



STRATEGIC PLAN 2021

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1. ABOUT MUSICIANS WITHOUT BORDERS

Mission and vision

Our mission is to use the power of music to bridge divides, connect communities, and heal the wounds of war.

Our vision is to inspire people worldwide to engage as peacemakers and use music to transform lives.

Guiding principles

Musicians Without Borders' guiding principles reflect our core belief and values. These principles serve as basis to ground our practices in using music to connect people and communities, transcending the borders of history, ideology, and geography.

We refer to:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- Our knowledge and understanding, as musicians, of music's power to connect and create empathy,
- The Principles of Active Nonviolence, especially as lived and described by Martin Luther King.

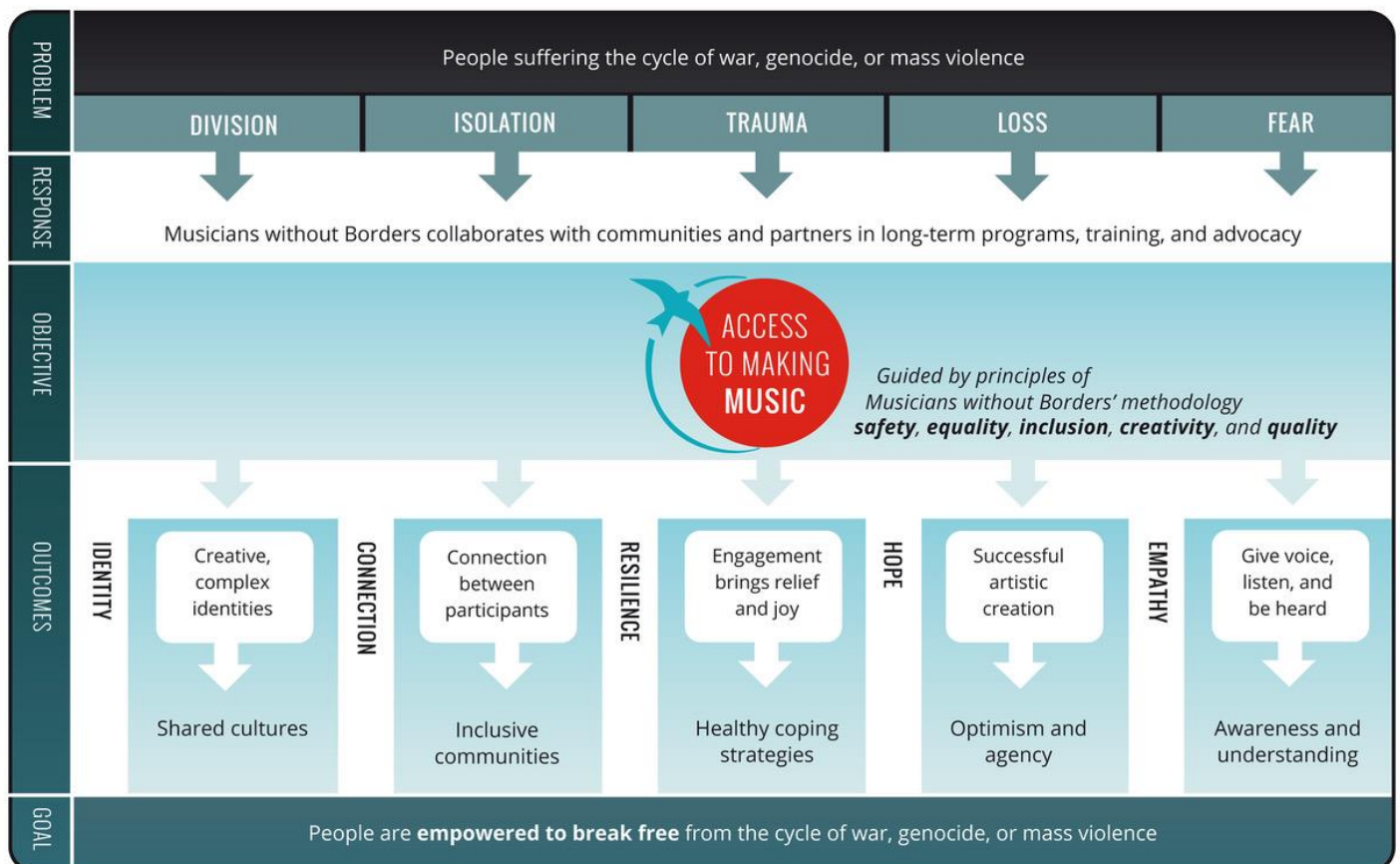
Working principles

In practice, our guiding principles are distilled into five working principles, around which our program and training work is based: safety, equality, inclusion, creativity, and quality.

Theory of Change



Musicians without Borders uses the power of music to bridge divides, connect communities, and heal the wounds of war.



2. 2021 OVERALL GOALS

Grow impact

Goals

1. Sustain current programs financially and programmatically in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic,
2. Launch new projects in Jordan and Palestine, restart Welcome Notes activities for refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
3. Increase our visibility and PR (both in our program regions and internationally)
4. Engage with new partners (advocacy): universities, arts and human rights organizations; develop global platforms (e.g. art27).

Actions

1. Develop activity sets that can be implemented fully in person or with lockdown or health measures in place; raise funds and support local fundraising efforts in support of programs,
2. Find and contract partners; agree on activity plans and budgets; plan projects' launch,
3. Develop integrated communications cycle; design and launch new website; focus on visual storytelling,
4. Establish research board; establish art27 podcast with industry experts; publish and disseminate Music Connects report.

Outcomes

1. Long-term programs sustained; best practices identified for working in periods of limited mobility; best practices for integrating technology in program activities,
2. MWB programs serve children, youth, and young adults in Jordan, Palestine, and Bosnia and Herzegovina,
3. MWB programs promoted to worldwide following,
4. Practitioners informed of and engage with MWB best practices; MWB aware of best practices of other practitioners.

Quality and professionalization

Goals

1. Invest in professional development training for our staff and trainers,
2. Increase 'in house' expertise; liaise with external advisors.

Actions

1. Organize Music Leadership conference; source coaching in HRM; organize and encourage staff to participate in safeguarding training; support project partners with the development of safeguarding and bullying and harassment policies; develop MWB equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policy,
2. Review internal procedures with the aim of completing a full audit and attaining CBF certification; review implications of UBO and WBTR for MWB with law office support; establish employee EDI provisions and disseminate through employee manual.

Outcomes

1. Music Leadership graduates share best practices and expertise; increased awareness at project partners of safeguarding and bullying and harassment principles and practices; introduction of EDI best practices at MWB,
2. Review of MWB procedures and practices to ensure full compliance with audit and CBF requirements; review of MWB statutes to ensure compliance with WBTR; UBO registration completed; EDI policy and provisions in place.

Positioning and messaging

Goals

1. Focus on key concepts: nonviolence, sustainable, activist,
2. Create shared language/strategy on how we engage as activists in the complex environments where we work; position MWB as an ally to those without power.

Actions

1. Develop new organizational descriptions of different lengths (sentence, 150 words, 450 words) describing MWB's principles and methodologies,
2. Integrate findings from research reports on MWB programs in organizational language, incorporate language in MWB project proposals and website, consider gender and other human rights as well as environmental angles in project proposals.

Outcomes

1. MWB underlying principles are an explicit part of its communications,
2. MWB programs and outreach integrate MWB's working philosophy and are consistent with MWB's position on human rights, equality, and the environment.

3. AREAS OF ACTION

3.1. Projects and programs

Current situation

MWB has long-term programs in (post-)conflict regions: Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Rwanda: and two projects in El Salvador (Soy Música and Armonia Cuscatleca). Our projects for refugees in Europe (Welcome Notes) is on hold as a result of the pandemic. Our project in Palestine ended in spring of 2020.

Capacity building, local ownership, and collaboration with local musicians and local organizations are key elements in all programs in present and post-conflict societies.

Goals

- Stabilize current program operations, strengthen local program teams (capacity building), work toward local ownership,
- Launch new project in Jordan,
- Launch new project in Palestine,
- Restart Welcome Notes.

Strengths and opportunities

- Thought leader in the field of music and social change, with programs informing training and research,
- Stable partner organizations that are highly invested in MWB mission in most program countries and motivated to develop creative solutions to continue activities during restrictions,
- Institutional partnerships add value to MWB credibility and reputation, increasing requests for partnerships,
- Small but skilled, adaptable, and experienced team.

Challenges

- Programs' vulnerability to lockdowns and other measures due to dependence on opportunities to connect and work in groups to achieve impact,
- Programs rely for large part on institutional fundraising: time-consuming and unpredictable process.
- Smaller partner organizations rely on MWB capacity building and administrative support,
- 'Brain drain' in program areas with limited economic opportunities.

3.1.1. Western Balkans: Music Connects

Goals

1. MWB's Rock School methodology validated and promoted to regional and international stakeholders,
2. Mitrovica and Roma Rock School activities sustained beyond Creative Twinning project,
3. Increased sound engineering capacity at MRS and RRS; increased visibility of MRS and RRS mixed band activities,
4. Local activities sustained and strategy for mid-term development and growth developed.

Activities

1. Disseminate final report and methodology video to donors and NGO community,
2. Activity plan produced and agreed with MRS and RRS for May-December 2021,
3. Invest in MRS and RRS ability to record and disseminate original music,
4. Develop and submit Creative Europe application for international rock school program; apply to local donors for local activities.

Timeline

1. April-July 2021,
2. Budget and activity plan finalized April 2021,
3. Ongoing training at MRS, release of seven online concerts by September 2021,
4. Pending publication of CE call; funding for local activities in place by April 2021.

Outputs and outcomes

1. MWB's methodology for promoting reconciliation through (rock) music education disseminated as a best practice,
2. Inter-ethnic activities continued at MRS and RRS despite COVID-19 pandemic; RRS included in MWB portfolio of long-term partners.
3. Seven online concerts/music videos of mixed bands disseminated to promote content-based inter-ethnic cooperation among youth in the Balkans.
4. Short-term funding secured for continuation of local activities; long-term funding applied for under international expansion plan.

3.1.2. Rwanda: Rwanda Youth Music

Goals

1. Maintain program infrastructure – staff and resources – throughout periods of lockdown and potential project insecurity,
2. Continue to provide support to young people living with HIV in Kigali,
3. Develop new income generating project that increases financial security of program while reaching thousands of children with support of music,
4. Expand regional reach.

Activities

1. Fundraising actions,
2. Young community members trained by MWB as community music leaders provide access to therapeutic music-making for young patients at our partner WE-ACTx for Hope,
3. Collaborate with the Community Music Center in Kigali, employing youth from the program as teachers and music leaders,
4. Seek funding to expand past pilot program in Goma, DRC.

Timeline

1. Raise €70,000 by July 2021,
2. On-going, working with 100 young people every month,
3. Develop partnership structure, work plan, and staffing by August 2021, to begin implementation in fall school term 2021,
4. By year end, for program to begin in 2022.

Outputs and outcomes

1. Funds received, and salaries of staff secured,
2. Each month 100 young people living with HIV are supported through music-making,
3. Rwanda Youth Music team teaches 50 paying students, 100 free students, and reaches over 1,000 children with music workshops.
4. Partnership structure established, work plan agreed, finances secured, to begin work in 2022.

3.1.3. El Salvador: Soy Música

Goals

1. Completion of Soy Música 3 year plan, 2018-2020.
2. Begin roll-out phase of Soy Música to teachers across El Salvador,
3. Explore regional links and program growth.

Activities

1. Complete final evaluation and reporting, and feedback process with partners.
2. Collaborate with UNICEF and Ministry of Education to formulate plans, agree roles, and implement next phase of Soy Música.
3. Evaluate viability of new program in Mexico, based on Soy Música model, and leveraging MWB's regional expertise.

Timeline

1. By end of January 2021,
2. Planning phase in spring 2021, for implementation from August 2021,
3. Spring 2021, for possible start date in second half of the year.

Outputs and outcomes

1. All partners agree completion of adopted work plan, and final program payments are received by MWB.
2. Work plan is agreed, new contract is signed between MWB and UNICEF, implementation begins.
3. Funding is secured and partnership agreement signed, implementation of new program begins.

3.1.4. El Salvador: Armonia Cuscatleca

Goals

1. Temporarily transfer responsibilities for daily operations to local teachers and administrators during the project manager's absence from El Salvador,
2. Sustain and grow AC's orchestra and lesson program,
3. Invest in the ability of former participants to fulfill teaching roles,
4. Complete AC registration as a Salvadoran non-profit/branch organization.

Activities

1. Identify and engage skilled candidate to fill Pablo's daily teaching role and Kenia's daily administrative role,
2. Recruit new students to AC's orchestra and lesson program,
3. Engage at least one former student in a junior teaching role, provide didactic support,
4. Work with lawyer to complete registration, open local bank account.

Timeline

1. January 2021,
2. September 2021,
3. June 2021,
4. Registration completed by April 2021.

Outputs and outcomes

1. AC activities sustained during project management team's absence from El Salvador,
2. 20 new students recruited, AC's local activities return to pre-pandemic levels,
3. 1-2 former student(s) engaged as junior teacher(s), increasing employment perspectives and contributing to program sustainability,
4. AC able to operate as a local entity and raise funds within El Salvador.

3.1.5. Palestine: new music program and inclusion of deaf children

Goals

1. Develop new program that provides sustainable support to communities in Palestine through making music,
2. Establish structural partnership to support the 'Deaf, Proud and Musical' project,
3. Maintain the expertise and infrastructure of a strong local network that were developed over the past 12 years of work in the Palestine Community Music program.

Activities

1. Create proposal and seek funding for new program, anchored with a local partner that meets MWB partnership criteria,
2. Identify partnership to give structural support in administrative elements of 'Deaf, Proud and Musical',
3. Employ Fabienne van Eck as regional program manager.

Timeline

1. Viable proposal researched and finalized by April 2021, fundraising begins from April 2021,
2. Spring 2021,
3. From January 2021.

Outputs and outcomes

1. Partnership agreement signed and initial funding secured, to begin implementation in Autumn 2021,
2. Administration and finances managed through local organization,
3. Duties agreed and contract signed.

3.1.6. Refugees in Europe: Welcome Notes

Goals

1. Build on partnership with Save the Children (StC) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, integrating musical methodologies within their approach to psychosocial care for young people in refugee camps,
2. Expand reach in Bosnia and Herzegovina, leveraging team of skilled music leaders to broaden impact.

Activities

1. Work in close cooperation with StC experts, to embed MWB musical approaches into best practices for psychosocial support of young refugees,
2. Establish partnership with community-based organization, and engage music leaders trained by MWB to lead workshops with refugees across the country in new Music Bus project.

Timeline

1. Formalize partnership with StC and agree work plan by April 2021, to begin implementation in May 2021,
2. Formalize project structure by April 2021, to begin project implementation in May 2021.

Outputs and outcomes

1. MWB music leadership methodology is an embedded aspect of psychosocial care for trained StC staff working with young people in refugee centers.
2. 1,000 children and youth living in refugee centers benefit from music workshops.

3.1.7. Jordan: Al-Musiqat Tajm'ana

Goals

1. Establish an infrastructure of organizations and trained music leaders in Jordan, empowered and equipped to support vulnerable and under-served children through music,
2. Together with partners and network, build strategy for future collaboration.

Activities

1. In partnership with Caritas Jordan, provide training to 24-40 musicians from community-based organizations, to work with over 400 children,
2. Collectively evaluate program impacts and local needs, to design future collaborative actions.

Timeline

1. Spread through the year, 2 30 hour training courses attended in total by 24-40 people, series of workshops for children during periods of school holidays,
2. Evaluation after each training period, with collective reflection and planning.

Outputs and outcomes

1. 24-40 skilled music leaders from network of community-based organizations working with children from Jordanian and refugee backgrounds,
2. Work plan and proposal developed for 2022.

3.2. Training and expertise

Current situation (November 2020)

- Two music leadership training weeks had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic,
- Alumni learning journey was organized online as an alternative to in-person training, to continue contact with former trainees,
- Development of Nonviolence and Music and the Nervous System training modules in progress,
- Soy Música (El Salvador) training program and coaching of local trainers moved online.

Goals

- Define position of training program inside MWB's program development strategy,
- Run two or three music leadership training weeks for international participants,
- Finalize Nonviolence and Music and the Nervous System training modules, adapt to local project situations,
- Plan and implement online and/or in-person training sessions at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, Limerick University.

Strengths and opportunities

- We've trained more than 300 people from 45 countries around the world through our external training program, many of whom have reported incorporating MWB methodology into their work, and reaching target groups that fall within MWB's mission/vision,
- Several Training of Trainers participants have gone on to become MWB trainers, building MWB capacity,
- Our external training program serves as an opportunity for our local trainers and project participants to expand their skills and networks, reinvesting in our programs,
- Our external training program allows us the opportunity to bring our team together for internal training/professional development.

Challenges

- COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing restrictions on in-person/group training,
- Tension between music leadership methodology and other MWB approaches, and resulting lack of clarity about training team role in new project development,
- Tension between recruiting enough participants for trainings and matching skills/experience levels,
- Setting expectations for participants, specifically what to expect from our Training of Trainers,
- Communication across core training team and project teams,
- Tension between MWB's wish to make training program accessible to practitioners of limited financial means and need to make training program self-funding or income-generating.

3.2.1. Training and expertise action plan

Goals

1. Tailor training program to MWB program development needs,
2. Market training program to practitioners and academic institutions.

Activities

1. Assess position of music leadership training program in new program development; assess training needs within existing programs; adapt curriculum to training needs where appropriate,
2. Organize Music Leadership conference and promote to training alumni: leverage connections made through research and advocacy to promote training programs to academic contacts and partners.

Timeline

1. Rolling, throughout the year,
2. Conference in October 2021; promotion of training to institutional partners throughout the year.

Outputs and outcomes

1. The music leadership training program is geared to the needs of the programs' new and existing target groups,
2. The music leadership program promotes MWB methodology to practitioners worldwide, and is self-funding.

3.3. Advocacy and network

Current situation (November 2020)

To promote the vision of music as a tool for peace, MWB gives keynote speeches and presentations at international conferences and expert meetings, collaborates with academic institutions, promotes its work and vision through publications and social networks, and connects with musicians worldwide through public and private online platforms. From March 2020, due to the Corona pandemic, all live advocacy work was either cancelled, postponed or moved to online platforms.

Goals

- Adapt messaging to new situation: continued urgent need for connecting power of music within context of isolation and restrictive COVID-19 measures; strength of local leadership; need for flexible approaches,
- Embed online tools and technical support in advocacy events; be prepared for both live and online opportunities in 2021,
- In response to pandemic learnings, explore collaboration with other organizations around overlapping global issues, highlighting need for global cooperation,
- art27: determine legal structure of platform,
- art27: use 2020 experience to roll out regular online events, e.g. monthly podcast, occasional online conferences.

Strengths and opportunities

- Previous partnerships and advocacy work have led to an extensive global network,
- MWB's 2020 COVID response has been effective, we can build on the narratives of strong local teams, flexibility of our projects and staff,
- art27 shift to online events in 2020 has attracted new audience and created new ways to approach a wider span of participants and listeners,
- Online advocacy potentially opens attendance to wider audiences,
- Within our own staff, volunteers, and trainers, we have learned who can assist and support online events, and how best to organize and present them.

Challenges

- Priority of project and organization adaptation to COVID situation has reduced capacity for advocacy work,
- Many advocacy events (conferences, concerts, meetings) cancelled due to COVID,
- Online presentations, meetings, conferences do not offer same opportunities as live events for informal networking, one of the most important aspects of advocacy work.

3.3.1. Advocacy and network action plan

Goals

1. Adapt messaging to new situation: continued urgent need for connecting power of music within context of isolation and restrictive COVID measures, strength of local leadership, need for flexible approaches,
2. Embed online tools and technical support in advocacy events and plans, be prepared for both live and online opportunities in 2021,
3. In response to pandemic learnings, explore collaboration with other organizations around overlapping global issues, highlighting need for global cooperation,
4. art27: determine legal structure of platform,
5. art27: use 2020 experience to roll out regular online events, e.g. monthly podcast, occasional online conferences.

Activities

1. Align talking points on strategy and future options and plans (MWB Director in cooperation with MT and communications team),
2. Coordinate speaking schedules with tech support colleagues, provide comms team with needed software and equipment,
3. Join CAN: Community Arts Network, explore other contacts around global 'days' and events (e.g. MHPSS Collaboratory),
4. Develop MWB proposal, meet art27 Steering Committee to discuss
5. Identify host and potential guests; plan and implement schedule including monthly podcasts; regular online talk-shows and conferences.

Timeline

1. Ongoing
2. Ongoing
3. April 2021 CAN launch, June 2021 World Refugee Day event, September 2021 World Peace Day event, December 2021 Human Rights Day event,
4. Quarter 1
5. Quarter 1: preparation; quarter 2: podcast launch; quarters 3 and 4: monthly podcasts/events.

Outputs and outcomes

1. All who write/speak about MWB publicly share common context,
2. Online presentations supported, all presenters can manage online tools,
3. Monthly art27 podcasts
4. Steering Committee/MWB agreement on art27 status, fundraising possibilities increase as art27 becomes MWB project,
5. 3 online conferences and 9 podcasts, art27 visibility increased, platform membership grows.

4. OPERATIONAL GOALS

4.1. Communications

Goals

1. Develop and promote a simplified organization description putting organization mission in a cross-sectoral context (environment, gender equality, and other human rights),
2. Incorporate EDI/accessibility principles in MWB's communications strategy,
3. Use visual storytelling to promote MWB best practices,
4. Incorporate challenges and opportunities of COVID-19 pandemic in communications strategy.

Activities

1. Develop a new organizational website and update organizational descriptions to reflect current-day relevance of MWB mission,
2. Improve accessibility of website and other organizational media,
3. Create two promotional films: one training, one program,
4. Address program challenges and opportunities related to COVID-19 pandemic in fundraising campaigns.

Timeline

1. Quarter 3,
2. Quarter 3,
3. Quarter 4,
4. Quarters 2 and 4.

Outputs and outcomes

1. Strong, unified messaging about MWB's role in challenging cross-sectoral issues and promoting human rights in (post-)conflict environments,
2. MWB's EDI principles reflected in its external communications,
3. MWB's programs and training promoted through visual storytelling,
4. Impact of COVID-19 pandemic highlighted in fundraising campaigns.

4.2. Fundraising

Goals

1. Secure 2021-2022 program funding,
2. Identify one new long-term donor,
3. Build existing corporate relationships, solicit 1-3 new relationships,
4. Develop fundraising campaign with communications manager focusing on specific project needs resulting from the pandemic,
5. Define strategy for 88 Keys program.

Activities

1. Support project managers in identifying and building relationships with donors, and drafting applications and budgets for 2021-2022,
2. Request support from current long-term donors and supervisory board members in approaching potential new structural donor(s), leverage research reports on MWB programs and/or communications materials produced,
3. Define communications strategy for existing and new sponsors, define appropriate 'asks', approach potential new music industry sponsors,
4. Coordinate messaging and needs with communications manager to define an online fundraising strategy that communicates the urgency of investing in MWB's work,
5. Decide on staffing of 88 Keys engagement, develop strategy for recruiting new 88 Keys members by engaging current assets: supervisory board, ambassadors, etc.

Timeline

1. Rolling, following project cycles and calls for proposals,
2. Quarters 1 and 2,
3. Around May and November campaigns,
4. May and November 2021,
5. Quarter 1.

Outputs and outcomes

1. Long-term programs fully funded for 2021, all or initial funding in place for 2022,
2. MWB has a relationship with one new large (>EUR100K), long-term (>2 years) donor, supporting the continuity of its operations,
3. Higher portion of MWB budget consists of unallocated funding, increasing MWB's ability to respond flexibly to program and organizational needs,
4. Messaging through social media campaigns promotes program results and calls social media followers to action, prompting one-off or long-term donations,
5. Strategy and capacity in place for maintaining and building 88 Keys.

4.3. Monitoring, evaluation, and learning

Goals

1. Assess and respond to MEL requirements in existing programs,
2. Develop MEL processes for new programs in 2021,
3. Establish strategy for research within MWB programs and organizationally,
4. Facilitate internal learning: communicating and reflecting on our successes/failures.

Activities

1. MEL team meet with and support program managers throughout program cycle, with particular focus on building SMART program proposals, data collection and analysis, and reporting,
2. Embed SMART program logic into new program development, and set up appropriate processes to monitor and evaluate,
3. Convene a research committee of researchers whose work is allied to MWB's ethos and objectives, to assess and guide future research engagement,
4. Develop model/opportunities to facilitate internal learning, via analysis of MEL forms and regular meetings with program managers and staff, incorporate into strategic planning.

Timeline

1. Throughout the year, at key program phases,
2. Predicted to be during the first quarter of 2021, as potential new programs develop,
3. Spring 2021,
4. To begin implementation in summer 2021.

Outputs and outcomes

1. Efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation of programs, with learnings incorporated into future program cycles,
2. Program logic is consistent and SMART, with appropriate, efficient and effective MEL tools in place.
3. Expert research committee established,
4. Process defined and implemented to embed learning into program and activity cycles.

4.4. Financial and general administration

Goals

1. Conduct full organizational audit,
2. Apply for CBF accreditation,
3. Complete verification of expenditure (project audit) Music Connects (Creative Twinning),
4. Support additional project needs stemming from the pandemic,
5. Support overall organizational needs and administrative processes during the pandemic.

Activities

1. Strengthen capacity of financial team; contract audit firm; complete audit process,
2. Contact CBF representative and assess accreditation procedure; review and collect documentation needed; submit application.
3. Support program manager with budget revision request; support project partners with understanding, implementation and financial reporting; conduct internal audit; provide external auditors with all documentation needed,
4. Follow up with project managers on needs for budget revisions; review implementation of activities and financial progress on a rolling basis,
5. Support reorganization to support employees working from home; assess and meet staff needs while working from home; complete digitalization of organizational administration.

Timeline

1. January 2021; March 2021; June 2021,
2. March 2021; May 2021; July 2021,
3. January 2021; February 2021; February/April 2021; February/June 2021,
4. Quarterly or as needed based on project context,
5. January-March 2021.

Outputs and outcomes

1. MWB meets conditions for major European and other funding, increased credibility among donor and partner organizations,
2. MWB gains CBF certification, increased credibility among large and small donors,
3. Three-year Music Connects project closed successfully,
4. Budget plans reflect new activity plans responding to pandemic,
5. Increased staff wellbeing, optimal efficiency while working from home.

4.5. Executive leadership

Goals

1. Continue to strengthen the new management structure within the organization, clarify and delineate roles within the management team,
2. Review templates for contracts and other legal documents, streamline approval procedure for new contracts, review existing policies and need to new policies.

Activities

1. Finalize role descriptions of management team members, clarify and communicate decision-making processes, update and circulate org chart,
2. Create a schedule for reviewing all contract templates (partnership, service, volunteer, intern, fixed-term employment, permanent employment), clarify and communicate procedure for entering into new contracts, particularly within project contexts, schedule review of existing policies and the need for new policies, and draft and submit for approval new policies as needed.

Timeline

1. Quarter 2,
2. Quarters 3 and 4.

Outputs and outcomes

1. The management team represents different skills and perspectives within the organization, and the roles of its members have been clearly defined and communicated,
2. Contract templates are up-to-date and policies cover all identified organizational needs and risks.