



# WISEAMP (Women in Sound Engineering and Music Production)

## Phase 2 Impact Study

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Background to the report**

WISEAMP (Women in Sound Engineering and Music Production) is a training programme for women in the north-west of England, based at the School of Sound Recording (SSR) in Manchester and supported by the European Social Fund (ESF). An introduction to the WISEAMP training programme, an outline of its aims, and a full description of the evaluation and the evaluation methodology were provided in the first evaluation report (October 2006) and are therefore not repeated here.

An evaluation report has been presented for each of the three phases of the WISEAMP training. This report is a supplement to the Phase 2 report and presents the findings of the impact study of the Phase 2 training.

### **1.2 The Phase 2 impact study**

The Phase 2 impact study followed up participants four months after they had completed the course in order to find out to what extent, if at all, their employment situations had changed and whether they regarded WISEAMP as a contributing factor to any of the changes.

A questionnaire had been designed for the Phase 1 impact study. For the Phase 2 impact study the same questionnaire was distributed to all participants to follow up their progress since the end of the Phase 2 training. The questionnaire covered topics such as professional development and the participants' thoughts about the relationship between the WISEAMP training and their employability. A follow-up questionnaire was sent to non-responders some weeks later. The overall response rate for this impact survey was the same as that for the Phase 1 impact survey. In Phase 1, 9 out of the 30 participants in that part of the training programme responded (30%). In Phase 2, with a different population of participants, again 9 out of 30 responded (30%).

## 2. Results of the impact study

### 2.1 Overview

Two thirds of the respondents remained in the same career situation as they had been in at the start of course. However, the majority of them had expanded their portfolios of work. They also reported that their professional skills and career aspirations had been given a boost by the WISEAMP training.

All respondents were actively looking for new employment openings in music or sound technology and felt that they were now better prepared to take advantage of these opportunities. Respondents felt that they had gained confidence, experience, skills and awareness of the job market.

There were some very positive comments about the value of the WISEAMP training and all respondents felt that it had been worthwhile.

### 2.2 Employment and career development in relation to the WISEAMP training

All nine respondents from the impact survey were currently in employment. Their areas of employment are diverse, but are shown as two main groups (“music/sound-related” and “other”) in the table below. More than half of the respondents were working with music or sound.

*Table 1: Current employment*

	No.
Music or sound-related (including singing/ vocal teaching, community music work, and radio work)	5
Other (including administration, customer services, marketing, disability support work, and computer software design and development)	5

Note: One respondent was doing work that fell into both categories

Respondents were asked whether their employment situation was the same as it had been when they completed or left the WISEAMP course. Six stated that it was the same; three said it had changed.

The three respondents whose employment situations had changed provided additional details about how their careers had developed since the WISEAMP training. Two had moved into employment which was not sound-related, from a situation of self-employment in one case and from unemployment in the other. For one of these women, doing the WISEAMP course had reminded her that she wished to dedicate her life to music. The second had taken up an employment opportunity outside music due to financial pressures.

The third had moved from a youth-work post into freelance work as a community musician. She felt she had gained confidence with music technology since doing the WISEAMP course. She had recently recorded a CD and had just been to Africa to record eleven youth choirs.

Comments from all those whose employment situations had stayed the same made it clear that their professional skills and career aspirations had been given a boost by the WISEAMP training. This suggests that the impact of the WISEAMP training is likely to increase in time as the participants continue to develop professionally and expand their portfolios of paid and unpaid work. Here are three examples of how this was already happening:

*I am currently preparing and rehearsing to start gigging regularly as a jazz/ popular singer. The WISEAMP course has given me the confidence and ability to control my own sound and PA set up which has allowed me to move away from just classical singing.*

*It has enabled me to start looking for alternative careers [dance music production] and working towards them in my free time.*

*Been able to run training courses with our volunteers in how to use and engineer ProTools.*

### 2.3 Impact on current working practice

In addition to having been asked about changes in employment status, respondents were also asked whether taking part in the WISEAMP training had made any difference to their current work or working practices. All respondents indicated that taking part in WISEAMP had influenced their current or planned employment, or how they work. The table below provides a summary of responses.

*Table 2: Influence of WISEAMP on current work*

	No.
Developed confidence/ independence	6
Developed technical skills	2
Revived musical/ creative interests	2
Made contacts/ networking	2
Doing more voluntary work now	1

Respondents were asked whether they were currently looking for additional employment. All nine respondents said that they were. All nine also gave an indication of what they were looking for, which included music/ sound or creative work in all cases. This suggests that the training had given the participants the confidence, expertise and motivation needed to seek to develop their careers in music and sound technology.

When the respondents were asked whether WISEAMP had helped them in looking for work, seven answered that it had. Again, four of them referred to a boost in confidence; others mentioned experience, skills and awareness of the job market and what employers are looking for.

## 2.4 Value of WISEAMP

Finally, respondents were asked whether, now that some time had passed, they thought it was worthwhile to have done the WISEAMP course. All respondents answered “yes” to this question. Although some mentioned their concerns about the pace and intensity of the course and the challenge of fitting it in around work and travel, the majority of them provided very positive comments about how they had valued WISEAMP. Here are some examples:

*I made great contacts, learned a lot and gained confidence.*

*It's made a huge difference to my understanding of music technology and has given me more confidence in my chosen career path.*

*It was a struggle to fit in around work and to travel so far but it has kick-started a very lethargic mind and career. I feel I have more confidence to aim for my ideal job now.*

*It was one of the most rewarding and exciting things I've ever done and it has helped me set priorities in my work life.*