

2025 - 2029  
**INTERNATIONAL  
MUSIC CAMP  
STRATEGIC PLAN**



**Inside**

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Board of Directors' Strategic  
Planning Summary

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Identified Goals & Strategies

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Raw Data from Planning Session



# BACKGROUND

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In the summer and fall of 2024, the leadership of *International Music Camp* and Strengthen ND developed a five-year **Strategic Plan**.

Founded in 1956, International Music Camp (IMC) offers a wide array of cultural study for students and adults. While the camp name speaks of its foundation in Music, IMC also offers summer camp programs in Dance, Creative Writing, Painting, Drawing, and Theater.

Students from across the world practice and learn together each season. Instruction ranges from beginning to advanced study, and classes are divided in order to challenge each person to the fullest of their ability.



**Strengthen ND** is a dynamic, multi-faceted, and well-connected organization that works across North Dakota to elevate nonprofits and rural communities to support a high quality of life and resources for vulnerable populations through community and economic development.



**StrengthenND**<sup>®</sup>

# MISSION, VISION, & VALUES

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## Our Mission

*The International Music Camp enriches lives through artistic expression and personal growth through our summer school of fine arts.*

## Vision

*The International Music Camp provides an elevated and welcoming fine arts camp experience with financial and capital sustainability and stability.*

## What We Believe In

The leadership, staff, and volunteers of International Music Camp value:

- **Camper Connectivity & Belonging** - Every camper, regardless of background, feels welcomed, valued, supported, and connected to staff and volunteers.
- **Opportunity** - The International Music Camp provides equal-opportunity for education and employment and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, age, disability, or veteran status.
- **Personal Discovery & Creativity** - Campers are provided the freedom and opportunity to develop themselves personally and creatively, with gentle guidance and support from staff.
- **Educational Experiences** - High quality fine arts education is at the core of a camper's experience, starting first with recruiting highly qualified local and international teachers.
- **Thoughtful Growth** - Growth of the campership is focused on rural and underserved areas by utilizing available resources, like teachers and past campers.
- **Sustainability** - Whether it be organizational or environmental, sustainable practices are implemented daily to reinforce kindness for the Earth and save much-needed organizational resources.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

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At Strengthen ND, our motto is: ***“If you can’t write it, you can’t do it.”***

We believe that creating and documenting an organization's goals and methodology is the most vital step toward actualizing the outcomes you hope to see. Of course an organization can have a clear strategy without having a strategic plan. A strategic plan is merely a document that puts on paper the long-term chosen direction. While a clear direction may exist anyway, writing it down enables it to be better understood by residents, by partners, by developers, and even by community staff and elected officials.

Our belief at Strengthen ND is that an effective strategic plan makes choices based on: 1) knowing who you are; 2) knowing what brings change; 3) predicting how the environment is likely to change; and 4) rigorous and honest self-appraisal. Strengthen ND was able to support the implementation of a planning process that involved IMC’s stakeholders, staff, and board members. Through a board-driven planning session and stakeholder survey, data was able to be collected on the current state of IMC, as well as what could be future priorities. Laid out in the document, you will find the details of the strategic planning process, relevant outcomes, and the distilled goals and strategies to guide future growth.



# STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

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Throughout September and October 2024, Strengthen ND teamed up with IMC to hear from our community! We sent out a digital survey to get a better sense of what's working and what could be even better. Here's what we found:

- **Engagement and Awareness**

- Word-of-mouth and educator referrals are the primary recruitment channels.
- Family traditions and school visits play a significant role in participation.

- **Overall Experience**

- Most respondents rated their experience positively, highlighting instructional quality and organizational excellence.
- Mixed feedback was noted on free-time activities; more options for less active campers were suggested.

- **Areas for Improvement**

- Evening Activities & Free Time Options: Because a wide variety of individuals come to camp, ensuring that activities are flexible and abundant is a must.
- Facilities and Infrastructure: Modernizing facilities and overall ease of building accessibility is important for long-term camper recruitment and retention.

- **Future Program Recommendations**

- Expand offerings to include animation, video production, and graphic arts.
- Increase professional development for educators.
- Develop more program options to empower campers of all abilities to participate.

# BOARD PLANNING SESSION

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In November 2024, Strengthen ND worked with IMC's staff and board to engage in a modified strategic planning process. The process included first identifying the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, as well as both internal and external hot topics to address through goal creation. Below is an overall summary of the planning session:

## **What Makes IMC Special**

### **Our People & Culture**

- Our staff and teachers come from all over the world, bringing fresh ideas and creative energy.
- We're all about making IMC a welcoming, positive, and inspiring place that includes everyone.

### **Bouncing Back & Staying Strong**

- We've faced challenges (hello, 2020), but we've come back even stronger.
- Our staff love what they do, and we work hard to keep our team together.

### **Learning That Sticks**

- We have incredible teachers who help campers grow their talents and confidence.
- IMC is a stepping stone for young artists, musicians, and educators.

### **A Place That Feels Like Home**

- IMC has a long-standing reputation as a creative and supportive space.
- Campers, teachers, and staff keep coming back because of the friendships and experiences they build here.

### **The Perfect Location**

- Camp is in a quiet, beautiful spot—ideal for creativity, focus, and fun.
- Camp is easy to access for both American and Canadian students.

# BOARD PLANNING SESSION

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## Challenges & Opportunities

### Keeping the Campers at the Center

- We want IMC to always be a place where campers feel valued and heard.
- Making sure we have the right balance of camper numbers and personal attention.

### Remembering Our Roots While Evolving

- Keeping the traditions that make IMC special while also growing to meet new needs.
- Using storytelling to share the impact of camp experiences in fundraising and outreach.

### Travel Burden & Cost

- Breaking down barriers like travel time and cost so more young artists can join us.
- Creating partnerships to make participation more affordable and available to all.

### Strengthening Leadership & Advocacy

- Continue centering training and education for board, staff, and volunteers to always put campers first in decision-making.
- Finding creative ways to fundraise and partner with organizations that believe in the arts as much as we do.



# GOALS & STRATEGIES

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## 1 - MAKE IMC MORE ACCESSIBLE TO CAMPERS & THEIR FAMILIES

**Strategy: Make camp better known across the region.**

- Make sure every young artist, no matter their background and barriers to access, has the chance to thrive at IMC.
- Find new ways to introduce IMC to schools, communities, and arts programs in areas without a strong representation at IMC already (SK, MT).
- Remove barriers to participation by exploring and implementing transportation alternatives, scholarship supports, and low-cost access to the International Peace Garden.
- Foster learning among board members to help them understand how to best serve the needs of the current camper population.

## 2 - EXPAND FINE ARTS OPPORTUNITIES FOR CAMPERS

**Strategy: Develop and grow creative experiences so campers can explore new art forms and express themselves in new and applicable ways.**

- Add exciting and culturally relevant programs when opportunities are available and timing is right for IMC.
- Bring in artists, musicians, and educators from different backgrounds to expand camper learning.
- Work with partners to secure funding for program growth apart from raising camper costs.
- Articulate and communicate the real-life value of the summer camp experience for campers and staff.
- Continue asking for feedback from campers, staff, and faculty about programming to identify future areas of growth and improvement.



### 3 - STRENGTHEN IMCS PARTNERSHIP WITH INTERNATIONAL PEACE GARDEN FOR CAMPER SUCCESS

**Strategy: Make sure every camper's experience is heard and shared, helping future campers, families, and supporters feel the magic of IMC.**

- Work closely with IPG to advance safe and functional buildings and spaces on the IMC campus.
- Continue finding partnerships with IPG to keep IMC costs manageable and affordable to campers.
- Continue collaborating with other arts and music organizations to recruit inspirational guest artists, instructors, and special events to IPG for campers and the surrounding communities to enjoy.

### 4 - BRING CAMPERS STORIES TO LIFE

**Strategy: Make sure every camper's experience is heard and shared, helping future campers, families, and supporters feel the magic of IMC.**

- Find opportunities for campers, staff, and alumni to tell their IMC stories through videos, art, and performances.
- Build a collection of camper-led stories to highlight the friendships, creativity, and growth that happen here.
- Incorporate camper stories as part of the IMC social media and newsletters
- Continue working with local media to showcase the impact IMC on young people.

