

3. Discussion around priority international markets and showcases

DD asked those around the table to highlight which territories and events were priorities for them.

The first point raised and one that was repeated around the table during the meeting was that the domestic market needed to be stronger and better supported. There were criticisms about the lack of radio play for UK urban acts and a lack of infrastructure for the urban music sector to grow. The group also thought that the urban sector needed a closer relationship with Government.

DD said that this meeting was specifically organised to focus on exports but recognised that there were issues of importance that needed to be addressed around the urban music sector in general.

He therefore suggested that the group might want to make representations to attend meetings of the Music Business Forum. Attendees suggested it was up to them to make their voice heard and agreed to consider setting up their own small Forum.

Andy Thomas mentioned that the DCMS's Creative Economy Programme was looking into diversity and suggested that some of the issues raised at the meeting could inform the diversity strand of the CEP. Billy Grant said that he had been a member of the diversity working group and encouraged others to feed in.

AT agreed to send attendees a contact for the Head of CEP team at DCMS.

Action: Group to nominate a lead person to write to Music Business Forum to ask to attend a future meeting. DCMS to send contact details (since done).

Action: Andy Thomas to provide attendees contact details for Broadcasting policy officials and CEP leads within DCMS (since done).

Priority Markets and events and what success have attendees had in exporting to date.

DD explained that MEG was currently reviewing its priority territories and also assessing the support for missions. They needed to decide which countries and events were priorities both in the developed and emerging markets and to direct resources that best met the needs of the industry.

He asked the group to identify which territories and events were priorities for them, to outline any successes they had had in exporting, and to make any comments about exporting in general. The following points were made:

Mick Clark felt that there was no particular formula for success abroad but that the key factor to export success was for everyone to concentrate on producing better records.

Kianda Hoji said that after working with Peking University he thought that China had great export opportunities particularly for producers who were in high demand to help local talent.

Adam Elfin felt that less focus should be put on the US as a territory as it was too hard to break and had plenty of talent of its own. He thought Europe should be taken advantage of more, especially France.

Harry Leckstein agreed that it was very hard to compete with the urban music sector in the US. Other areas should be looked at in Eastern Europe. For example the Czech Republic had plenty of opportunities especially for live music. Harry said he had also recently been to Hong Kong and thought there could be some opportunities for talent exchange, as local music makers faced problems breaking into the western market.

Billy Grant thought that the US had to be one of the key places to target. He also thought that South East Asia and India were great markets but noted that to reach the local market your records would need to be bootlegged first due to the high piracy rates. DD added that since there were no copyright laws in many of these countries, money would need to be earned by other means, for example touring and on line or synch licensing.

Simon Goffe thought priority markets depended on the artist and the product you were exporting. He also said that he had recently attended an UKTI sponsored synchronisation event in the US and encouraged others to consider taking part in future missions.

Jade Richardson thought the UK Urban sector needed more visibility at events like Midem and the Mixtape Power Summit. She also thought Africa was an interesting territory to explore.

Hugh Francis thought it was important to emphasise the digital aspects of music and was interested to hear about on-line licensing deals that had been instigated following discussions at MEG. He also thought there needed to be further discussions around withholding tax. Japan was the biggest export territory for his company. He also suggested the UK needed to promote itself more aggressively if it was to gain a foothold in the US market. He also said he thought there was more US music on UK TV and radio than UK music.

Paulette Long said that the US and Japan were their biggest markets and agreed with MEG that China and India were the most important emerging markets. She also agreed with other attendees that domestic issues needed to be looked at urgently.

Jackie Davidson thanked DCMS and DD for arranging this meeting but wanted there to be more dialogue between the sector and Ministers. She said that it was important for the sector to come together and to present its views clearly.

Ameena M. McConnell expressed her concern at lack of awareness about the funding opportunities available to the urban sector and it's under representation at the strategy building/decision making meetings for the development of Industry. She added that smaller organisations were better connected with the grass roots and should be therefore consulted more often from the early stages of development of initiatives that have an impact on their work.

Victor Redwood-Sawyer said that as co-founder of Blak Twang, knew Germany was a big territory for Hip Hop. As a producer and a founder member of UK R&B Act, Hil St Soul he discovered that there are avenues into the US Market. He thought it was simply a question of quality. They had also enjoyed a measured level of success within Smooth Jazz and Adult Urban/Contemporary radio and VH1, which has resulted in R&R and Billboard chart positioning. They have also had calls to tour South Africa & Zambia.

Kanya King also concurred with many of the thoughts raised, especially on domestic issues. She was also glad that Africa had been mentioned as a potential export territory. Kanya also said that she welcomed the idea of a well-funded, resourced trade association for the Urban Music sector as it was something MOBO have already started looking into.

Remi Harris also noted that there seemed to be a lack of awareness of trade associations and said that AIM recognised the importance of having a diverse list of members.

DD raised the issue of whether there was need for one more Urban Music sub-meeting. The group welcomed another meeting but it was felt that this should be for industry to organise and then feed through to MEG.

Action: Aameena and Kienda to attend the next MEG on 14/12 on behalf of the Urban sector and to feed back to attendees (since done).

AOB

Attendees raise the issue of lack of UK music on radio. Doug suggested the group should develop a lobbying strategy to approach the relevant radio stations.

Summary of Action points from this meeting

- Action 1: Group to nominate a lead person to write to Music Business Forum to ask to attend a future meeting. DCMS to send contact details.
- Action 2: Andy Thomas to provide attendees contact details for Broadcasting policy officials and CEP leads within DCMS.
- Action 3: Aameena and Kienda to attend the next MEG on 14/12 on behalf of the Urban sector and to feed back to attendees.