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FOUNDED IN 2011 BY WORLD-RENOWNED PERUVIAN TENOR JUAN DIEGO FLÓREZ, SINFONÍA POR EL PERÚ PROVIDES MUSIC EDUCATION TO UNDERPRIVILEGED YOUTH IN PERU, CURRENTLY SERVING MORE THAN 6,400 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN TEN REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY. THE ORGANIZATION WORKS TO UPLIFT VULNERABLE YOUTH AND ADVANCE SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH THE COLLECTIVE TEACHING AND PRACTICE OF MUSIC. IT RECENTLY LAUNCHED ITS FIRST-EVER CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN WITH THE HOPE OF BUILDING UPON ITS SUCCESSFUL AND INNOVATIVE MODEL OF SOCIAL INTERVENTION.

Since its founding in 2011 by Peruvian tenor Juan Diego Flórez, Sinfonía por el Perú has impacted the lives of over 30,000 underprivileged Peruvian children by providing them access to music education. The results of Sinfonía's approach, where music is at the center of a holistic intervention, are outlined in two experimental reports

commissioned in 2014 and 2018. The reports highlight lower rates of child labor and youth pregnancy, and higher rates of self-esteem and education attainment. Flórez explains, "Once the children feel appreciated and seen, they realize they can achieve great things for themselves and their community."

## A MODEL FOR SUCCESS

Currently, Sinfonía serves over 6,400 children and young people the age five and up. “Our musical training centers provide pedagogical artistic education based on programs, such as the choral program, taught by the chair of singing and choirs, instrumental programs, training programs in local Peruvian music, and the main ensembles,” explains Sinfonía’s CEO Gabriela Perona. Sinfonía also offers classes for kindergarten students and children with disabilities, as well as luthier training.

Classes take place at nucleos and módulos, or music centers located in ten regions throughout the country - from the northernmost region of Loreto to the southernmost region of Tacna. “We would like to be in 100% of our territory,” says Gabriela Perona. “But at this moment we are concentrating on supporting the centers that we currently operate.” Last year, that meant organizing a gradual transition back to in-person activities after two years of pandemic. COVID-19 had a particularly devastating impact in Peru, which at one point experienced the highest per capita death rate in the world.



2022 was an important year with several firsts for the organization. The Youth Orchestra, for example, went on its first international tour with Juan Diego Flórez, performing at several classical music festivals in Europe. “It was a huge success,” says Flórez, “because not only is the project a social project, but it also is a great musical project. Excellence is a very important factor for Sinfonía por el Perú.”

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Sinfonía organized its first-ever artist residency, which took place just outside of Cusco. The objective of this activity was to generate a space for introspection about the role of the musician and their artistic process. In addition, it promoted reflection on the potential and scope of music as an instrument of social transformation for children and infants, through the development of socioemotional skills, which is achieved by promoting the value of coexistence and fostering community spirit.

Without a doubt, the organization set the stage for its upward trajectory to have more students, programs, and outreach. The year also featured nearly one hundred performances in Peru and over 69,000 hours of music instruction.



#### **FOR A BETTER PERU**

Sustainability is key for growth, and both are priorities that led Sinfonía to form a partnership with the King Baudouin Foundation United States (KBFUS) and open the Friends of Sinfonía por el Perú. In addition, Sinfonía launched its first-ever crowdfunding campaign under the hashtag #SinfoníaPorUnPerúMejor (Symphony for a Better Peru), along with a new website and a comic book on violence against children.

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ELIMINATING VIOLENCE IN OUR CITIES."**

**- GABRIELA PERONA**

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The campaign provided a baseline of support abroad. "Outside of Peru, we have concluded that we need foreign audiences to know us, and we are working on a better understanding of these audiences, so that we know how to address them, what their interests are,

what type of content they would like to see, among other actions," says Perona.

Another result has been increased visibility within Peru. "At a national level, our action plan allowed us to achieve organizational brand positioning on the digital platforms where we have a presence," says Perona. "In addition, we generated a press and mass media campaign, strengthened with the support of Peruvian channels and media."

Ultimately, the goal is to expand Sinfonía's reach to every region in Peru and other countries. "In the future, we hope to have a presence in other countries through the internationalization of our social intervention model that allows us to take our philosophy and work in other societies where children and adolescents need the transforming power of music," says Perona.

#### **A SENSE OF URGENCY**

The timing is critical, after twelve years of relying on solely private donors, unlike El Sistema, which receives public funding. Perona explains that the decision to partner with KBFUS was prompted "by the search for



new opportunities and alliances that will allow us to build different ways to raise funds.”

Political and health crises have only added to a growing sense of urgency, with successive waves of nationwide protests against the authoritarian regime of an interim president coinciding with an economic downturn. “The reality of our country is difficult,” adds Perona. “Our philanthropic culture is incipient, and the current economic crisis reduces the commitment of different actors to non-profit organizations.” Nevertheless, Perona remains optimistic about the future: “We are on the right track, and we continue to promote and invite more people, companies, and institutions to join us in this great effort.”

### LOOKING AHEAD

In August, Sinfonía announced a new initiative together with the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights called “Symphony for Peace: Empowering Communities Against Violence” (Sinfonía por la Paz: Comunidades Empoderadas Contra la Violencia), which will serve approximately 1,000 children in three vulnerable communities in Lima suffering high rates of violence and poverty.

“Collective music education, equitable access to music, and the promotion of a harmonious coexistence in our nuclei are fundamental elements to create an environment conducive to promoting life projects, healthy environments, and community building,” explained Perona in a press release. “Music becomes an instrument capable of weaving a network of peace and eliminating violence in our cities.”

Ultimately, it is the success of the students, several of whom have earned opportunities to study abroad in the last year, that makes the mission of Sinfonía so rewarding. “One of the main achievements is witnessing the personal and educational growth of our beneficiaries,” says Perona. “Listening to their life stories from the voice of their fathers and mothers is inspiring and commits me even more to keep working for them.”

Flórez shares a similar sentiment: “Sinfonía por el Perú reminds me every day of how music has changed not only my life, but also the lives of thousands of children, offering them a new future full of hope.”

<https://sinfoniaporelperu.org/en/home/>

<https://www.every.org/asociacion-de-orquestas-infantiles-y-juveniles-del-peru>

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