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## Music Education Policies of Northern Cyprus

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### Abstract

This research is a descriptive study aiming to examine the music education policies of North Cyprus in accordance with the documents determining the music education policy. In the research, the general purpose of North Cyprus regarding education, the general structure of the education system, council decisions of the Ministry of Education, government programs and the activity reports of the Ministry of Education, since 1982, were examined and put forward in connection with the existing music education in North Cyprus. The research was conducted by using descriptive analysis, one of the qualitative research methods. However, it was not possible to reach any resources related with the four council meetings held between the years 1982 and 1985, therefore, the research was limited between the years 1995-2015. The findings obtained were sorted in relation with music, music education, and art and culture concepts, then associated with the activity reports and council decisions of Ministry of Education and education programs of the government of the period. The study results revealed that, no expressions on music, music lessons or, culture and art were taken place in the council decisions taken between the years 1995-2005, however it is also seen that the council meetings held and some of the decisions taken in 2014 were a little more comprehensive. Furthermore, in the activity reports of Ministry of Education, it is seen that there are conceptualized music-related articles, however, most of them are not realized and/or sufficient.

Keywords: Music, Music Education, Activity Reports, Government Decisions

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## 1. Problem

A general look at the purpose of Cyprus Turkish National Education shows that it is defined as aiming at a unity of conscious and emotion among citizens with Ataturk's principles and revolutions, targeting modernization and ensuring that Turkish people attain national conscious, educate people who are faithful to democracy, social justice, and rule of law principles, who protect and improve them; and educate citizens of Cypriot Turkish society as people who have an awareness of their own history, improve their spiritual and cultural values, love their country and society, know their duties and responsibilities, are able to transform such into behaviour, peaceful but able to protect their rights; train them into citizens who are balanced and healthy in terms of body, mind, morals and emotions, with sound personalities and characters, possessing the power of scientific thinking and a wide worldview, who has a love of humanity and respective towards human rights, valuing entrepreneurship, feeling responsibility towards their society, trying to improve their society, brave, character, creative and efficient citizens; evaluating their interests and abilities, and displaying and improving such, integrating necessary knowledge and skills and making them into a profession; thus, citizens who want to make their society and nation a modern, constructive, creative and elite partner. In national education system of Northern Cyprus, obligatory education is until the age of fifteen. In this framework, ages 5-6 is pre-school, ages 7-11 is elementary, ages 12-14 is secondary, ages 15-17 is high school and ages above 17 are higher education phases ([www.mebnet.net](http://www.mebnet.net)).

Music education, which is a part of Cypriot Turkish education system, is seen as a discipline which is important in ensuring that they know their society, elevate its culture to international level. Music directs people in their development phase and has a positive impact especially on their cognitive processes. At the same time it plays an important role in the socialization of children. In addition, music is considerably influential in development of cognitive capacities of children and it serves as a tool in developing their social interactions. Most important of all, music creates for children an environment remote from risks ensuring exploration of social behaviour patterns (Cross, 2001). Music is an aesthetic whole consisting of sounds processed and united according to a certain understanding of beauty with a certain purpose and method (Ucan, 1997). In Ireland, which has a template music program where music courses are correlated to all other courses, basic education program is categorised under three basic headings, namely listening and responding, composing and stage. The purpose of this program is as follows:

- Researching the opinions, emotions and experiences of children through a series of activities, clarifying such and ensuring that they express the foregoing,
- Earning them aesthetic experiences, improving aesthetic conscious in dance, drama, music and visual arts,
- Improving the children's awareness of enjoying visual, audio, tactile and spatial environments,
- Obtaining the techniques required for improving natural skills and potential of the child, applying the skills necessary for their tasteful participation in creative expression and different artistic forms,
- Helping the child to deal with individual and institutional problems by developing the ability to see through problems and offer creative solutions through creative thinking,
- By means of self-expression, finding their self and self-respect valuable, training individuals with self-respect,
- Developing the sense of aesthetic perfection in past and present life by encouraging towards art in local, regional, national and global context,
- By earning artistic skill, acknowledging and encouraging for improving personal satisfaction and appreciation skills (Ireland Arts Education, 1999).

In addition to all the foregoing, the fact that the 2016 budget for education in Ireland is 8,5 billion euros (<http://www.irishtimes.com/>) is an indicator of the importance of education in that country.

Music education in Turkey: in Republican Turkey, the target of culture and art policies is to establish "a lifestyle shaped by western cultural values" and create a "cultural identity"

established/fictionalised towards this ideal. A comprehensive look at the Republic shows that it is a project designed to create its own citizens and build this new individual conscious. In this period when several societal, social, political incentives were witnessed, several vital important steps were taken in terms of arts (Sahin, Duman, 2008). These breakthroughs were echoed in Northern Cyprus. Education in Northern Cyprus was based and prepared on an example of the education system of Republic of Turkey written on paper. The musical education program applied also has the same structure with the music education in Turkey. In this context music education is seen as a course based on traditional structure, distant from modern education, aiming at learning a few songs every week. When the principles and purpose of national education system is examined, it can be seen that education has a structure which is supposedly aimed at having a very ideal construction but which is not able to come up to the expectations in practice. Of the TRNC budget, the share of education was 14,79%, 15,53%, 12,18%, and 13,75% in the period between 2001 and 2004 respectively (Fedai, 2004).

Music teaching is a faculty of education department which accepts its students with “special skill test”. Students are accepted to the music teaching program if they are found successful in these special skill tests and are trained in this program. Individuals who become teachers without entering any musical competency test cannot be fully adequate in music course, which is one of the artistic courses, and realise the earnings required by education system. It can be said that the level of education obtained by the candidate teacher is directly proportional to their success in professional life, ability to train students in this direction and earn them to the society. Detailed preparation of education programs by governments bears importance in the sense that education and training processes carries society forward and ensures sustainability of education. Reports and programs prepared by government, decisions made, and applications display the education policies of the state. Education Councils, Ministry of National Education activity reports and government programs are documents which display the music education policy of the state. In this context, the problem of this study is the direction with which music education in Northern Cyprus was considered from 1982 to the present (2016). In accordance with this problem, the findings in National Education council decisions, Northern Cyprus government decisions and National Education Ministry activity reports have been described and in general terms the music education policy of Northern Cyprus is displayed in line with these documents.

## **2. Method**

In this study qualitative method is used and the study is analysed descriptively (Yildirim & Simsek 2006). The data are council resolutions between 1995 and 2016, general education policies and decisions of the respective government and activity reports of the ministry of national education which are examined as per research questions and the results are described and interpreted. In the examined reports, the decisions as regards music – music education – art – culture are included in the scope of the study. Music and music education are two phenomena included in art and culture in their broadest sense. Therefore while scanning the documents for decisions as regards music and music education, information as regards art and culture at large are also interpreted.

## **3. Findings and interpretation**

In Northern Cyprus five different education councils have convened so far (2016). Nevertheless, government officials stated that two more councils convened in 1975 and 1985, but no findings were encountered about these councils (MEB, 2016). Below a list of the education councils in Northern Cyprus between 1975 and 2016 and the respective governments is provided.

1.council in 1975 by UBP, 2.council in 1985 by UBP, 3. Council on 19-30 June 1995 by DP, 4. Council on 24-26 March 2005 by CTPBG-DP and 5. Council on 10-14 March 2014 by CTP-DP coalition government.

#### **4. Resolutions as regards music education as recorded in council minutes**

In the III MEB council (1995) no decisions are detected as regards music-music education-culture and art. In the IV. MEB council (2005) there is an article reading “creating the profile of a person who is aware of national cultural artistic and modern identities” in a decision taken by education commission. In addition there are other articles describing the impact of educative branch activities on students.

V.MEB council (2014) is the most comprehensive council so far. It can be seen that education of arts in general and music education in particular claimed a more comprehensive place in this council compared to the previous ones. In this regard the purpose and scope of the council held in 2014 and resolutions as regards art and music education are identified and described below with their level of education.

The 15<sup>th</sup> article of the council suggests that “rapid developments are being experienced in science and technology and parallel to these fast developments, with the purpose of bringing to life the principle of “learning by doing and living”, computer, science, technology, physics, chemistry, biology laboratories, technology design and drawing ateliers, music rooms and art centres must be created primarily at all types and levels of schools starting from secondary schools”. However, there are no provisions on music-music education-culture and art at pre-school and elementary school level decisions. At general secondary school level, decisions were taken for increasing music, computer, and technology design courses and enriching their infrastructure (article 28). There are suggestions for ensuring thematic relation between branches (article 41) and encouraging every student for at least one social activity at school (article 43). At high school level, within the scope of language commission, one can encounter the suggestion that the earnings of the literature course must be interacted with types of text (literary, didactic texts and poems), writers-poets, literary periods and schools, based on Turkish and global literature and with other art (drawing, music, caricature, cinema, drama ...) and science branches (psychology, sociology, natural sciences, history etc.) (article 7).

Within the scope of special education and teaching, the suggestions are that, at special education institutions, in addition to special education teacher and administrative personnel, drawing, music, physical education, dance, drama etc. specialists should be employed along with other field specialists (article 32), necessary facilities should be ensured to so that students with special needs at MEB schools can obtain modern social, sportive, artistic and academic education and specialist cadres should be established in specific branches (article 44).

Among decisions at university level, no decision has been identified as regards music-art and education thereof.

When education councils in Northern Cyprus are examined, no provisions are detected about music-music course-culture and art at the councils in 1995 and 2005. It is seen that slightly more comprehensive discussions are held and some decisions are taken at the council in 2014. Music is an interdisciplinary course. This course should be interconnected with other courses. It is a course which can especially be a part of other courses at preschool and elementary levels. The councils have taken almost no decisions about the status and improvements of music courses.

#### **5. Decisions taken about music education at activity reports**

Ministerial activity reports for the years 1999-2000, 2000-2001, 2005, 2006 and 2007 were reached. Musical activities performed by Directorate of Secondary Education were reported as follows (MEP activity reports, 2000):

Secondary school music books are changed. Polyphonic chorus contest was performed between high schools with the participation of Prof. Hikmet Simsek. Educative school concerts were prepared in coordination with Nicosia City Orchestra. The band instruments of Anafartalar High School were repaired, preliminary work was conducted for establishing school bands in every province within this project but it was not concluded. An effort was begun to create a musical archive that music teachers could benefit at the inspection office, effort was paid to ensure that music branches worked uninterruptedly as per their purpose, seminaries were organised for elementary school music teachers on teaching, elementary music festivals were launched, teaching program was photocopied

which showed in detail how a course would be delivered in addition to the curriculum program so that music courses at elementary schools could be fixed and distributed to all elementary school music teachers, the first of the monthly meetings planned with elementary school music teachers was held, books and records of "TRT let's sing altogether" children's songs were distributed to all elementary schools, various researches and studies were conducted at the foundation stage of Anatolian Fine Arts High School (AGSL), curriculum and statute studies for Anatolian Fine Arts High School (AGSL) were conducted, some musical instruments were provided to AGSL.

In 2000-2001 period activities planned in Secondary School Office are reported. Accordingly, the planned activities are as follows:

Ensuring that polyphonic chorus contest between high schools is conducted (money and plaque award), inviting prof. Hikmet Simsek as jury member if he finds suitable, ensuring that orchestra contest between high schools is conducted, ensuring that elementary school music festivals continue, providing instrument aid to schools which are obliged to but instrument for participating in orchestra contest, ensuring that training school concerts continue in cooperation with Nicosia City orchestra, in the case that financial problems of planned school bands are resolved within a certain program, ensuring that they are activated in several cities. In addition, in cooperation with Nicosia Municipality, obtaining support for instruments and trainers. Obtaining instrument support from Security Forces and Peace Forces (instruments of Girne Anafartalar High School are ready, works can be launched if the trainer problem is solved. Activating bands simultaneously in Yeni Iskele, Guzelyurt and Nicosia. Relevant music teachers to be trained at City Orchestra of Nicosia Municipality for bandmaster position. Ensuring that in-service training is given to elementary-secondary and high school teachers for music course delivery patterns and new techniques. Especially at elementary schools handling the training of music teachers anew and as per opportunities. In addition, bringing solution to existing problems. Ensuring that teaching method distributed to elementary school music teachers is implemented and activating music books for elementary schools. Ensuring that the entire music curriculum is renewed. Implementing a good music curriculum from elementary school to the last grade of high school. Regulating music course hours anew and putting into practice a music education system which is fit for the purposes of Turkish national education. Paying effort to provide rhythm instruments etc. for elementary and secondary schools. Providing Orff instruments which have a very critical place in elementary school music teaching and which does not pose too much financial burden and putting into practice Orff doctrine starting from central schools. Ensuring that a musical archive that can be employed by teachers is established at inspection office. Ensuring that music branch activities are more purposeful and effective. Guiding skilled elementary school graduates to apply to conservatory. Guiding skilled secondary school graduates for applying to AGSL. Urging the foundation of music clubs at schools and attracting more students. In time, ensuring that they feel privileged and sparing them from bad habits in this way. Ensuring that music teachers receive "bandmaster" course (if Prof. Hikmet Simsek is invited for the contest ensuring that he is utilized for this seminar.) cooperating with music associations and organizing music concerts for the benefit of schools. Ensuring that AGSL teachers are sent abroad for in-service training. Cooperating with Ankara State Conservatory and importing staff for maintenance and repair of instruments. At the same time ensuring that these persons provide education to our students. Providing for concerts at home and abroad for AGSL students. Paying effort to ensure that our schools are more successful at November 10<sup>th</sup> and December 21<sup>st</sup> ceremonies.

Musical activities organised by secondary school office in 2005 are reported as follows: (MEP activity reports , 2005) 4 Petrof brand pianos are purchased to AGSL which cost 4500 pounds. The director and two teachers of AGSL were sent to Germany to research German music high schools. In 2004-2005 a study was initiated for preparing anew the music programs of elementary and secondary schools.

When the activity report of 2007 was examined no articles were detected about music and music education.

When the activity reports of Ministry of National Education are evaluated, it can be seen that there are some projected about music most of which are not put into practice and/or not sufficient. In addition, it can be seen that several resolutions about music and music education in the reports are related to Anatolian Fine Arts High Schools. The articles about schools which offer general music education are referred to as "decided but not realised as yet" in following reports. Music contest

between high schools is not sufficient for improving music education and making it a more qualified course. It is clear that schools lack the necessary equipment for inter-high school music contests, and most students and teachers are participating these contests with their own facilities.

Music education in government decisions <http://www.basbakanlik.gov.ct.tr/>

The efforts which generally require changing in the education system of DP-CTP coalition government (1995); will restructure parallel to the democratization philosophy by handling overall with the purpose of providing the well-trained, qualified manpower needed by Cypriot Turkish society, and equipping our people with the education, skill and foreign language needed for being respected globally. For this purpose, the share of education in state budget will be increased, and parent-teacher associations will be equipped with modern functions...Necessary works will be initiated for making schools serve students and the public all day, as explained. In addition, as regards art education, the decisions that “art education will be generalised at our schools” and a “necessary works will be launched for founding a course material construction centre within the Ministry of Education”, that legal and administrative measures would be taken to put into force the III. National education council resolutions, necessary regulations would be made to encourage, support, protect and award art, free, inspirer and supporting policies would be implemented in cultural and artistic life, state finances would be available for artists to present their works at home and abroad, successful artists would be awarded and necessary measures would be taken to protect local artists and their works, groups and associations which perform cultural an artistic works s-would be encouraged and supported by the state, Law on Intellectual Rights would be passed as soon as possible, all measures would be taken to ensure that Advisory Council for Culture and Art, which was thought as the foundation of an autonomous Culture and Art Agency, can conduct its works properly, that Cypriot Turkish Folklore Archive would be established and foundation law of State Symphonic Orchestra would be prepared and put into practice.

As a result, when the art policies of DP-CTP coalition government (1995) are examined, it appears as a government which is modern and democratic in education and training, supportive of art and artist, encourages their popularisation and ready to allocate the necessary budget for all the foregoing. It is seen that the decisions related to education-training and art are taken with a view to support and improve education for culture and art.

When the decisions and policies on education of CTP-BG-DP government (2005) are examined, it can be seen that efforts initiated with the purpose of restructuring education would be continued with a transparent and participatory approach and efforts launched in line with the previous resolutions on education and teaching would be maintained. There are no new resolutions taken by the government for ensuring the sustainability of the previously taken decision.

An examination of the decisions and policies of CTP-BG-DP government (2013) on education reveals that National Education System, which provides the most important role and policy for training young generations which is the foundation of the existence of TRNC and guarantee of its future, would be based on a modern level and scientific foundations and restructured, that the envisaged national education policy was one which was based on the needs of citizens, political conjuncture, rule of law, strategic vision, scientific foundations, transparent and fair approaches, egalitarian vision and realities of the country, that apprenticeship and vocational education would be supported that the intermediate staff gap of our country will be closed and our young citizens would be able to find jobs more easily, program development project for elementary and secondary schools would continue, in-service training would be made widespread and perpetual taking into the modern and scientific innovations and needs for professional development of teachers.

When the education policy of the government is examined, it is seen that the coalition government had a modern, scientific approach in line with Ataturk principles and revolutions and especially the understanding of laicism, as well as a transparent, fair, egalitarian attitude , but that it did not give any special place to music and its education.

## 6. Conclusions

In conclusion, National Education council resolutions are rather superficial in terms of the basic problems of music education such as education program, standards of books and modern music education directed at creativity, and qualifications of teachers. There are government decisions as regards education but none has been detected on music education. Activity reports of Ministry of National Education including decisions on music education are found to be mostly on Anatolian Fine Arts High Schools, many of which cannot be implemented before infrastructure problems are handled. That the minutes on works conducted by the state could not be reached shows that archiving, which is necessary and important, was not performed. In accordance with all the foregoing, examination of MEB council resolutions, activity reports and government decisions showed that Northern Cyprus lacks a music policy, that every incoming administration can change education, thus, music education, in accordance with its decisions.

## Recommendations

At National Education Councils problems related to music courses must be discussed in more detail and upon more scientific foundations. Music teachers must be graduated from a music education department, music course hours must be increased, music courses must be more qualified, music course students must not be directed based on their existing skills but provided with self-respect for using their existing capacities, must be correlated to other courses, the budget reserved for education must allocate more resources for musical instruments. Activities targeted and realised as regards music education in MEB activity reports; education and training must be more qualified, directed towards creativity, and restructured based on the existing situation. A sustainable innovative music education policy must be created with the purpose of raising individuals who have a view for improving culture and art in Northern Cyprus, productive, self-respecting and knowledgeable about their own culture as well as that of the world .

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