expenditure. There was some discussion in the Environment sub-committee meetings about starting to raise funds to plant trees through the Ethno World website, but this has yet to be ratified by the entire Ethno Committee.

Perhaps the biggest question for Ethno is whether they only focus on the integration of diverse communities within a region. Some Ethno Gatherings have responded by holding National Ethno's that have been open to people who live within a region whilst borders have been closed. This was an approach taken by Ethno New Zealand in 2021 who have a diverse migrant population. It is also something that Alice reflects on in the opening quote and was something that participants in Ethno on the Road reflected upon (Gibson, 2021). It is important to place a word of caution when focusing on a National Ethno, however. Music within a National context has a painful history, particularly within the Nazi regime (Hess, 2021; Turino, 2008). Within this caution, however, Hess (2021) emphasises the 'giving voices to experiences, recognizing and naming the conditions that shape those experiences, coming face-to-face with the humanity of others, and imagining different possible futures position musicking as an important contribution indeed.' Magnus Bäckstrom (Interview, 2020), founder of Ethno, has also observed an attempted shift to use folk music in Sweden as a tool for divisive Nationalist politics. He feels that the last thirty years of the Ethno programme in Sweden has acted as a 'vaccine' to prevent young folk musicians from responding to this approach reflecting the positive influence Ethno could have in this area.

Alice emphasizes the importance of 'doing it right' (Interview, 12th March 2020). Ethnographic research in New Zealand highlighted some examples of connecting sustainable environmental practice with the Ethno Gathering. In this instance, we were being hosted by the Maori community whose approach to environmental sustainability was central. An afternoon of weaving opened my eyes to an attitude of respectfulness towards the earth and patience towards the use of resources that has profoundly

impacted my personal attitude towards wastefulness. Learning from indigenous communities about sustainable approaches to the environment is a growing area of research in Ethnomusicology (Impey, 2018) and something modelled by Ethno New Zealand that has the potential to be incorporated into other Ethno Gatherings.

Based on these examples it is clear that Ethno has the potential for developing the environmental awareness of their participants by incorporating indigenous sustainable practices and drawing attention to the natural environment through musical activities at the Gatherings. Serious consideration needs to be made regarding the amount of international travel perhaps by focusing on who within the network would benefit most from the experience (Grant, 2018). Whilst offsetting emissions is a serious necessity, so is maintaining connections between people, for, as Hess (2021, N.P) argues, 'seeing, recognizing, and honouring the humanity in all provides an impetus for change'.

Sustainable practices: What holds Ethno together?

Ethno is a very human centred programme. One year a gathering may have a group of musicians who are super focused and want to learn as many songs as possible. And they're all talking about music theory and so on. Then, sometimes, it's groups who just want to hug each other and learn five songs over the course of ten days. (Ryan Interview, 17th September 2020)

One factor that distinguishes Ethno is that it is not a musical culture, per se, but a musical practice. Ethno is not promoting a particular musical style, but a manner of engaging with multiple folk music practices. This can complicate the sustainability of the practice, as the focus is not preserving a musical instrument or folk tune, but a method of interaction between people. What Ryan draws attention to in his comment above is the organic nature of an Ethno Gathering, something Rohan also felt was an important element of Ethno (Interview, 12th October 2020).

Changes in context allow for an opportunity to reflect on the distinguishing features of a practice, which Schippers and Grant (2016) refer to as a recontextualization. Becoming aware of what makes a practice distinct provides an opportunity to refine practice (Schippers and Grant, 2016). When Ethno Chile were reflecting on the elements that were essential to their online workshop they identified the need to have people from different nationalities; exposing participants to the music of the host country; respect for other cultures and a variety of music to learn. Once they had identified these key features, they were able to further refine the practice based on being situated in an online, rather than an offline event. For example, they were able to develop Ethno by providing interpreters for their workshops, increasing accessibility to the programme for people who do not speak English.

In terms of pedagogy, the Hope Sessions allowed Artistic mentors to focus more on their knowledge of their practice (Keerthi, Interview, 27th May 2020; Advik, Interview, 4th June 2020). They were able to 'dig deeper' into their musical traditions by focussing on concepts that there is often not time for during Gatherings. Annya felt that sessions where Artistic Mentors had explained rudiments behind their music were more interesting, which was why she decided to take that approach with her session (Interview, 21st May 2020). The opportunity for more cultural contextualization during the online programmes meets a need that was felt to be missing by some participants at Ethno Gatherings, enabling further intercultural understanding and further fulfilling one of the aims of Ethno World.

The transition to online Ethno programmes embraces the Ethno spirit of enabling and inspiring participants to take initiative with projects (Rohan, Interview, 12th October 2020). Most notably this is in the manner that two of the three case studies presented were ideas brought to the Ethno head office by members of the network. Ethno Chile wanted to create an online event and Advik recognised a need that he thought Ethno could fulfil. These organizers then approached the head office for support.

There is a clear acknowledgement by all participants in the research that online Ethno events were not the same as the offline Gatherings, largely due to the immersive experience at the Gatherings (Rohan, Interview, 12th October 2020; Andrik, Interview, 5th June 2020, Tara, e-mail correspondence, 17th May 2020, John, e-mail correspondence, 26th May 2020, Annya, Interview, 21st May 2020). Rohan contrasted the experiences:

> **There were dozens of things happening at the same time in Ethno Sweden as you moved from the gym to the cafeteria. There were multiple jams in the gym, then as you left that building and walked through the pine trees, there were people rehearsing, then people in the courtyard smoking or playing basketball. As you entered the school building, there was a bit of jamming in the passage, then people playing table tennis in one room and then the office, which was buzzing. By the time you arrived in the cafeteria, there was like 6, 7, 8 different experiences that you could have in 15, 20, 30 seconds, as you're just walking. Online is one focused experience that you're committing to (Interview, 12th October 2020).**

Rohan provides a description of the immersive nature of a Gathering where it is hard to escape all the music and activity taken place and contrasts this with the single experience of one person in a room with an Artistic Mentor presenting a piece of music on-line, with a focus of learning one tune in a short period of time.

There were concerns over programmes not being 'peer-to-peer' and a loss in the relational side of Ethno, where there were fewer one-to-one interactions (Pablo, Interview, 26th April 2021). The online programmes could be considered as teaching sessions, rather than sharing sessions. The Exchange Session approached this concern by devising pairings for collaborative projects. This approach still requires some facilitation by artistic mentors, however, as the conclusions by the organizers appeared to be that some participants engaged in the process more than others. There were also concerns over the quality of the final product for an online audience, drawing attention to how the online context changes the audience-performer relationship (Gibson, 2021).

There is clear evidence that online programmes enabled a refinement of practice supporting a process of sustainable music practice, however, there remained a longing for a 'human' connection stressing the need for further innovations in sustainable offline Ethno Gatherings, or online events that further innovate on that aspect of Ethno.

Conclusion

The purpose of this report was to explore how the Ethno network has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through an analysis of three case studies, The Hope Sessions, Exchange Sessions, and Ethno Chile 'onlive' I have explored the approaches used by Ethno organizers as they adapted to online engagement. I have also engaged with the question of sustainability of Ethno, both in relation to the climate crisis and as a sustainable music practice.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Ethno has provided an opportunity to explore online engagement with Ethno participants. An online community can support offline events by providing materials for participants to learn new tunes, hold sessions where tunes are taught, and create networking opportunities for music collaborations. The online programmes can also showcase potential Artistic Mentors as candidates for Ethno Gatherings. Ethno online is also an opportunity to support their network in developing their technological skills, particularly around collaborative recordings. The case studies for this research have demonstrated further opportunities for accessibility, such as the multi-lingual sessions during Ethno Chile, and free online Hope Sessions.

Using an online platform has the potential to make Ethno more accessible as it does not require any travel. There are, however, limitations regarding Wi-Fi connectivity, access to high quality technical equipment for recordings, and, how time zone differences can impact who attends live events, risking an even greater divide between those nations with effective infrastructure and those nations in more complicated situations. However, the urgency of the climate crisis means that the innovations in online Ethno gatherings need to be developed and embraced alongside offline Ethno events to sustain not only the Ethno music practice, but peaceful relationships between diverse communities.

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Appendix

ETHNO CHILE 2021

What was the inspiration do an online and offline Ethno Chile this year?

How did you organize Ethno Chile 2021?

How much preparation and planning did it take?

How did you need to change your approach to teaching
and organising the Ethno for the online event?

What new skills did you need to learn?

How do you create the "Ethno atmosphere" online?

How are you creating the online musical collaborations?
Are you making videos / audio recordings?

How did you keep a connection between local and international participants?

Could you explain how Ethno Chile blended online and offline groups?

How did the live audience respond?

What was a highlight of Ethno Chile 2021?

What was a difficulty for Ethno Chile 2021?

What can an online Ethno offer the Ethno network?

Did participants feel it helped their wellbeing?
How has it supported them?

ETHNO EXCHANGE ORGANIZERS

How were the musicians selected?

What is a digital residency?

How is the digital residency being organized?

How are participants being facilitated?

How are the final premieres being presented?

What was the inspiration behind this idea?

What is the purpose / aim of the Exchange sessions?

How is it different to the Hope sessions?

Which aspects of the Ethno ethos are you focusing on?

How do you envision Ethno benefiting from online collaborations?
How do you balance excellence with inclusion?

What is your understanding of intercultural exchange?

How is intercultural exchange achieved through an online platform?

HOPE SESSION ARTISTIC MENTORS

What was your experience of leading a Hope session?

What benefits do you see the Hope sessions offering the Ethno community?

Do you see any drawbacks, or room for improvement?

How do you see the Hope sessions encouraging
intercultural exchange on an online platform?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO THE
HOPE SESSION ORGANIZERS

What was the inspiration to start the Hope sessions?

What is the aim of the Hope sessions?

ETHNO

RESEARCH

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