

‘Art is not free but comes with price tag’

By [IMAN MAN](#)



It was late last year that she left their headquarters, there in Oslo, to attend a ten-day workshop, here in Dar es Salaam. In fact, this first “NORCODE Regional Training Programme on Collective Management of Copyright and Related Rights 2017”, brought together over 70 copyright stakeholders, from all over Africa.

It was organised by NORCODE and coordinated by them with assistance from the Copyright Society of Tanzania (COSOTA), being the host country. The participants were from Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, the Tanzanian Mainland and Zanzibar, which stood as a country, having its own copyright organisation.

According to Dirdal the main reason for having this training programme was her country’s way of helping strengthening the copyright systems on the

African Continent. “There’s a reason why we started doing work like this about ten years ago.

In Norway we have a fairly well established collective system and year after year we have been collecting money that we couldn’t send to the rightful people because there was no receiving CMO (Collecting Management Organisation) in the country that we had collected it for,” Dirdal explained.

“So, we decided to take some of that money, which we couldn’t distribute to Africa, Asia or wherever and set-up an organisation like NORCODE, which would solely focus on strengthening the copyright situation in developing countries,” she added.

In addition to this, their request, to the Norwegian foreign ministry, for funds to have a three-year plan, on how to do regional training programmes, was successful. Therefore, together with what they had from the CMO, they were able to hold the first of these workshops here in Dar es Salaam, late last year.

The second one of these training programmes is slated to be in Asia followed by Central America and then back in Africa next year. The date has been set as to when they are expecting to be back on the African continent again, although the exact country has not been selected as yet.

Dirdal hopes “Rights Holders” in Africa will get something from the programme, towards redressing a situation where it has been recorded that only 40 per cent of radio stations on the Continent pay royalties. Increasing this figure, she said, to even 50 or 60 per cent, would make “a big difference”. “This would mean a lot of money for the Right Holders,” she suggested.

The NORCODE Managing Director, believes the government of a country should make sure that the copyright act complies with all international treaties and empower Right Holders to administrate their own rights. In this case she complimented the proposal put in the amendments to the copyrights act that is going through the process, for having the clause whereby COSOTA should only operate as a registrar.

Then, there is the suggestion for the collecting body (CMO), to be in another hand completely. Dirdal hopes that the authorities work together

with the Right Holders so as to make sure the laws are written in a way that it will bare fruits. She then pointed some reasons why she believes the Norwegian copyright system is working to some levels of satisfaction.

Apart from it being in operation for many years now, she indicated the importance that it NORCODE is wholly owned by the Norwegian collectors' society. Added to this their copyright system has been accepted by the business community, which is fully inclusive of radio, television, shopping malls or wherever music is being used. "It is known that if they want to use music they have to pay for it, because it has a value.

However, we do have challenges, like the big international corporations, such as Google or Facebook. It's hard to get a fair deal for all the music that's driving their operations," she admitted. Having said this, she still maintained that the reason why the Norwegian copyright system is sort of functional, is because it has been enforced for a long.

Added to this their society for composers and authors, she pointed out is over 100 years old. There were later drives which are 25 to 30 years old.

Therefore, she maintains the entire system has had time to establish itself. This is quite in contrast to many countries, which includes Tanzania, where it has been hard to get that start period, where they have licenced enough that they can run an office on administration fee.

This, Dirdal singled out as being a critical point from which one can be self-sufficient and able to educate the users of artistic works have value because they have been created by people, therefore, have to be paid for.