

Music in cultural policy at an international level

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Everyone in this room has given themselves away simply by being here. You see some way in which the musical world could be better, and you are working to make that happen.

The question is: will you make the biggest impact by directly causing the change yourself, or by persuading some other entity with far greater resources to make your changes, big time. And there are a lot of other questions then about what actually is the change you want to make, if it can be so much bigger.

So I invite you to think about what I have to say about advocacy as being about YOUR possible personal involvement as an advocate.

Music needs advocates.

I have been asked to speak about how music's cause can be advocated at the international level. I do this from the perspective of a modest international music organisation and I must say, I do not speak as an expert. But I can tell you some things I have tried to figure out.

Advocacy obviously is a process through which we try to persuade others that they should implement OUR policies. This makes a lot of sense when they have plentiful resources and our resources are very small. Alternatively, we can take a more direct role in making change - - but for a small organisation such as ours to have an impact in this way has its obvious limitations.

So to deal with advocacy: in theory there are two ways a membership organisation like EMC or IMC to go: up and out, or down and in.

By up and out, I mean that IMC (for instance) can take its international advocacy into international forums or international organisations. So for instance, we could develop policy proposals in intellectual property and take them to WIPO or we can form alliances with other international organisations to make proposals jointly to, say, intergovernmental agencies. IMC has been doing this with the INCD with regard to proposals to UNESCO for the implementation of the UNESCO Convention for cultural diversity.

One of the most interesting of my limited number of experiences with international advocacy came as a member of the steering committee of the INCD when it was in the crucial stages of advocating for the UNESCO Convention for cultural diversity. I am not quite sure who invented this Convention but INCD may have, and it certainly was very active during the gestation period. The INCD's initial advocacy target was the very similarly named International Network for Cultural Policy. This was a group of cultural ministers from eventually about 55 countries. It met each year and decided in due course that its main task was to formulate a proposed treaty in support of cultural diversity and as a protection of culture against free trade agreements. It eventually decided that UNESCO should be approached to host the agreement that became known as the UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. (Only UNESCO would come up with such an indigestible title.)

Now during this process, the INCD organised its conferences each year at the same time and place as the INCP and always was able to organise a meeting between its members and the cultural ministers. Personal contact seems to be of the essence. Policy papers, of themselves, are a dime a dozen and unlikely to do the job without some more direct way of attracting the decision-maker's attention. INCD put together its own version of this agreement which took a more vigorous and inclusive line on some issues and it was able to cause changes in the INCP document.

I note in passing that during this period, the membership of the INCP, the Ministers' group, continually grew. Organisations gather members when they can be seen to be doing something constructive and important.

So that's up and out. Now for down and in. Most crucial cultural policy decisions are made at the national or local level. For instance, IMC has decided that it wants to encourage adoption of the Road Map for Arts Education formulated under UNESCO auspices a couple of years ago. Arts education is not delivered by international governmental agencies, it is delivered by national governments or by agencies even more local. So it is those bodies that have to be persuaded.

I don't know about your country, but for sure, in mine, a proposal about educational policy from IMC would probably travel straight from the Minister's mail box to the Minister's waste basket. But if, say, the national music council could propose the IMC policy to its Minister for Education, then it might get some traction. The national council's

hand might even be strengthened if it can show that there is international endorsement for its proposals.

So by down and in, I mean in a sense down to the national level and in to our own IMC membership. That seems to me perfectly feasible but of course, it is useful only if the national organisation wishes to be an advocate and wishes to advocate a policy along the lines proposed by IMC.

So that is one possible view of the advocacy landscape for organisations like EMC and IMC. Behind these strategies we need to ask some questions. Here are some that I see as crucial.

What do we see as the key issues for which we want to develop and advocate policies? We need a process to make those decisions and to develop the policy positions.

With respect to these key issues, where are the official policy positions made, by whom, and how? To whom should we be talking? How do we get access to these people? Also, we need to know their view of the world and we need to state our arguments in language that they respond to. Of course, I am assuming that their decisions are made on a rational political basis and are not simply corrupt or self-indulgent.

What are our chances of success? And what is the likely cost of such a success in terms of expenditure of time, effort and resources? Is this a good use of our very modest resources?

I conclude by taking a somewhat different tack. At the local level, where the IMC or EMC 'down and in' strategy finds its place, there are other possible strategies that are like advocacy with a tinge of marketing. For instance, take the Road Map to Arts Education proposals. These could be taken straight to government by the local organisation with IMC backing. But the government may not yet be ready to listen. My own music council has developed a number of advocacy-plus-marketing strategies. Let me describe one to you: the Flame Awards.

These are awards for the most inspiring school music programs. Schools are invited to send submissions describing their programs and winners are chosen. We have formed a partnership with the radio section of the national broadcaster. It publicises the invitation to apply, and gives air time to the winners. It mounts a concert in the school that wins the first place and broadcasts it nationally. Meanwhile,

we are coaching all the many finalists on how to get articles on their program into the local media and we are ourselves doing a media blitz. The top eight winners receive small cash prizes and all this publicity.

The real purpose here is to build grassroots support for school music by gaining media exposure for the most inspiring examples. This can build grassroots support. If there is strong grassroots support, then the government will be more likely to be persuaded to invest more in school music education. It's not a plan that will produce an overnight success, but there is no plan that will do so. We must be willing to persist for as long as it takes.

We are all heading relatively small organisations. In advocacy work, it pays to form alliances and collaborations, whether the plan is up and out, or down and in.