



# IETM Survey Results

*What are the three things about your working conditions that you would like to change tomorrow, if you could?*

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In the lead up to the **Innovate Cultural Policy Event**, which took place on **25 January 2023**, IETM invited its members to answer the following question via a survey: ***“What are the three things about your working conditions that you would like to change tomorrow, if you could?”***<sup>1</sup>



*The main thematic groups from the survey results*

1. The question was asked by Katja Katja Praznik in her article: “Which side are you on?” On Understanding Art as Labour and the Potential of Collective Organising of Art Workers”. See IETM publication [“Which Side are you one? - Ideas for Reaching Fair Working Conditions in the Arts”](#)

With over a hundred responses, the topic was clearly on the mind's of our members, despite the busy holiday period.

To little surprise, change in members' financial situation was the most prominent response from both those who are freelancers and those employed by an organisation. In particular, respondents aspired for long-term and stable financing and moving away from 'project generated' funding. They hoped for increased salaries and compensation for paid overtime, travel time and preparation work. **"Higher wages would attract a higher calibre of individuals, enable a deeper commitment and encourage a more diverse workforce to work within our fields,,** noted a respondent from Ireland.

Laws allowing better working conditions and the creation of a basic income for artists, as well as unemployment and retirement schemes for freelancers, were amongst proposed solutions. **"My current 'contracts for specific artwork' do not classify me for insurance, and I cannot afford to pay the insurance myself."** stressed a respondent from Poland. **"(I wish) to have clear laws that create better work conditions for non-governmental artists, organisations and companies"**, noted a member from Egypt.

Looking at public funding, respondents felt that there were too few grants available for independent companies and the existing ones not very accessible to smaller organisations. Respondents also suggested time spent on grant applications to be covered by the funding organisations. Artistic freedom was also raised as a key concern, as many members still face censorship. Several members also hoped for fairer dialogue with funding institutions and less political interference on cultural contents.

Finance was not the only topic of concern; as better work-life balance and the ability 'to switch-off' was also much desired. Administrative burden, including applying for funding, was also perceived as a plague by many respondents, preventing them from spending the necessary time on research and creative work.

Being part of a community and increased collaboration with peers and other sectors was also a recurrent response. **"I'd like to have a studio in a building shared with other artists and arts workers, rather than working from my spare room."** claimed a member from Ireland. **"I would like to introduce a culture of mindfulness, with rooms in which to rest, healthy eating places and an understanding of wellness and healthy work practices."** noted a respondent from South Africa.

The subject of diversity and equality in the sector also figured high in the responses, including equal pay for men and women in the same position and more equity between salaried staff and freelancers. In addition, several members deplored the lack of access for artists coming from lower socio-economic backgrounds and wished for better representation for artists coming from diverse ethnic backgrounds in the arts across Europe.

In addition, there were country specific wishes for change, such as cancelling the political conditions imposed by European donors on the work of performing arts organisations in Palestine. In the UK, several respondents deplored the dreadful impact of Brexit and suggested the creation of a global artists passport to encourage exchanges between the EU and the rest of the world. **"The resulting lack of meaningful access to European Funding and increased costs of producing and touring work has been seismic and something real."** stressed a member from Northern Ireland.

Finally, a couple of respondents expressed the wish for the sector to further address the Climate Crisis as it is also impacting working conditions. **"Focusing on a 'Just Transition' would put all equity, including gender, diversity and abilities into focus as we make our way to a fairer future. This is not simply about resource and energy use but also about the existential threat, embedded in local places, the natural world, the role of live performance and human connection in an increasingly digital world."** stressed a respondent from Australia.

# Conclusions

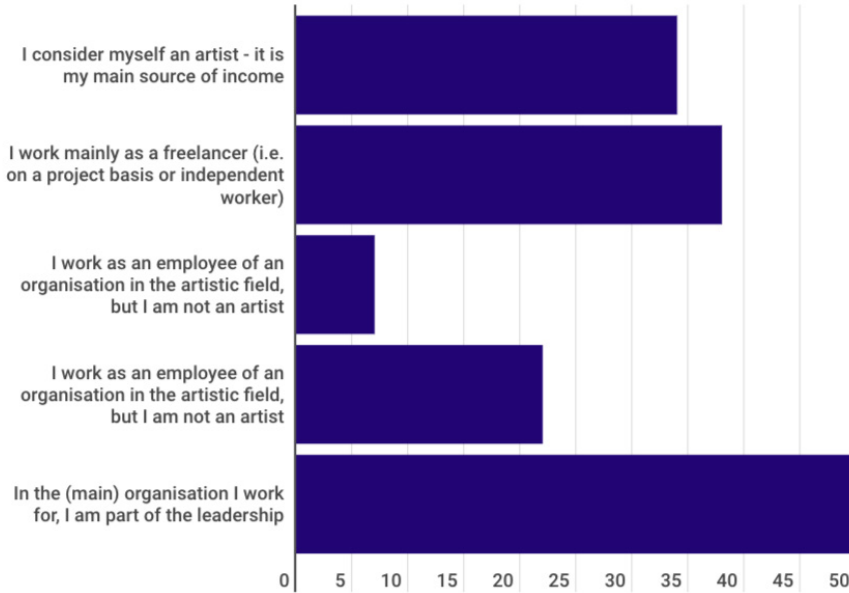
Working conditions are a key concern for the performing arts sector and will remain high on IETM’s agenda. In addition, in 2023 IETM’s thematic focus is on the green transition of the performing arts sector. This year, our meetings, programmes, projects and publications will explore different angles of how our sector can transition towards greener practices, with the goal to foster change in our members’ local contexts.

## Annex 1: Summary of most common challenges and opportunities from the survey answers

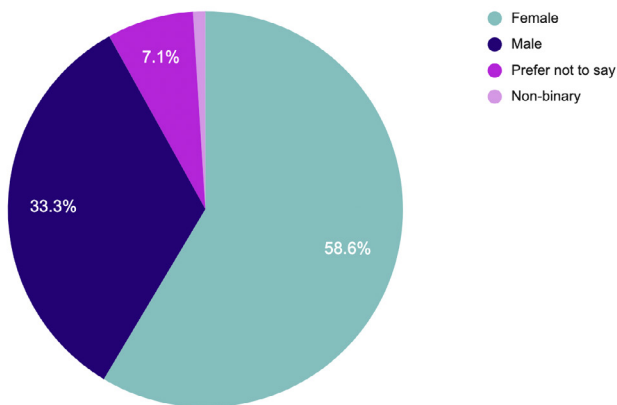


# Annex 2: Statistical data about the respondents

## 1. Professional situation



## 2. Gender



## 3. Country

