

Dear Colleagues,

As Paulo Freire said,

'There's no such thing as neutral education. Education either functions as an instrument to bring about conformity or freedom.'

Any education approach or philosophy is only as strong as the people who carry it forward. It is with this ambition and spirit that we warmly invite you as changemakers in music for social action, to join us for our first Fire Up! in Europe. This follows AIM's Fire Up! editions in the USA and Brazil.

Fire Up! distils AIM's core approaches, developed in our intensive year-long Firebird Fellowship, into a compressed format that suits strong and inquiring teams seeking revitalisation and realignment as they strive together for social and educational change in their communities.

AIM in Athens

The welcome and shared vision of our colleagues at El Sistema Greece makes this possible, enabling this 4-day intensive to take place in their beautiful home of Athens, launching the next academic year from 1-4 September 2025, followed by 6-month action research project, led on the ground by you and guided by AIM.



From Angeliki Georgokosta at El Sistema Greece

Athens is a city where cultures converge, rhythms intertwine, and music thrives. At El Sistema Greece, we've built a dynamic intercultural community where education, inclusion, and artistry come together—offering a truly immersive experience. Fire Up! participants will engage with a living, breathing example of music for social action, gaining insights that will inspire and empower their own work. We can't wait to welcome you and design an experience that deeply connects you to this city, its people, and its vibrant musical landscape.

How to apply

For Fire Up! Europe we are seeking influential teachers and leaders in our field who continue to innovate, improve and share their best findings with generosity - especially those who are building their expertise as teacher trainers and may like to lead Fire Up! in the future - so we invite you to put forward your most curious, open-hearted and impactful team members for this project.

Please read the practical details for consideration and [the prospectus carefully](#), and if you are ready to apply, please complete the [application form](#) by 17 March 2025 on behalf of your team.

[Prospectus: Fire Up! Europe 2025](#)

[Application: Fire Up! Europe 2025](#)

Thank you

AIM has grown from within the vibrant field of music for social action and with the notable input of leaders from Europe's programs, and you can expect to see familiar faces facilitating Fire Up!

We want to thank our colleagues at Sistema Europe for promoting this event to the network, to our partners El Sistema Greece, and to the many colleagues in Europe helping AIM to evolve.

We hope you will join us.

Best wishes

Fiona Cunningham | AIM Director

Practical details for consideration:

People:

- There are 30 spaces in total, excluding places for our host, El Sistema Greece
 - You can bring between 2-5 people maximum per program, depending on interest levels.
 - You will need a good working command of English or Greek. There will be translation between these two languages but unfortunately we cannot provide translation for other languages.
 - We recommend proposing the most influential and open-minded members of your team, and those who need to regather at the start of your year to align - this is to maximise sharing and dissemination of the things you find valuable with as many other teachers in your program.
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Priorities:

Hopefully, we will be able to welcome representation from all programs who want to join us. If there is a much bigger response than expected, our selection will prioritise the following:

- Fit with AIM's mission and vision
 - Teachers and leaders who are moving the field forward and who show influence
 - Student and community impact potential or track record
 - Programs that show particular collaborative spirit in action
 - Program sustainability - programs with reasonably robust structures and teams
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Costs:

- All costs for the project are covered by AIM once your team is in Athens.
 - Additionally, AIM offers a €100 per person donation towards flights to Athens. If your program does not need this, we urge you to donate it back to us so we can help programs that could not otherwise come to join us.
 - You are responsible for booking your flights and getting the best possible deals. AIM will reimburse you for the donation we can make towards them.
 - Any visa and local transport costs within your country should be covered by your program.
 - If you choose to extend your stay or arrive early in Athens, this needs to be funded separately. AIM pays only for the days and nights of Fire Up! itself. While AIM does not facilitate this, it could be a good way to add on an extra day of bonding or planning in a beautiful and different environment with your core team.
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Other information:

- There is an artistic strand to the days, and we ask that all teaching artists bring their instruments or request instrument hire (large instruments).
- Weather in Athens is still hot at the start of September.