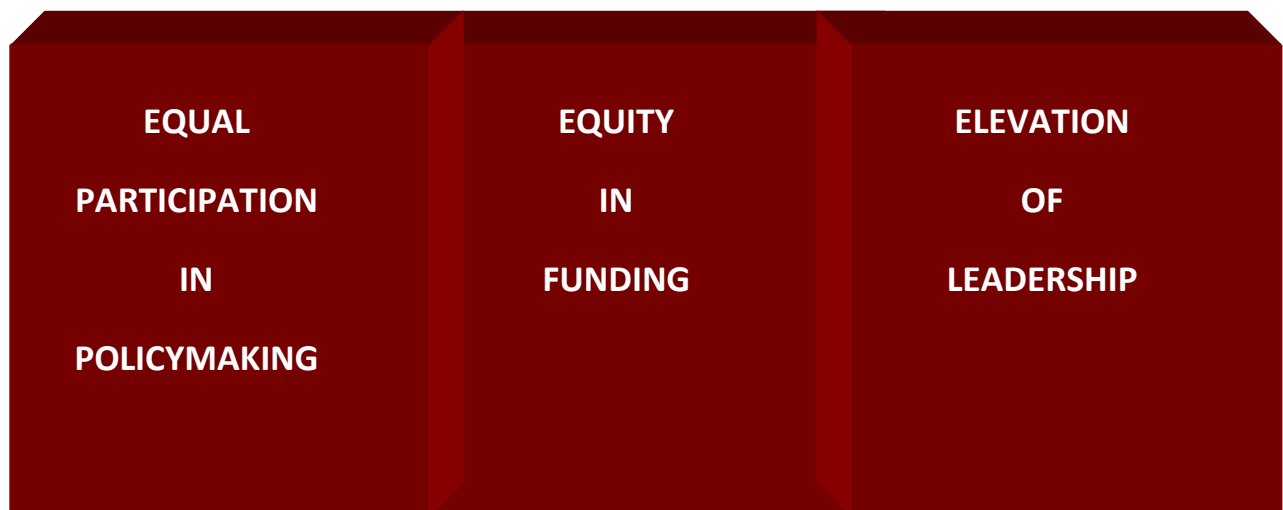


Building the 21st Century Agenda for Cultural Democracy

OD XII HIGHLIGHTS



INTRODUCTION

On August 12 to 14, 2010, The Association of American Cultures (TAAC) brought the vital discussion of cultural democracy to Chicago with Open Dialogue 2010. The theme for this twelfth biennial symposium was **Building the 21st Century Agenda for Cultural Democracy**. Over three days, participants from around the nation engaged in action-oriented sessions, connected around food, music and common purpose and concretely planned how to craft and realize the Cultural Democracy Agenda in 21st century America. Open Dialogue 2010 also featured an inspiring keynote by Tony award nominated director, and artistic director of True Colors Theatre, Kenny Leon. Additional remarks were made by Patrice Walker Powell of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Participants were treated to a tour of the DuSable Museum of African American History featuring a walkthrough of the notable *African Presence in Mexico* exhibition. From there, attendees continued on to a lively night of food, music, dancing and art at the National Museum of Mexican Art. Exhibitions included *Mexicanidad*, a journey through Mexican culture and history, and a touring exhibit from Chiapas, Mexico, *Millas y Kilometros*.

Open Dialogue 2010 also featured a dynamic and diverse sampling of artists performances as joyous reminders of what we all are striving to celebrate and protect.

Featured performers were Chicago's own Funkadesi, the rock-folk infused indigenous group Sak Tzevul from Chiapas and Hector Silveria y Su Orquesta.

Additional performances included a spoken word and dance performance (Young Chicago Authors), a drum circle from the American Indian Center, a jazz ensemble from Jazz Institute of Chicago, traditional Chinese music (Chinese Fine Arts Society) and West African dance and drumming (Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago).

This document **summarizes** the sessions presented at Open Dialogue 2010 and communicates the key ideas and action items that emerged. Thanks to our intrepid note-takers! We encourage you to review this summary with an eye toward how you in your work, art, community and organizations can forward the agenda for Cultural Democracy. Many important ideas and much input were given at each session and unfortunately we could not include all of it here. Please see our website at www.taac.com for additional information, video and photographs of the events.

Sincere appreciation to our Chicago hosts: Illinois Arts Council, Arts Midwest, City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and The Joyce Foundation. Other key sponsors included: Americans for the Arts, The Boeing Company, Chicago community Trust, National Endowment for the Arts, National Museum of Mexican Art, Ohio Arts Council, Washington State Arts Commission and Western States Arts Federation. (Please see our website for scholarship supporters)

And thank you for your participation in this vibrant, personally enriching and politically relevant biennial event we call Open Dialogue. We look forward to seeing you next time!

From the TAAC Board of Directors

Session: Philanthropic Principles of Pluralism- Institutional Capacity and Undercapitalization

Description: Many foundation and corporate-giving strategies have significantly changed in the new economic climate. How are culturally specific organizations and artists of color impacted? Are the new funding guidelines moving cultural democracy forward, or are we losing ground? What changes in funding policies need to occur to ensure sustainability of our organizations? How do we make these changes?

Speakers

Susan Taylor Batten/President & CEO, Association of Black Foundation Executives

Deepa Gupta/Program Officer, The John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Phillip Thomas/Senior Program Officer of Community Development, The Chicago Community Trust

Angel Ysaguirre/Director of Global Community Investing, The Boeing Company

Economic Downturn

- Foundation and corporate-giving endowments have experienced decreases their net worth. Hence, most funders are having to rethink their philanthropic strategies. In addition, some are giving preference to current grantees rather than supporting new grantees
- There appears to be a decrease in foundation and corporate support to people and communities of color

Death of Professionals of Color

- African Americans represent only 7% of foundation board members (Source: Racial Equity in Funding)
- 16.9% of program officers are African American, and this figure is less for Latinos and Asian Americans (Source: Racial Equity in Funding)

Trends

- Alignment of corporate needs is stressed in grant evaluation as well as how supporting grantees will strengthen corporate positioning/branding strategies within the market
- Measurements, outcomes, and results are being emphasized to ensure the efficacy of corporate investment in grantees

Actions

Organizations need to:

- Figure out how they can best serve/meet the needs of the funder
- Demonstrate internal capacity, infrastructure and operational effectiveness
- Connect to these foundations/associations—serve on advisory committees, engage with donors who support the foundation
- Explore the area of Diversity Focused Funds—engage individual donors with the issues

Session: Equity & Access

Description: How are artists of color supported in the creation of their art? The Alliance of Artists Communities will address issues of access and equity at artist residencies, through the lens of the Midwestern Voices & Visions project. Midwestern Voices & Visions is led by the Alliance of Artists Communities, the national association of artist residency programs, in partnership with The Joyce Foundation and seven artist residency sites in the Midwest, to support artists of color in the Midwest.

Speakers

Michelle T. Boone, Senior Program Officer of Culture, The Joyce Foundation
Regin Igloria, Director of Artists-in-Residence, The Ragdale Foundation
Robert Karimi, Artistic Director, kaotic good productions/ Cooking Con Karimi
Wayne Lawson, Former Executive Director, Ohio Arts Council
Caitlin Strokosch, Executive Director, The Alliance of Artists Communities

Issues

- Dearth of diversity in artist residency programs
- Lack of access to information on residency programs
- Economic realities—participating in a residency program for two or three weeks is a challenge for many artists
- Lack of familiarity with the application process
- Tokenism—No one likes to be the only one – feeling of being isolated
- Perceptions that residencies are like vacations

Strategies and Actions

- Watch for institutional change within organizations that host residency programs. Residencies should not be the only strategy used to foster multiculturalism. Residencies are more than outreach programs
- Examine the language on applications – find new and creative ways of presenting the work
- Examine the selection process—who is making the decision?
- Establish networks that can offer access to residency programs

Session: Raising More Money to Support the Good Work That We Do

Description: How can culturally specific organizations and artists of color gain greater support from individuals within and outside our own communities? People of color have been historically and systematically excluded from controlling our own economic futures. Artists and organizations will have a more sustainable future if they are successful in securing a broad base of financial support from individuals at all income levels within their own communities and like-minded people outside their communities. This broad base of support will enable a secure future allowing groups to make their own decisions on programs and priorities. Jerry Yoshitomi will discuss methods to help redress historic and economic inequalities, and David Dombrosky will talk about inexpensive, yet effective methods to connect with donors through technology and social media tools.

Speakers

David Dombrosky, Executive Director, Carnegie Mellon Art & Technology

Jerry Yoshitomi, Chief Knowledge Officer, MeaningMatters, LLC

Facts/Statistics

- Seventy-five percent of all gifts are made by individuals
- On average, individuals with lower income levels donate more than those from higher income levels

Strategies

- Ask people about the experiences with your organization. This can activate their memories and increase the potential of them making a contribution
- Engage donors by offering incentives (i.e. "Donate \$20 and a tree will be planted in your name")
- Establish an online donation system on your website
- Use a third party online donation service because they can provide SECURED sites
- Make your default donation amount the second to smallest option amount
- Provide gifts to those who make a larger donation
- Micro-donations (\$50 or less) take less time for individuals to make a commitment. These types of donations are suitable for a broad market. Also, micro donation should be as easy as 3 clicks
- Generate/create a buzz by using e-blasts or materials that can be incorporate into emails
- Consider using text-messaging as a tool
- Find out what your audience uses (i.e. don't create an app unless you know that your audience uses iPhones)
- Don't use a "Donate Now" button. It should be relevant/compelling (i.e. "Save a Child in Israel")

EQUAL PARTICIPATION IN POLICYMAKING

Session: Collaboration to Engage Community Empowerment

Description: Creating access and visibility for any cultural organization only works with good partnerships and effective collaboration. Join the discussion on what is needed to form positive relationships in 2010 and how through collaboration we can collectively advance the 21st Century agenda for cultural democracy.

Speakers

Hatem Abudayyeh, Executive Director, Arab American Action Network

Bau Graves, Executive Director, Old Town School of Folk Music

Joe Podlasek, Executive Director, American Indian Center

Rebeccah Sanders, Executive Director, Chicago Cultural Alliance

Sherry Williams, President, Bronzeville/Black Chicagoan Historical Society

Lessons/Observations

- Build strong alliances that enable our voices to be heard by the government
- Create strategies/opportunities that promote awareness of cultural organizations and that reinforce the position the cultural organizations represent the mainstream
- Create opportunities that impart knowledge and understanding of certain minorities that are not always consider or not invited to be part of the conversation (i.e. Native Americans)
- Learn about other cultures. This process often times provides a greater understanding of your own culture

Additional Comments

- The government has not responded to the needs of arts advocacy in the United States. However, we have not responded to our own needs
- When working with other organizations it's important to focus on your similarities, but also on the difference and when differences are accepted, it is much easier to build a strong relationship and trust
- Bring youth into decision making. Let them identify their issues, needs, and desires
- Building unusual relationships has been one of the main benefits of being involved with the Alliance. Such as Black Chicago Heritage Museum partnering with an Environmental Organization on comparing African American Migration to Chicago to the migration patterns of birds
- Refocus the conversation on values to bridge the gap between the political parties

Session: Stand Up and Be Counted - Equity in Data Collection

Description: When doing research on the vibrancy of the arts and the demographics of the audience, what we track and who we track determines how the story of arts and culture in America will be told. National and local organizations have recently completed research on trends in the arts, with different results. Each will describe their process and results followed by an open discussion.

Speakers

Roland Kushner, Assistant Professor of Business, Muhlenberg College

John McInerney, Vice President of Marketing & Communications, Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance

About the National Arts Index (NAI)

- Measuring the cultural....What's Treasured is Measured
- The arts index measures the vitality of arts culture using 76 different indicators (refer to Americans for the Arts website)
- Seventy-six indicators had to meet these markers: Meaningful, National, Annually Recurring, Available, Affordable, Statistically Valid
- NAI could not answer: Equity of access, Equity of participation, quality of the arts, accessibility of funding, differences between communities
- Problems measuring cultural diversity: "Long Tails" or long term arts activities are not recognized, as opposed to Lady Gaga performances and other big popular cultural industries. A lot of variety, but not much critical mass. There is a scarcity of data

The Local Arts Index (AFTA project)

- Objective is to measure of vitality, character, performance
- Distinguish what works well from what does not work so well. (100 local partners, 120 counties)
- How is Arts Index positioned?—Measure of arts employment, activity and establishments are aspects of vitality

Philadelphia: Research into Action (Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance)

- Objective is to double the cultural engagement in the region by 2020
- Key strategies: a) Conduct and analyze research on emerging patterns of cultural participation (i.e. if you use different definitions, Latino and Black audiences are showing more participation), b) Seed capital, c) Marketing support, d) Product development, and e) Apply new technology and social networking in the cultural sector

ELEVATION OF LEADERSHIP

Session: Maintaining Legacy while Moving Forward

Description: Many of our cultural institutions are finding themselves at a crossroads. With a rich and vibrant history, organizations struggle to honor the past, while embracing changing leadership and a changing world. This session presents approaches and compelling models of organizations that have successfully transitioned leadership and solidified their relevance to their communities.

Speakers

Amina Dickerson, Retired senior executive of Kraft Foods; arts leader

Malik Gillani, Executive Director, Silk Road Theatre Project

Jody Gottfried Arnhold, Board Member, Ballet Hispanico

Nicole Robinson, Director of Community Involvement, Kraft Food, Inc.

Eduardo Vilaro, Artistic Director, Ballet Hispanico

Issues Surrounding Succession

- Lack of professional development (i.e. founder is not provided opportunities to grow)
- Founder and institution share the same identity
- Founder is afraid of the outside world
- Lack of advancement opportunities (i.e. founder has reached the ceiling)
- Poor working conditions to attract new talent
- Board does not want to tackle the issue
- Fear of change
- No “alarm bells” going off—no recovery plan in place
- No one’s thinking about what’s next

Best Practices

- Develop succession plans—directly supports long term institutional building
- Exchange and sharing of knowledge
- Be sensitive to and aware of change
- Invest in your organization so to attract new talent
- Board led transitions
- Organized Transitions—Transition-In and Transition-Out of leadership
- Ask the hard questions—who is ready—what if....

Session: Capacity Building - The 21st Century Cultural Organization

Description: Cultural organizations were founded on serving their community and creating missions that would affect change both internally and externally. However, how can we build capacity without burnout or straying from our missions as we move through changing times, face economic hardships, and see a growing need for services offered by cultural institutions?

Speakers

Jilly Canizares. Executive Director, FilAm Arts

Maria De Leon, Executive Director, National Association of Latino Arts and Culture

Leslie Ito, Program Officer, California Community Foundation

Program Models

FilAmARTS

- Issue—address the increasing tension of the changing constituency. Initiated by the City of LA for programs for Filipino youth, to offer more positive alternatives to gangs
- Capacity Building: Initial assessment is key—to make sure you aren't just following the outside trends but doing what works for best for the organization
- Developed a success equation (a model from the Center for What Works) then developed indicators to track progress and help make critical decisions
- Conclusions—valued inclusiveness over the quality of the aesthetic of the arts
- Leverage local businesses using the arts as a neutral ground
- Measure local volunteers to gauge our leadership pipeline
- Employ artist, Using street arts as a tool

NALAC (National Association of Latino Arts and Culture)

- Philosophy—capacity building that matters is the leadership development
- Leadership institute to make sure that the up and coming leaders can learn from us and , don't have to repeat the same trial and error lessons that we did
- Teach youth about partnerships and collaborations
- Advocacy is important— teaches youth to speak out about their cause, advocate for their communities.
- Building the next generation of leaders

Session: DIY- Cultural Arts in the 21st Century

Description: Artists have a long history of developing their own tools, programs, organizations and communities in response to their own needs, specific time and place. How has this generation of cultural artists and organizations emerged in response to the needs of their communities and the politics of the larger society? How are today's artists redefining cultural work? Young leaders share their development of DIY approaches to art and organizations.

Speakers

Barbara Koenen, Director, Chicago Artists Resource (CAR)

Manwah Lee, Executive Director, Street Level Youth Media

Ed Marszewski, Co-Prosperity Sphere

Duncan MacKenzie, Executive Producer, Bad at Sports

ElizaBeth Simpson, Performance Artist, UCIMC member, Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center

Jorge Valdivia, General Manager, Radio Arte

Program Models

Chicago Artists Resource—CAR grew out of a need to bring the artistic community together and to provide a resource for individual artists. CAR is a program of the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs. CAR describes the landscape of opportunity for Chicago artists working in Dance, Music, Theater and Visual Arts through a unique combination of:

- artists-curated resource directory
- links to local and national organizations
- includes articles (i.e. [New York Foundation for the Arts](#); [UIC Center for Health in the Arts](#); [GYST, Ink](#), and [Ann Daley Consulting](#))
- provides a platform for the voices, artworks, and experiences of Chicago artists

Public Media Institute—mission is to create and incubate innovative arts programming and cultural infrastructures to transform people –socially and intellectually–through the production of festivals, art spaces, events, exhibitions, community projects, artifacts and media. PMI provides alternative viewpoints after being disillusioned with “left” establishment. It expands its presence primarily through trading and bartering to make things happen. PMI advocates for all kinds of emerging art except theatre and film, along with addressing gaps in representation of cultural capital.

Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center –a grassroots organization committed to using media production and distribution as tools for promoting social and economic justice in the Champaign County area. UCI-UC fosters the creation and distribution of media, art; narratives emphasizing underrepresented voices and perspectives; promotes empowerment and expression through media and arts education.

- philosophy: stories represent the cultural narrative and through stories gain access
- spokes council: democratically run org.; people who do the work make the decisions
- staff: all volunteers; decision making is through a spokes council structure;
- control of land: purchased the Post Office Building and now rent to the Post Office
- pools resources: financial, equipment and human capital; small operating budget of \$200,000

Radio Arte is owned by the National Mexican Fine Arts Museum; trains youth in media; started from scratch, paid positions; model for youth in radio broadcasting and goal is to become a full site media center

Lessons learned: a) Persistence; b) Know when to end something; c) Don't duplicate services; d) Do work regardless of funding; e) Let group own the project; f) Make sure that there are resources to support work; g) Sustainability; h) Volunteers and community stakeholders keep work alive, partnerships also can help to make things sustainable; i) Community –if the community does not support it then maybe it's not worth doing.

NEXT STEPS—PARTICIPANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

A d v o c a c y

- Develop a “digest/position paper” outlining priorities – equal participation in policymaking equity in funding, elevation of leadership
- Disseminate the document strategically to key decision makers
- Identify key decisions makers (individuals/organizations) to who should be contacted (i.e. NEA, NEH, IMLS, AFTA, Smithsonian, Urban League, Dept. of Education, Dept. of Juvenile Justice, Corporation for National and Community Service, etc.)
- Arrange meetings with key decision makers
- Be proactive and invite TAAC to the table with decision makers
- Consider re-framing the narrative of our “ask – assess the politics – champion politics of inclusion

F u n d e r s

- Increase presence with national funders
- Attend foundation conferences (i.e. Grant makers in the Arts); make TAAC’s priorities known; gain buy-in

F u t u r e C o n f e r e n c e D e s i g n

- Allocate time to celebrate current achievements
- Explore breaking-down group size based on region, ethnicity, etc.
- Design structures that provide opportunities to individuals, who generally shy away from speaking in public, to be heard
- Consider smaller convenings of participants between conferences to engage in deeper dialogue
- Plan now for next conference
- Evaluate piggybacking with other conferences to reduce expenses. Note: Given the reduction in foundation/corporate underwriting \$\$\$ conferences this could be an effective strategy
- Reach out to academician (i.e. students matriculating in arts related fields to attract younger audiences

L o c a l E n g a g e m e n t

- Take responsibility locally for championing priorities.
- Meet with local decision makers on cultural policy issues

- Use grass-roots strategies/tactics to advance the agenda

Networking

- Develop a directory of all participants
- Assist with information sharing about other activities/ cultures
- Use current networking systems (i.e. CARS) to promote the collective agenda and or develop a blog

Marketing

- Fortify the TAAC brand

Membership

- Encourage all participants to become TAAC members—take out memberships

Mentorship

- Establish mentorship programs or mechanisms for “emerging arts leaders” and “mid-career professionals” to learn and/or to be coached by more seasoned cultural leaders
- Tell the story of TAAC’s history to “emerging arts leaders” who may be unaware of its evolution— who were the players – what were the issues—what were the success

Research

- Engage in solid research about TAAC priorities and other research that reinforces the agenda

Additional Thoughts

- Develop transition plans to address white supremacy bias in the arts
- Develop strategies on how members can become more active as part of TAAC’s “think tank”
- Develop succession strategies (i.e. TAAC leadership)