

MEETING SUMMARY

A NATIONAL GATHERING FOCUSING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUPPORT SYSTEMS
FOR IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE ARTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Wheelwright Museum, Santa Fe, New Mexico

June 3-4, 2005

Organized by the Fund for Folk Culture

Supported by grants from the Ford Foundation

and the National Endowment for the Arts

Summary prepared by Andrea Graham

In Attendance:

Maribel Alvarez, The Southwest Center, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
Lucero Arellano, California Arts Council, Sacramento, CA
Caron Atlas, The Ford Foundation, Brooklyn, NY
Melanie Beene, Melanie Beene & Associates, San Francisco, CA
Carolyn Bye, Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, St. Paul, MN
Inta Gale Carpenter, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
Sherwood Chen, The San Francisco Foundation, San Francisco, CA
Diana Coryat, Global Action Project, New York, NY
Kurt Dewhurst, Michigan State University Museum and Chair, FFC Board of Trustees, East Lansing, MI
Eduardo Diaz, Arts Consultant, San Antonio, TX
Andrea Graham, Independent Folklorist, Pocatello, ID
Bau Graves, Center for Cultural Exchange, Portland, ME
Gilberto Gutierrez, Grupo Mono Blanco, Veracruz, Mexico
Joyce Ice, Museum of International Folk Art and Secretary, FFC Board of Trustees, Santa Fe, NM
Florence Kabwasa-Green, The Urban Institute, Watsonville, CA
Anne L'Ecuyer, Americans for the Arts, Washington, DC
Marsha MacDowell, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI
Laura Marcus, Fund for Folk Culture, Santa Fe, NM
John McGuirk, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Menlo Park, CA
Sam Miller, Leveraging Investments in Creativity, Boston, MA
Max Niedzwiecki, Southeast Asia Resource Action Center, Washington, DC
Tey Marianna Nunn, Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, NM
Chike Nwoffiah, Oriki Theater, Mountain View, CA
Betsy Peterson, Fund for Folk Culture, Santa Fe, NM
Sally Peterson, North Carolina Arts Council, Durham, NC
Eugene Rodriguez, Los Cenzontles Mexican Arts Center, San Pablo, CA
Ratna Roy, Urvasi Dance Company & Evergreen State College, Tumwater, WA
Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, Cambodian dancer & Khmer Arts Academy, Long Beach, CA
Sandra Smith, The Columbus Foundation, Columbus, OH
Rebecca Spurrier, Institute for Cultural Partnerships, Harrisburg, PA
Bill Westerman, Art Knows No Borders, Bound Brook, NJ
Francis Wong, Asian Improv Arts & Wildflowers Institute, San Francisco, CA
San San Wong, Arts Consultant, San Francisco, CA
Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, The Rockefeller Foundation, New York, NY

Introduction

In 2004, the Fund for Folk Culture initiated a series of gatherings focusing on the development of nationwide support systems for heritage-based traditional arts that link newcomer communities and artists in the US with opportunities for cultural expression, continuity and growth. At a time of increased global political unrest, massive population displacement, and global expansion of commerce, the Fund seeks to engage diverse groups working with refugee and immigrant communities nationwide in an interdisciplinary dialogue that recognizes the importance of heritage-based cultural and artistic traditions to the well-being of individuals and communities resettling in the United States.

On June 3rd and 4th, 2005, the Fund hosted a third gathering on this topic that focused on goals, strategies and priorities for developing, enhancing or linking support systems for refugee and immigrant artists and communities, against the backdrop of transnational movement and globalization. With this gathering, our goal was to build on our previous work, and to bring the collective expertise and passion of the group to a new level by identifying concrete action to be undertaken individually and collectively.

In keeping with the interdisciplinary spirit of the Fund's gatherings series, this group was comprised of artists, cultural practitioners and activists, representatives of relevant social service and cultural agencies, funders, policy-relevant researchers and scholars, representing diverse cultural communities.

Working with a planning group, the FFC developed an agenda for the gathering to identify and prioritize actionable steps to be undertaken by participants individually and collectively at local, regional and national levels, in five primary areas:

- 1. Access to Space.** Physical space, virtual space, group-specific space, and accessible and welcoming intercultural space – where artists and communities can create, gather and present, among other activities.
- 2. Resources and Support.** Support for newcomer artists and communities for cultural programs, materials and equipment, etc.
- 3. Developing Leadership.** Training and professional development (for individual artists and community cultural activists), including artistic, professional/business, community and political leadership. Networking capacity and coalition building (within communities and across communities, connecting artists and communities, artists to other artists).
- 4. Language and Public Awareness.** Strategies for addressing the inadequacy of existing terminology, categories and definitions about art forms, aesthetics, cultural identity, creativity and tradition; lack of knowledge and understanding about diverse groups, arts and cultures; and generalized fear and prejudice.
- 5. Information, Research and Public Policy.** What are the gaps in our understanding? What information do we need? How do we integrate this information and research about newcomer

and diasporic cultural traditions and practice into other sectors? How do we affect public policy decision-making?

The meeting culminated in a series of prioritized, recommended actions in each of the five areas, which are highlighted in the summary that follows. Look for *Working Papers* on topics related to the June 2005 gathering to appear in Fall 2005.

Planning Group and Facilitation Team:

In planning the agenda and/or facilitating the meeting, coordinators Laura Marcus and Betsy Peterson worked with the following individuals: Lucero Arellano, Melanie Beene, Eduardo Diaz, Kurt Dewhurst, Bau Graves, Maria Rosario Jackson, Chike Nwoffiah, Ratna Roy, Ann Rynearson, Amy Skillman, and San San Wong. Our appreciation to the team for their knowledge, enthusiasm and thoughtfulness.

This series is part of the Fund for Folk Culture's ongoing national gatherings program, enabling artists and cultural activists to connect with related sectors, build alliances and share information and knowledge. The 2004 and 2005 Gatherings Focusing on the Development of Support Systems for Immigrant and Refugee Arts are supported by the Ford Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Asian Cultural Council.

Editor's note: In this meeting summary, invited presenters and speakers who made longer statements are identified by name. Shorter comments and questions are not attributed in order to allow the ideas to flow.

JUNE 3, DAY ONE

Presentation One

Documentation and Storytelling: Understanding the Refugee Experience

Diana Coryat, Global Action Project (GAP), New York

Diana Coryat co-founded Global Action Project (GAP) in 1991, and the organization was incorporated 1998. GAP’s mission is to provide young people with the tools to produce media on local issues, and use them as a springboard for local action and change. Their work is particularly aimed at young people of color, immigrants, and refugees, to help them engage in cultural expressions of their communities and others through video. Mass media is controlled by older people, and young people are usually left out. A report called “Off Balance,” about youth, race and crime as represented in the media, found that stories about young people on TV news focused on violent and negative situations, while positive stories constituted less than 2% of the total.

GAP’s mission focuses on media arts, social justice, and youth development. They use critical literacy to help kids understand themselves as social activists in the world. One three-year project that is now ending involved working with twelve young refugees from Sierra Leone, Bosnia, and Burundi on issues of home, loss, and community. Over the life of the project they moved from looking at the past, to the present, and finally to the future. The project came about from ESL teachers who wanted kids to use media in literacy development. The local resettlement agency also saw a need for attention to refugee kids, who were simply dropped into large urban schools and often felt misunderstood and lost. GAP worked with the same group of twelve kids for three years, every Friday night. The first year was spent getting to know each other and building trust; they started with scrapbooks of photos, poems, and stories. They also interviewed their peers and posted transcripts on their web site.

One of the media artists was awarded a two-year fellowship which covered her salary, and GAP also received Rockefeller funding. The project was artist driven and youth driven, which was very important to its success. Outreach was also very important—media projects must get out in the world. The youth have presented their work at many festivals and conferences, and schools and colleges as well—Sundance, Pan-African Film Festival, World Social Forum, Chicago International Children’s Festival, etc. They also have a curriculum guide that accompanies the videos.

Diana read a letter from Lulu, one of the students, who is from Sierra Leone and is now attending Smith College: it opened with a story about watching the movie “Home Alone” in Sierra Leone and how it made them laugh, even while battles were raging outside, and how that made her aware of the power of the media. Lulu came to New York age 14, in 2001; she watched a lot of TV at first but soon became bored. She wanted to see her own story on TV, and became fascinated by media production. For her the camera was a means of power, a way to control the world, a way to tell her story.

Diana then showed five-minute segments of two of the videos the students produced, made two years apart. The first was called “One Family,” and opened with the quote “We all came through

the same fire.” It expressed the many commonalities the students found in their refugee stories from different places (Africa and Eastern Europe), such as hiding in basements, running from attacks, and the experience of coming to New York. The second piece was called “Moving On,” made in the third year of the program and looking at the future. One girl who was profiled in the video was being pressured by family to marry, but she was not ready; she felt as if “two cultures are fighting within her.”

Break-Out Session One: Goals and Issues

Participants were assigned to one of three discussion groups of ten to twelve people each, addressing the following questions in each of the five thematic areas outlined in the introduction: What do we know collectively and individually? What do we want to change?

The reports from each group were compiled by topic into a master list of issues, questions and directions as follows:

Access to Space

- Traditional performance centers often act as gatekeepers.
- Flexible-use space is very valuable, must be appropriate for community capacity.
- The comfort level of artists with certain spaces is important to consider.
- Virtual space—web, e-mail, cell phones—can facilitate the formation of a community, often below the public radar.
- The internet is an organizing tool, community builder, a form of meeting space, a place for art making in new media.
- Transnationalism is changing the idea of “space.” Transnationalism and diasporic communities are the norm now, we need a more global vision.
- In one specific example, there was a need for a cultural center in the Cambodian community, restaurants are not a respectable place for Cambodian dance performances.
- Look at multicultural and shared spaces.
- Make a list of existing available and appropriate spaces—museums, schools, libraries, etc.
- Bridging space and bonding space and both needed. Develop collaborations between the spaces because they have different uses.
- Not all groups need or want a permanent space.
- People are resourceful about finding space, but that can marginalize them, and let public agencies off the hook.
- One survey found that arts events mostly happen in non-arts venues like community centers, libraries, schools, churches, or nightclubs.
- You need to start with people and activities, not space; that will come.
- There are many examples of arts centers built with no provision for how to fill them. Beware the Edifice Complex—a building for its own sake.

Resources and Support:

- How to reach those who are just arriving, and how to identify artists and cultural workers in those groups.
- Need to collaborate with social service interests, since they are often the first point of contact with immigrants and refugees.

- Identify existing informal networks in communities.
- Support the connectors, the people in a community who know people and facilitate getting things done.
- Funders want accountability, but does that have to mean 501(c)3 status?
- The FFC has been a good model of flexibility and accessibility in their grant programs.
- How do people find out about funders and other resources?
- Encourage arts funders to support non-arts organizations; likewise social service providers can fund arts projects.
- There is too much restricted funding. Arts projects need flexible multi-year support, and small grants can often get a lot done.

Developing Leadership

- Incubation models.
- Mentoring.
- Understanding the role of community leaders.
- Understanding the role of mediators and brokers.
- Take culturally specific ideas of leadership into account.
- Understanding factionalism and diversity within communities.
- How to foster internal leaders to keep them from burning out.
- Who takes responsibility for getting work done, and for communication (local and field wide).
- Provide technical assistance and help with grantwriting.
- Mexican Fandango Project brought youth and elders together; every time you create a young musician you create someone new to propagate the tradition; the project has also had an economic impact.
- Working with youth entails a commitment of time and resources over the long haul.
- Hire youth as project staff.
- Leadership training must be transnational.

Language and Public Awareness

- Grantmakers, critics and other decision makers lack adequate information about immigrant and refugee arts and communities.
- We lack a good vehicle to communicate complexity.
- We need to take ownership of terms to define/redefine them.
- Existing terminology is vague (i.e. ethnic, multicultural).
- Understand art as a means and as an end.
- Look at what is described, by whom, in what media.
- How will language change take place: next generation leadership, changes in traditional institutions?
- Who defines “authenticity”?
- Traditional journalism is changing, it’s not as discipline specific, but better informed art critics are still needed.
- Some terminology that needs re-examining: majority, minority; immigrant, refugee (when are you not one?); ethnic; traditional, folk; race, nationality; world music; tribe; citizenship; national or American culture; community; cultural heritage; preservation vs. innovation.

Information, Research and Public Policy

- Define our cultural lens.
- Begin at the beginning with research, rearticulate who, how, what.
- We need up-to-date research on demographics, language, education, economics, etc.
- Think about creative methods to disseminate research findings, i.e. a published report vs. an expressive performance.
- Local and global storytelling.
- Work with universities to conduct research.
- Link with social service organizations to gather information.
- Arts councils need to revisit their standards and criteria, which often don't fit newcomer artists and communities.

Presentation Two

Case Study: The Fandango Project

Gilberto Gutierrez, Mono Blanco, Veracruz, Mexico

Eugene Rodriguez, Los Cenzontles Mexican Arts Center, San Pablo, CA

The Fandango Project is a long-term collaboration and cultural exchange between Mexican musician Gilberto Gutierrez and Mexican American musician Eugene Rodriguez and the communities and students they work with. Gilberto and his group Mono Blanco have been largely responsible for the renaissance of the *son jarocho* tradition of Veracruz. In 1991 Eugene brought Gilberto to California for a series of residencies to teach the music and its cultural context, the *fandango*, to Mexican American youth. The collaboration has resulted in a number of cultural exchanges, recordings, performances, and the founding of Los Cenzontles Mexican Arts Center in San Pablo, California.

Eugene Rodriguez: The *son jarocho* are songs in 6/8 rhythms, made to accompany dance. The port of Veracruz has very multicultural roots, with strong indigenous, African and Spanish influences evident in the music. The music became very commercialized in the 1950s ("La Bamba" comes from the *son jarocho* tradition), musicians left the villages to go to cities to work, and the local tradition was decimated. For Eugene, as a third generation Mexican American, Mexican music was a fixed, static tradition. After meeting Gilberto and hearing his music he was fascinated by the counterpoint and improvisation. They have created a partnership through the music, working together for 16 years since they first met in 1989 and creating bridges between their two communities and countries. Eugene took his students to a music camp in Veracruz, which proved to be an amazing and unifying experience of cultures, rural and urban kids, and language. The chance to make music participatory rather than a spectator experience was very valuable. Eugene has taken this participatory approach to other forms of Mexican music such as mariachi, and has taken his students to other parts of Mexico as well. They created a movie (*Pasajero*) about the Mexican American kids going to Jalisco to perform.

Gilberto Gutierrez: The problems here are very similar to ones in Mexico, especially when talking about traditional culture. About 30 years ago *son jarocho* was on the verge of extinction because the party or *fandango*—the social contextual essence of the music—had been stripped away. These musical forms, in their commercial manifestation, were the pillars of Mexican

cultural identity—people thought the tradition was the costumes and the performance, but the tradition goes beyond that. They have brought the older masters into contact with the youth to pass on the whole tradition. The reemergence of the *fandango* has brought people together from different social classes and experiences. In addition to recouping the traditions, they have recouped the history behind the traditions. They have also gained a deeper understanding of the African, indigenous and Spanish roots of the music. There have been economic ramifications as well—recordings have been produced, and instrument makers and costume makers have more business and are teaching their skills. Gilberto thinks that this is a good example of democracy in action and perhaps can be exported around the music.

Eugene and Gilberto were asked how they saw their relationship continuing in the future. Eugene replied that it had been a fruitful collaboration, and he hopes to keep it going. He is now working on a second documentary video about Gilberto in Veracruz. Gilberto agreed that it has been a very creative relationship, and that now the students have developed their own relationships and have their own creative ideas, and are taking them in new directions as well. There have even been some marriages as a result of the exchanges. They will continue to do the cultural exchanges.

Eugene and Gilberto then performed several songs, and explained that the songs are improvisational, and that singers will alternate verses in response to each other. The patterns are rhythmic more than melodic, and there is a lot of counterpoint. The words are more poetic than narrative, and the songs are about creatures of nature (birds, etc.) as actors in situations that reflect human activities; the themes are often taken from Spanish literature. The dance is also a vital component of *son jarocho*, it is a percussive dance. The high voice is very Mexican, and may be an indigenous quality. Gilberto has a powerful voice and says, “I sing from the point from which I shout,” and also, “It comes from the heart muscle.”

Break-Out Session Two: Strategies

Participants broke into five discussion groups, focusing on each of the five thematic topics.

Summary points were posted from the morning discussions as a starting place for each group.

The groups then reported back to all gathering participants.

Access to Space

Maribel Alvarez, Lucero Arellano, Melanie Beene, Joyce Ice, Laura Marcus, Ratna Roy.

This group discussed three kinds of space and strategies for working with them:

1. Culturally specific non-arts space: Develop a system to identify newcomer artists. Undertake advocacy and form alliances with non-arts organizations. Create a directory of spaces—maybe a Rotary Club could take this on as a project. Publish case studies.
2. Performing and visual arts spaces: Advocate for newcomer arts groups. Collaborate with other “nomadic” arts groups. Create a directory of available venues. Form alliances with other arts organizations. Make a list of local ethnic and arts festivals.

3. Virtual space: Nurture computer education and computer access for newcomers. Create a map highlighting sites, and make the map available in different languages, both in print and electronically. Use culturally specific newspapers, newsletters, church bulletins, etc. to get information to newcomer communities.

Resources and Support

Carolyn Bye, Andrea Graham, John McGuirk, Max Niedzwiecki, Betsy Peterson, San San Wong.

Issues:

- Resources are more than just financial—there is also knowledge, training, nurturance, etc.
- Communities and artists need access, training, flexible support.
- We need to target education on the issues to various sectors—social service, arts, funders, etc.
- De-emphasize the 501(c)3 model and the push for constant growth with immigrant and refugee organizations.

Strategies:

- Incubator models or co-op structures for newcomer artists and groups. Do a demonstration project on a local level that can serve as a national model.
- Understand vertical vs. horizontal models of support in communities, depth vs. breadth.
- Support the connectors and brokers.

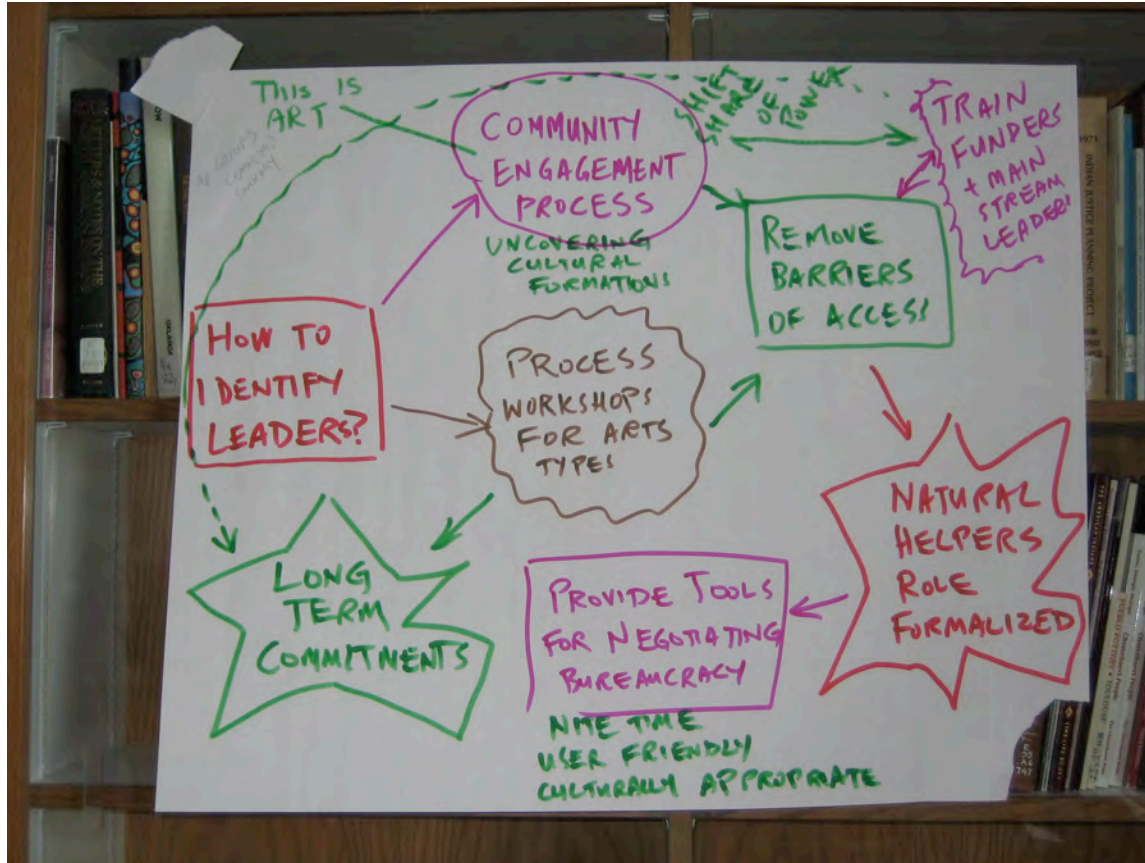
National strategies:

- Challenge the National Endowment for the Arts and state arts agencies to address immigrant and refugee arts issues.
- Promote a campaign about cultural citizenship, integrating citizens into communities.
- Work with SCORR network (State Coordinators for the Office of Refugee Resettlement) and the Department of Homeland Security to promote the arts as a means to citizenship.
- Work with communities to recast the importance of arts and culture.
- Educate ourselves on advocacy.

Developing Leadership

Diana Coryat, Bau Graves, Sally Peterson, Sandra Smith, Rebecca Spurrier, Francis Wong.

This group distilled their work into a diagram.



The group started with the question “What kind of strategies can we imagine to support leadership in immigrant and refugee communities?” The first issue is how to identify existing leaders (left center of diagram). This involves uncovering cultural formations and systems, so advancing the practice of community engagement is central to everything (top center). There must be a shift to a sharing of power. Removing barriers of access—language, non-profit status, etc. is an important step. “Natural helpers” are the future leaders—formalize their roles (lower right). We need to provide tools for negotiating the bureaucracy, and make them user friendly and culturally appropriate. We also have to train the arts community and mediators in working with immigrant and refugee communities, again through the community engagement process (center). This requires a long-term commitment. Training is also necessary for funders, community civic leaders, and “mainstream” leaders.

Language and Public Awareness

Caron Atlas, Sherwood Chen, Gilberto Gutierrez, Sam Miller, Chike Nwoffiah, Eugene Rodriguez, Sophiline Shapiro, Bill Westerman.

Language Issues:

- Articulate your own language within your own context.
- Contexts are constantly shifting, there are multiple ways to describe oneself.
- Re-appropriate and redefine current language—terms like values, immigrant, ethnic, quality, democracy.
- Language creates value.
- Develop language of appropriate complexity and multiple choice.
- Artists should define themselves by their art, not only by categories or checking one box. Artists are constantly crossing or bridging genres and disciplines (i.e. classical forms).

Public Awareness Issues:

- Design and implement an “I am an immigrant” public awareness campaign.
- Focus on the continuum of immigrant experience, the long legacy of immigrant contributions in this country.
- Affirm assets of immigrants and refugees rather than focusing on deficits.
- Create our own stage and market, and articulate value.
- Develop the intermediary role, the insider-outsider.
- Develop disciples and proponents.

Information, Research and Public Policy

Inta Carpenter, Kurt Dewhurst, Eduardo Diaz, Florence Kabwasa-Green, Anne L’Ecuyer, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto.

- There is a need for better research, and/or gaining access to existing research. We need to learn more about changing demographic realities in the US.
- Focus on cultural participation, the Fandango Project approach, not audiences.
- Is public policy the way we want to come at this? Maybe story would be a better approach—tell a story rather than send a message.
- We need a new narrative of who we are, rethink American identity.
- Cultural citizenship as the story we want to tell, it is inclusive.
- Cultural remittances is another story, the way things move back and forth across borders.
- This is a global story, it is participatory, and it is multifocal.
- Think about the human story, tell it in a multinational way.
- Articulate the story through new tools—make a splash.
- In general, arts are highly valued, but artists are not—we need to bring the artist’s voice forward.
- We need to come to grips with new realities, how people are really living their lives—it’s more complex than currently understood.
- We need to be more integrative.
- Constant critique of our work must be built in.
- We need to deconstruct the current messages and reconstruct them from our viewpoint.
- Create future scenarios, the America we want, what we aspire to; include the voices of youth.

- Funding streams need to reflect the global reality.
- We need bi-national funding, support for the study of America by scholars from other cultures.
- Characteristics of a research project: we need good examples like Fandango, capture the voices of the people, projects that integrate multiple impacts, artists must be present as subject and showcase.
- Build research teams that include people from the communities, artists, research scholars who can work with communities, policy people.

JUNE 4, DAY TWO

Presentation Three

Three Artists' Perspectives

Ratna Roy, Urvashi Dance Company & Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA

Sophiline Cheam Shapiro, Cambodian dancer & Khmer Arts Academy, Long Beach, CA

Chike Nwofiah, Oriki Theater, Mountain View, CA

Ratna Roy came to the United States in 1966, first to Seattle, and she now lives in Olympia. She received her Ph.D. in English from the University of Oregon, and is now on the faculty at Evergreen State College. She performs Odissi dance, the classical temple style of India. Most people don't train in temple dance, and in India Odissi is done by young men who also play roles of women. She has researched and reconstructed the women's tradition, which has died out in India. There are two women in India in their 80s who remember the tradition, so she is documenting their knowledge. Last June she performed in India with two students.

Sophiline Shapiro came to the US from Cambodia in 1991. She is teaching Cambodian classical dance in Van Nuys, Los Angeles and Long Beach, and is also an individual performing artist. She has established the Khmer Arts Academy in Anaheim. One of her programs provides free classes for low-income and at-risk youth, giving them basic training in Cambodian dance. Her intention is to build capacity in the community for her company. She also teaches parents to sew costumes and dress the dancers, and they want to train students in staging, marketing, management, and other aspects of running a dance company in the future.

The other facet of her work is the creative development of dances based on her experiences with the Khmer Rouge. She choreographed an adaptation of *Othello* linked to her experience. Another piece, "The Glass Box," is a 10 minute solo dance about a woman born into an ancient culture, where she is honored and protected, but also imprisoned by the culture. A dance called "Season of Migrations" addresses contemporary issues expressed through traditional forms. She works with dancers in Cambodia to develop the creative pieces, and it's enrichment for herself.

Her organization is a 501(c)3. The budget has increased with the production of *Othello* and touring, but because the organization is only 2 1/2 years old, they can't go to the NEA and other large funders yet because they are too new. They always need more opportunity for funding of projects, but the most difficult money to raise is for general operating funds. They just found a studio space and are renovating it.

Chike Nwoffiah was born in Nigeria, educated at a British boarding school in Africa, and came to the US in 1988 to take a job in Silicon Valley doing corporate strategy planning. He has done theater all his life, and is also a documentary filmmaker. He has always been perturbed by the public perception of African performance art as only “dancing and drumming.” No one knows about African theater, so in 1994 he put together a dance drama piece about the new and old self, explaining that “our first budget was my credit card.” The audience was expecting dance and drumming, so when the curtain opened on a set of an African village they were surprised, but it was very well received. Then the NAACP commissioned him to write a skit to honor Nelson Mandela, which gave them a real boost and recognition. They have since formed a 501(c)3 called Oriki Theater.

Immigrant Africans flocked to their productions, but African Americans also were attracted, searching for their African connections. People ask them to do weddings, naming ceremonies, and other personal and community rituals. Their organization has two departments—one that does theater productions, and the other for community outreach to respond to the needs of local residents. “The artist is not just about performance, you have to be relevant to the community,” he says. They do rite of passage programs for boys and girls, and lots of work with social service agencies to help pregnant teens, troubled youth, etc. They consult with school teachers on Africa-centered curricula, and also work with colleges; Chike teaches part-time at Menlo College. Their primary community is the African immigrant community, but the African American community has also taken them in; they have drum and dance classes, and training for their theater group.

They do the work because Africa is still misunderstood, they want to share the real Africa and its people and way of life through theater and performing arts. Oriki produced a video for kids on African stories using a *griot* (oral storyteller/historian), which was distributed through libraries and schools. They also work as connectors between immigrants and social service agencies, and help people transition to the US. They are currently working on a film on the African performing arts movement in the Bay Area and are also working with the 2000-2010 UN Roll Back Malaria Decade (malaria kills more people than AIDS in Africa). Like Sophiline, he has found access to general operating funds the most difficult, because most funds are project-oriented. Oriki Theater has a \$250,000 budget.

Question: Have any of these artists considered or used fee-based services to help with income—in their community work, for example?

Chike replied that his group didn’t start that way, but it has developed over time into a source of income. They charge when community groups ask for programs.

Ratna said that she is trained in American literature and has translated some stories into Indian dances, and charges to take them into schools and community venues.

Sophiline said that they can take up to 20% of their grants for overhead, but often they don’t because that shortchanges the program itself. When they perform in the community, for New Year’s and other celebrations, they may be paid only \$300, which doesn’t cover their costs. And

they often perform for free because it is what needs to be done for the community. They want exposure, so often the costs are more than the money they receive.

Chike said that people will try to pay in goods, such as African fabrics, for a full performance. People ask a master drummer to play for \$50. For some community events they will work for free or little money, but people often expect them to work out of love and dedication and don't understand that artists need to be paid.

Question: What one opportunity would move each of the groups to the next level?

Ratna needs to videotape the last two remaining women in India who know the women's Odissi dance tradition. She needs a person to run the camera so she can ask questions and try the dances. Time is of the essence because the women are very elderly, and they also need to be paid for their time. She could also use funding to get dancers together for rehearsals instead of each rehearsing separately to fit their schedules; she would like to pay them so they can take time off from their jobs so they can all practice together.

Sophiline would like support for the training program, to improve the curriculum, and to have opportunities to present the students to the community in a professional venue (not a park or restaurant) on a stage with good lighting. It lifts their self-esteem, and raises their profile and respect in the community. For her own creative work, she is working on two projects: a ten-minute dance called "The Goddess of Rice," and an adaptation of *The Magic Flute* for Mozart's 250th birthday in Vienna, which she is working on with Peter Sellars. She needs money to work in Cambodia on the latter project.

Chike reinforced the importance of support. Access to general operating funds is the biggest hurdle. They want to go to Africa with their troupe, to a festival in Ghana; some of the artists will be African American, and will get a welcoming and naming ceremony there and be brought into a tribe, for which they need funds. He reported that he had a dream the previous night that all the funders at this meeting left a blank check for Oriki Theater. There is little enough time to do artwork, and taking so much time on fundraising is demoralizing and exhausting. Chike called in favors from his Silicon Valley colleagues and contacts to get his group started, but the economic bust and collapse of the California Arts Council has really hurt them. They need different ways of accessing funds.

Ratna added that the FFC has funded her research, for which she is very thankful.

Sophiline asked about other sources of funding like student tuition. She provides free classes for low-income families, and charges for those who can afford it. She wondered if she should start charging even a small tuition fee for everyone? Another participant said that in organizations he has been involved with they ask craft sales artists for a voluntary donation, and that she could use that a model for the dance classes. Sophiline replied that they have asked for voluntary donations, \$20 per family, but sometimes they can't even pay that.

Open Discussion Session

This period allowed for a review of topics and issues to date and an opportunity for people to raise new ideas or ask questions.

Role of the Federal Government:

- The first question related to the formal structure of public diplomacy, whether people were talking with the State Department about immigrant and refugee arts issues, and whether there were opportunities there. Betsy replied that State Department representatives were invited to this meeting, but they couldn't come. Many people were surprised to learn that culture and arts issues fall under the State Department—we don't even know we should have a relationship with them on this topic. There have been some meetings in Washington, DC, between national folklore organizations and the State Department, but there is a major information gap and little communication. The State Department has no real idea what is going on in the nonprofit world.
- The United States Information Agency (USIA) used to do cultural exchanges, and they are starting to reach out again, but don't have much funding; a lot of their focus now is the Muslim world.
- Various groups have met with the consular corps in California to review visa issues, which have been increasingly difficult and have hampered bringing in foreign artists. Several artists reported that they have worked with local embassies and invited consuls to their performances.
- Many artists also work to educate their local municipal governments, but have mixed results in getting officials to attend shows.

Building Connections:

- We need to be creative in making connections between organizations and sectors. For instance, The National Alliance for Media Arts and Culture (NAMAC) could provide filmmakers as a resource for Ratna to document the Indian dancers.
- Social service agencies could pay fees to those who help make connections for newcomer artists.
- We need public education about fair compensation to service and brokering organizations for their knowledge and expertise. It's a shift to a business model from community support work.

Payment for Artists:

- There is also a need for education about the value of artists. In the African drumming community, for instance, there are complaints about people calling around to get the lowest price. They are working on setting standard rates, but some people are so desperate for money they will take whatever is offered.
- In another example, the wives of East Indian engineers who work for Microsoft in Washington state are often well-trained dancers who are willing to perform for free because they don't need the money, but this undercuts other dancers.

Wealth and Giving within Immigrant Communities:

- There is money in the immigrant Mexican community in California, and people will pay for popular name artists. Those working with lesser-known artists and community-based arts are trying to tap into that money. The arts community needs this population, it is the future, but there is a huge disconnect between the money world and the arts world. We need to ask individuals to

get their money, develop an individual donors program. Even a \$20 membership for families teaches people the value of the arts.

- There is an organization called the Grassroots Institute for Fundraising Training (GIFT) which focuses on fundraising training for social justice and organizations of color, and which is a great resource.
- There are multiple worlds in immigrant communities, many generations. Every community has a top, middle, and bottom; we work so much with the bottom that we don't know how to work with the middle and top where the money is.
- Within the Mexican and Mexican American community we need an open dialogue—change is happening rapidly, and we need to talk about it in an inclusive manner. There are deep divisions of class, economics, politics, and race within that one community. In the Chicano movement, culture was a component of politics, but a better way to think of it might be to see politics as a subset of culture.
- One attendee told a story about a Latino family in California who won the lottery. They had been supporters of the arts center where she worked, and she always thanked them for their modest donation and made them feel special and welcome. With their lottery winnings they made a large donation to the arts center because she had always acknowledged them and appreciated them.
- Another person told a story about a social service agency where he worked that had no individual donor campaign. They hired a development director who suggested they ask former clients for donations, which is a hard shift for a social service agency to make. But reciprocity is very important in many cultures—you helped them when they needed it, and now asking them to give back is often appreciated.
- Many immigrant communities are transitional, people move through and move up. Often local businesses will be owned by kids who grew up in a community and benefited from its arts activities, and they become financial supporters.
- Remember that not all giving is monetary—time, services, supplies, etc., are all very important as well.

New Ethnic Media:

- 70% of California's population doesn't read English-language mainstream newspapers. We need to think about new and ethnic media as a source for publicity, education, etc.

Other topics posted in the “parking lot” (large sheets of paper posted on the walls for comments)

- Undocumented or illegal workers.
- Mexican American vs. Mexican immigrants in separate worlds.
- The 501(c)3 model—hopes and myths.
- Web site for critics and writers to access basic contextual information about ethnic arts.
- Are we being practical enough? How can we be sure we will take action when we leave.
- Who are the available funders for immigrant and refugee arts?

Break-Out Session Three: Prioritizing Next Steps

For this session, the same groups assigned to each of the five themes met again to devise specific strategies to address their issue. They developed concrete action steps to approach those strategies, suggested funding sources, and determined at what level the actions should take place—locally, fieldwide, nationally, through the FFC, etc. After each group presented their ideas, others were asked to contribute additional suggestions, and to think about which actions they were personally willing to work on. Everyone was also asked to vote for the one topic they thought had the highest priority.

Access to Space

Strategy #1: Capture and disseminate what we know works about accessing space for newcomer arts.

Action #1: Design a template and prepare a manual/guide for inventory of potential local spaces and events, both arts and non-arts. For example, libraries, schools, festivals, community centers, chambers of commerce, local arts councils, social service organizations, discipline-specific service organizations, etc. Include information on issues to consider, such as access, insurance, etc.

Who: Dissemination can be national, based on a template or a manual, but action must be local, carried out at the local level. Could this be developed by or through LINC?

Action #2: Identify existing directories of spaces, use them as models, disseminate on FFC web site.

Who: Local organizations, FFC.

Action #3: Compile and publish selected case studies of successful arts support models.

Who: FFC, Institute for Cultural Partnerships (ICP), LINC, GCIR.

Action #4: Create an internet-based “map” of resources for the field, “community connectors.” Also do in-person presentations, traveling workshops, conference talks.

Who: FFC or Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF).

Strategy #2: Educate resource providers about special space needs of immigrant and refugee communities and artists.

Action #1: Create and disseminate a position paper outlining the special characteristics and needs of the field of immigrant and refugee arts.

Who: Local, national.

Action #2: Present panels at key affinity group meetings and contribute articles to their publications, for example GCIR, AFTA, GIA, APAP, museum associations, local municipal governments.

Who: Local, national.

Additional Suggestions:

- Connect with LINC in general on space work.
- Get involved in city/regional cultural planning processes.

Volunteers to work: Ratna Roy (local directory), Florence Kabwasa-Green (guide on accessing space).

Priority votes: none.

Resources and Support

Strategy #1: Develop a cultural mapping template (utilizing a team field-based approach) that can be replicated or adapted for identifying immigrant/refugee community-based cultural resources, stakeholders, moving beyond our customary universes and partnering for common cause.

Action #1: Use a current mapping project in the San Francisco Bay Area as a model, and be sure to include urban, suburban, small town and rural information. Others? Rockefeller-supported projects?

Who: FFC, Alliance for California Traditional Arts, World Arts West, San Francisco Foundation, Urban Institute, LINC, others? Involve others in dissemination of work.

Strategy #2: Look at space, co-ops or incubators, find successful models for distribution of resources outside the 501(c)3 model. Look at alternative organizational structures.

Action #1: Perhaps develop a pilot or demonstration project, supporting such structures or networks. Document, evaluate and make information available.

Strategy #3: Strengthen advocacy and education efforts—developing intersectional approaches and finding common goals with other strategic agencies (National Organization of Counties, GCIR, AFTA, NASAA, mayors, governors, etc.). Integrate our work with others.

Action #1: Work actively to encourage appointments of individuals who are advocates for arts and culture to advisory boards in diverse fields, for instance on a project of SEARAC that Max is beginning, and the GCIR board to represent arts and culture.

Strategy #4: Work at the public policy level, for example, publish a list of ways to affect public policy on the local level.

Additional Suggestions:

- More money to artists.
- Recruit, recognize and support “cultural connectors” on a variety of levels; cultural ombudsmen for specific locales and/or communities to facilitate gatherings and to connect resources with artists.
- Get more regrant money to FFC to distribute to immigrant and refugee artists (recommended by someone not associated with the FFC!).

Volunteers to work: Florence Kabwasa-Green (mapping of potential stakeholders), San San Wong (mapping in SF Bay Area and figuring out FFC role), Max Niedzwiecki (concept papers on mapping and co-op projects), FFC (all), Sherwood Chen (strengthen representation on GCIR), Andrea Graham (mapping template).

Priority Votes: 2 (template for mapping), 1 (more money to artists), 1 (support cultural connectors).

Developing Leadership

Undergirding all of the recommendations below is the belief that existing leaders and potential leaders in newcomer communities must be identified through a process of significant community engagement.

Strategy #1: Educate the funders.

Action #1: Collection and dissemination of information about refugee and immigrant communities, artists and arts organizations and social service organizations active in immigrant and refugee communities.

Action #2: Collection and dissemination of data on best practices and models.

Results: working papers, websites, media projects.

Who: GCIR, arts organizations, and community and economic development organizations.

Strategy #2: Training of practitioners.

Goal: Training of facilitators for comprehensive community engagement process work that can empower (and identify) new leaders and result in a shifting paradigm for institutional interactions with communities.

Action #1: Workshops.

Action #2: Conferences, local and national.

Action #3: Publications.

Who: Experienced community and cultural facilitators.

Needs: Vehicle to make this compelling; major funding.

Strategy #3: Provide tools to communities.

Action #1: Convene and collect case studies from successful community-generated programs.

Action #2: Deliver information to prospective immigrant and refugee community groups.

Action #3: Community group led presentations to other community groups.

Who: FFC (convening, collecting), FFC and field (disseminate locally).

Additional Suggestions:

- Communities need strategies to alleviate burnout in their leaders.
- Educate board members and cultivate immigrants to serve on boards.
- National network could be a prime disseminator of community engagement practice.

Volunteers to Work: Lucero Arellano, Sandra Smith, Kurt Dewhurst (FFC working papers, convenings, presentations to GIA, etc.), FFC, Diana Coryat (training of facilitators), Joyce Ice (training workshops for artists and new leaders), Chike Nwoffiah (training of practitioners), Marsha MacDowell (training workshops), Bau Graves (development of training workshops), Sally Peterson (help develop immigrant and refugee group led workshops for other immigrant and refugee leaders), Laura Marcus (compiling directory of resources of social service providers).

Priority Votes: 8 (educate the funders), 3 (training of practitioners).

Language and Public Awareness

Strategy #1: Public awareness campaign: “I am an immigrant.”

Action #1: Examine existing models such as “I am an American,” anti-smoking, “Got Art?,” etc. Also Ford Foundation’s strategic communications program, Kellogg Foundation Center for Rural Strategies.

Who: FFC, national organizations, GCIR? Members of GCIR?

Action #2: Identify firms, resources and partners. The campaign must be mainstream, not marginal or boutique. Look for pro bono opportunities. Research funder support resources. Partner with national immigrant rights groups.

Who: National, field.

Action #3: Implementing the campaign. Personalize to local and regional populations. Use high profile (Baryshnikov, Schwarzenegger) and community spokespersons. Be affirmative, have it be about cultural assets, not deficits. Build on the continuum of immigrant heritage in the US. Profiles to reflect breadth and diversity, intercultural representation. Non-paternalistic attitude. Letter writing campaign, movie trailers, high profile spokespeople. Events, parades, school programs, etc. National framework with local versions. Declare 2007 The Year of the Immigrant, ad hoc.

Who: National, regional, local, field.

Strategy #2: Public education and framing. Establish language and vocabulary, how to clarify complex topics, make them accessible. Emphasize cultural assets.

Action #1: Web site with resources for editors, critics, artists, arts professionals, educators.

Who: FFC, Community Arts Net, Animating Democracy.

Action #2: Strategic cross-disciplinary collaborations: conferences, joint meetings, convenings, GCIR, fields of public health, social services, law, public anthropology, business.

Who: Local, regional, national, field, FFC, American Folklore Society (AFS), others?

Action #3: Self-education on civic participation in arts and immigrant and refugee issues. Use AFTA and Animating Democracy as a resource.

Who: National, local.

Action #4: Convene publishers, editors, critics and media leaders. Increase the rigor and responsibility in media regarding arts and immigrants.

Who: FFC, national, local media, field.

Action #5: Self education about creating our own spaces and value. Organizational development, articulating your own values and content, bringing proponents on board.

Who: Local, regional, field.

Additional Suggestions:

- Contact the Ad Council with a proposal for the “I am an immigrant” campaign.

- George Soros or Bill Gates foundations for campaign funding.
- Research if others are doing similar things.

Volunteers to Work: Caron Atlas (share information on other public awareness campaigns), Bill Westerman (public awareness campaign), Eugene Rodriguez (public awareness campaign), Chike Nwoffieh (media campaign, web site), Diana Coryat (facilitate youth-made video for “I am an immigrant” campaign), Sophiline Shapiro (connections with Cambodian communities), Sherwood Chen (strategic cross-disciplinary collaborations), Florence Kabwasa-Green, FFC.

Priority Votes: 3 (public awareness campaign).

Information, Research and Public Policy

Strategy #1: Develop a research agenda.

Action #1: Compile a database of immigrant and refugee artists. Redefine “immigrant and refugee artist.” Assess demographic and geo-demographic trends. Count immigrant and refugee artists.

Partners/Collaborators: Indiana University, FFC (facilitator, convener, information disseminator), UCLA Center for Urban Policy, Smithsonian, UNESCO, ethnic specific service organizations (NALAC, etc.), Ford Foundation research projects, discipline-based service organizations (AFTA, Dance USA, NAMAC, etc.), Pew, local social service organizations, city demographers (like NYC).

Funders: Pew, GCIR.

Action #2: Identify, compile and disseminate best practices and case studies that could help in advocacy. Work by discipline or tradition, country of origin, and by identifying and incorporating grassroots leaders. Use “first voice.”

Partners/Collaborators: AFTA, LINC, AFC, NGA, Smithsonian, FFC, discipline-specific arts service organizations, immigrant and refugee service organizations.

Funders: Ford, Rockefeller, NEA, NEH, funders interested in new American culture.

Action #3: Develop a list or directory of research that addresses a broad range of immigrant and refugee issues (academic/scholarly and research institutes). Involve graduate students at IU, UCLA, MSU; self-contained, self-funded, center and student driven.

Partners/Collaborators: UCLA Center for World Culture, Michigan State University, Indiana University. FFC as disseminator.

Big Concern: Need to look at FFC’s mission and capacity as a national service organization for the folk arts field, with specific, current focus/commitment to immigrant and refugee issues.

Strategy #2: Reform funding guidelines, criteria and decision making.

Strategy #3: Document immigrant and refugee artist training and professional development strategies and best practices.

Strategy #4: Influence US State Department diplomatic and programmatic decisions regarding cultural exchange.

[Note: the group did not have time to develop specific action steps for strategies 2, 3, and 4.]

Additional Suggestions:

- Consider steps to move research to action.
- Give resources to grassroots groups of artists to contract their own research.
- Create writing fellowships for community scholars and writer-practitioners.
- Social service agencies are not set up to identify or count artists; IRCO model in Portland is replicable.
- The Bureau of Population Refugees and Migration at the Department of State sets the agenda of questions asked of refugees.
- Research is time consuming and expensive.
- How to make sure the information gets widely disseminated.
- Report writing must be accessible and not too academic.

Volunteers to Work: Inta Carpenter (identify best practices and case studies, develop directory of available research), Sherwood Chen (funding guidelines and criteria, outreach and targeting strategies), Florence Kabwasa-Green (in conjunction with ongoing project with Tremaine Foundation), Eduardo Diaz (reform funding guidelines, criteria and decision making on a state and local level), Kurt Dewhurst (inventory what is already being done), Anne L'Ecuyer (develop research agenda), Bill Westerman (develop research agenda), Rebecca Spurrier (connect Refugee Employment Services Coalition with ICP in Pennsylvania), Chike Nwoffiah (develop research agenda), Mirabel Alvarez, Sandra Smith (collection and dissemination of information), Tomás Ybarra-Frausto (new initiatives in research and vocabulary), Caron Atlas (include “Renewing the Countryside” and “Animating Democracy” studies), Ratna Roy (research by students at Evergreen State College), Max Niedzwiecki (research on and introductions to national refugee groups).

Priority Votes: 4 (develop a research agenda), 3 (identify best practices).

Comments and Discussion

It is exciting to see how much cross-penetration there is among the groups and their suggestions.

The problem with funding structures in the US is that they get money to organizations and folklorists, but not to folk artists. There was not one strategy presented that gets money to artists. However, we are talking about improving the environment for artists in the long term, educating granters, providing access, etc., and these actions will translate into more support for artists. Also, there is more than money that helps artists, for example access to space, or greater awareness, acceptance and interest by the general public.

On the subject of research, we need to develop a form of research that includes community knowledge and pays community members and artists to participate. In fact one organization has found that the community groups need to be the ones to contract with the researchers directly—we work for them, not the opposite.

Understanding the marketplace for one's work helps artists, both within their communities and in the larger community. Marketing is part of an artist's work, showing the group's value to the community. We need to understand consumer behavior, get more earned income, and lessen dependence on grants and state funding. Developing individual giving strategies is another alternative to reduce dependence on grants. Some foundations have training workshops in giving for people with money. Well-known and financially successful immigrant artists, such as the Mexican group Los Tigres del Norte, are now donating to other immigrant arts groups. There is also a need to train board members of immigrant organizations, and get more young educated people on boards.

It takes a long time for newcomer groups to figure out the system, not to mention finding time for creating their art. They need very basic support, especially at first.

FFC Capacity

A major concern was whether the FFC has the resources to do all the work that was suggested for them. Is there a need for a national service organization for the field of folk and traditional arts? There is not one at present, and the field has balked at that idea in the past. There are several related organizations, or ones doing part of the work. The American Folklife Center (AFC) and the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage are not suited, they are programmers and archives. The American Folklore Society (AFS) serves folklorists. The National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA) is mainly a presenter and producer of events. Currently the FFC provides regrants, serves as a liaison to private philanthropy, works as a convener, and advocates for the field. FFC has by default become a national service organization for the field, but it's a fragmented and decentralized field. Also, active stakeholders don't necessarily see themselves as connected, some are focused locally, ethnically, or regionally. It's a powerful bloc of people, organizations and advocates, but has little money. Other potential partners in this work with immigrant and refugee artists are NALAC and The Association of American Cultures. Collectively there is a huge amount of work going on, but it is frustrating to see all these organizations working in overlapping areas and not communicating very well.

Should this group ask the FFC to consider forming such an organization, or taking on the job? Who will see the overall picture, be the facilitator, broker, convener? Some attendees already see the FFC as the service organization for the field. The FFC should not fall into the trap of using the language and processes of other groups. FFC is about convening, they are not a fixed body of professional types. They have to be flexible, be willing to take risks, and be aware of their capacity. Bringing together multiple voices is the FFC's gift—we need to recruit, recognize and support cultural connectors and the FFC is one of them. This an issue that the board needs to discuss.

A comment was made that a better analogy than the arts field would be a group that needs a union. We work in the same industry and have common interests—funding, insurance, access, etc. "Culture workers" is the industry. Another comment was that the FFC might be able to get more funding if they showed they represented a real, definable field. That will take a long time, and begins with defining a constituency that needs your services. There is a lot of new interest in regional networks in a global world. The world is being reconfigured. How do we keep things connected instead of disassociated, see the continuum? We are continually redefining what it is

to be American. Europe is going through this identity crisis right now. We need to be proactive about defining a multicultural and inclusive America.

One Sentence Closing Thoughts from Participants:

Chike Nwoffiah: There was incredible networking for me, as an artist and an advocate for this field of immigrant and refugee arts. It gives me hope for the field, the incredible minds working on the issues.

Bau Graves: A big thank you to the FFC for the rich conversation.

Caron Atlas: The power of intersections of different sectors and fields was what I took away.

Bill Westerman: I really benefited. There are a lot of people with like concerns, so don't despair—we can generate hope.

Eugene Rodriguez: Surveys indicate that immigrants are optimistic, and we need to hold on to that.

Max Niedzwiecki: I learned so much; this is a new circle of people for me, and I'm grateful to be part of it. I'm feeling that I'm present at the birth of new things. It is nice to hear alternative models, using arts as a key to culture.

Laura Marcus: Thanks to everyone for coming, this has been an incredible experience. The FFC can be a disciplinary connector. This feels like an opening, not a closing. We need to keep communicating.

Anne L'Ecuyer: I am very grateful to be here, thanks. People are triangulating around real problems with real solutions, this is a way to solve community problems.

John McGuirk: The issue is one of access—to space, money, resources, thought, language, advocacy. We are looking for ways to keep access open to the most people. The art was great.

Betsy Peterson: Thanks to everyone, we always come away very enriched. The importance of connection and intersection can't be underestimated. We need each other and everyone's minds. Good things always come out of these gatherings, but frequently in unanticipated ways. There will be a report out of this meeting, and we will definitely follow through. We [the FFC] are beginning to rethink our role.

Kurt Dewhurst: Bringing people together in person is very energizing, it validates what we all are doing. We need to learn to live with ambiguity, learn lessons as they come, keep critiquing, and don't get comfortable. We can become the Force for Folk Culture. You are all part of the force.

Marsha MacDowell: I have a long view of the FFC since I was present at its birth. I love watching the organization evolve with nimbleness and creativity, and consistent passion and dedication to causes.

Sherwood Chen: I am relieved, and honored. I feel galvanized.

Eduardo Diaz: Thanks to Melanie Beene for her leadership and facilitation. This is a critical juncture for the Fund, and hopefully will allow them to move forward strategically, but they need to be mindful of their capacities.

Tomás Ybarra-Frausto: Complexity, contradiction and ambiguity are the new imagination of this tectonic shift in the world. This country is an experiment. At every moment we have to deal with the history of the past, the reality of the present, and the future.

Sandy Smith: This feels like a great continuation of last year's conversation. We are looking for models for immigrant integration into communities, and making culture a vital part of that. This

will help my work with Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR). It validates some of the work of my foundation in Columbus; there is more community work to do. *Florence Kabwasa-Green*: Communication creates opportunity. We are supporting artists, asking what does it mean to be American. The work here will change things for immigrant artists.

San San Wong: Continuity between generations is important, transmission of values and culture is important. There is a great complexity of art forms coming into the country, contemporary as well as traditional, and they have different dissemination models. Figure out how to be more inclusive.

Mirabel Alvarez: Our work is about civil society, about creating hope. We are struggling to define the nation. Our space is determined by people, by citizen action. It is hopeful work.

Rebecca Spurrier: I am thinking about how I can take these ideas home, and excited about interdisciplinary work. So much work was done here.

Joyce Ice: I am very impressed with this group. Your work does make a difference in people's lives.

Lucero Arellano: I will take away possibilities. The California Arts Council is looking at new ways of operating and this information will be useful to us.

Ina Carpenter: I connected with many of the things that were said. I will take away the validation of the powerful story of refugees and how it connects to American identity; we need to articulate that. The university is changing, there are more opportunities to do community-based research and action there.

Sally Peterson: I have been crafting dialogues to have with my superiors [at a state arts council] about including immigrant and refugee artists in their work. The old ways won't work, but they are stuck on how to proceed. I got validation from the group that this is important, I have backup.

Andrea Graham: I was overwhelmed, wandering around with my post-its, couldn't decide what to help with or focus on because there is so much to do and so much good thought. It is both daunting and inspiring.

Melanie Beene: This is the most hopeful conference I've ever been to, with lots of positive energy. The America I really care about is going to be saved by immigrant energy.