

THE NATIONAL MUSIC COUNCIL

The national music council is defined by

- its principles
- its mission and objectives
- its structure
- its place in its society
- its methods

PRINCIPLES

A national music council subscribes to these principles as enunciated in the International Music Council Statutes:

2.11.1. the right for all children and adults to express themselves musically in all freedom;

2.11.2. the right for all children and adults to learn musical languages and skills;

2.11.3. the right for all children and adults to have access to musical involvement through participation, listening, creation, and information;

2.11.4. the right for musical artists to develop their artistry and communicate through all media, with proper facilities at their disposal;

2.11.5. the right for musical artists to obtain just recognition and remuneration for their work

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

The mission of a national music council is the advancement of music practice and musical life in its country.

The objectives are designed to contribute to achievement of the mission and will very much depend upon local circumstances. They are prioritised in accordance with an assessment of their effectiveness, related to effort or resources expended, in contributing to achievement of the mission.

The objectives might be concerned with improving:

- government policies in support of music, including funding, legislation and regulation
- copyright law and enforcement, royalty collection and distribution
- music education in the formal education system
- music in communities
- the situation for the creation and performance of music in a broad range of genres, including traditional genres
- public support for music education and music creation and performance
- music research
- recording industry (production, marketing, distribution)
- music broadcasting
- musical instrument production and sales
- music on the internet and new media
- local music in the international context
- other issues of local importance

STRUCTURE

The structure of the national music council can be expected to vary from country to country, culture to culture.

The national music council may be a non-government organisation or be an entity within government. Independence is desirable because an independent council is more free to advocate change and criticise government. (This freedom *may* be compromised if a council depends upon government for funding.) To be part of government may have the advantage of lending the ability to influence government from within, but there may be constraint on the freedom to criticise and advocate change.

In order to assist in gaining an understanding of the functioning of the entire music sector, and to be seen as properly representative of the entire music sector, the membership should include knowledgeable individuals or organisations representing, for instance, all the subsectors involved with the objectives listed above. Consideration should be given to inclusion of representatives of the national branches of international organisation members of IMC.

Some advocate strongly that the national music council should be independent with a democratically elected membership.

PLACE IN ITS SOCIETY

Through its membership, its principles, objectives and activities, the national music council earns a place in its society as the balanced and authoritative voice both for music as an artform and as part of the cultural industry.

It is called upon by governments for advice in developing music and music-related policies and legislation.

The music sector looks to the music council to be its main voice to government and to the international music community on matters of policy and principle.

The national music council has a place in bringing together the various interests in the music sector in order to create better understanding and cooperation.

METHODS

The national music council can act directly to achieve its objectives, or act indirectly by persuading others to work towards their achievement. In either case there is the prospect of acting through its members.

Indirect. Since the resources controlled by national music councils are normally much too limited to achieve national objectives, they may have greater success by persuading others with control over large resources, such as governments, to apply them to music.

This requires that the music council should be skilled in advocacy. In order to be skilled in advocacy, it must also be skilled in policy formulation. Sometimes, policy formulation requires the development of new relevant knowledge through research.

Therefore, the national music council should practice skilled advocacy, backed up by expert policy formation and on occasion, original research.

In order to create a context in which the need for change is better understood, the national music council collects and disseminates information about the situation of music.

The recipients are people in the music sector, who then may act independently in pursuit of music development or may be music council allies in its advocacy efforts; other recipients are the eventual targets of advocacy efforts, whether the general public or decision makers in government and elsewhere.

Direct. The national music council may also act directly to achieve objectives, through mounting campaigns, projects, producing recordings, publications etc. These direct actions are assessed according to their power to achieve important national objectives.

For instance, a music festival in a country that already has a lot of music festivals may be an enjoyable exercise but may not expand the situation of music in that country; but a festival that for instance focuses on bringing endangered traditional musics before the public could significantly change the course of music in that country. Such a festival could be thought to be an appropriate direct and strategic activity for a national music council. The former festival could be a distraction and a diversion of resources away from more strategic activity.

A council could produce information that is important to the future of music in a country and disseminate it in a general way to the music community. But it may be much more effective if it takes this information and uses it in direct advocacy to those who have the power to make decisions that will solve music's problems.