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The Arts in Cross-Sector Collaborations: Reflections on Recent Practice in the U.S.

1. Introduction

In this Chapter we look at cross-sector collaborations in the United States – arts and cultural organizations partnering with other community-based organizations to create positive local change. These collaborations address a wide variety of issues and involve diverse types of organizations including non-profit and government agencies. Partners in these collaborations represent education, housing and economic development, youth development, juvenile and adult justice, senior and social services, public health, refugee and ethnic-based organizations, tourism, and other neighborhood and community improvement groups. Based on both experience and research the authors concur with Lane DeMoll, former Executive Director of Cart'm Recycling in Manzanita, Oregon, »There Ain't No Other Way«. Collaboration, when undertaken in good spirit and with sound practice, is the most powerful tool for sustaining our organizations and communities while effecting positive change.

The history and practice of cross-sector collaborative work in the U.S. is not to be romanticized. Much of what has been accomplished emerged out of the struggle to identify and quantify the value of arts and culture in our nation. Unlike other countries such as Germany, which have a long tradition of substantial public financial support for arts and where individuals and communities highly value the arts and culture for their inherent significance, public, and even private support in the U.S. is often determined based on an organization's ability to provide tangible evidence of the effect that its programming has on those they serve.

This Chapter explores the following themes:

- Collaborative work is driven by the need to address broad, complex, and overlapping community goals such as youth development, economic development, ethnic integration, and the like, and has been shaped by the history of how the arts and culture have been supported in the U.S.

- U.S. arts and cultural organizations have been increasingly concerned with creating access to their programs and services. In response to a variety of outside forces and internal pressures, organizations appear to

be taking a more public service oriented approach than ever before. At the same time, they are continuing to strive for artistic and programmatic excellence. Often, they find it difficult to reconcile these seemingly opposing goals.

- Change is both a motivation for, and an outcome of, cross-sector collaboration.

2. Key Concepts

For the purposes of this discussion ›collaboration‹ is defined as intentionally working with others toward a common goal. Collaboration, or partnership as it is often called, is the result of individuals and the organizations they represent coming together in pursuit of a shared vision. We have an affinity for Jo Ann Romero's definition of collaboration as »the movement of value between two parties.« (Romero 2008: 3). The most successful collaborations change the partnering organizations and the larger community.

›Culture‹ is what motivates humans and binds them one to the other. It is what we feel most strongly about – our values, traditions, stories, languages, beliefs, faiths, arts, crafts, and the ways we construct our communities and care for our families. Culture, more times than not, is deeply rooted in and shaped by place. We are Portlanders, we are New Yorkers, we are Berliners, or we are Siletz (a Native American Tribe on the Oregon Coast).

The term ›community‹ is used quite differently in the U.S. than in other countries. In fact, there are two meanings that are employed equally often. The first is geographic community, which refers to a physical place such as a city, town, or village where people live together and over time develop shared interests, values and patterns of living. Second, there is cultural community or community of interest, which describes a group or network of people of common background, interests or beliefs that extends beyond geographical boundaries. Cultural communities are usually made up of those who share an ethnicity or religion. Communities of interest are groups of people who share a hobby or passion or a concern for a social or political issue such as the environment.

›Community cultural development‹ describes processes of utilizing and strengthening local culture to improve communities. An individual's participation in his or her culture creates stronger individuals, families and groups and fosters the achievement of broader social and infrastructure improvements. The ways people work together in community cultural development projects are as important as the product or outcomes of the collaboration. Arlene Goldbard describes community cultural development in *New Creative Community* as (Goldbard 2006: 20)**:**

> »The work of artist-organizers and other community members collaborating to express identity, concerns and aspirations through the arts and communications media. It is a process that simultaneously builds individual mastery and collective cultural capacity while contributing to positive social change.«

›Sustainability‹ is becoming better understood and is of greater concern in the U.S. than ever before. In fact, it is often the motivation for collaboration. The Native American (Iroquois) concept of considering the impact of decisions made now on seven generations in the future is a vivid illustration of this concern. The term is used to describe both planning for long-term organizational success and reaching environmental improvement objectives by decreasing negative impact on the natural world. The acclaimed novelist, poet and social observer, Wendell Berry of rural Kentucky, does an excellent job of describing the connection between culture, community, and sustainability in the concluding paragraph of his book *Home Economics* (Berry 1987: 192):

> »The local community must understand itself finally as a community of interest – a common dependence on a common life and a common ground. And because a community is, by definition, *placed,* its success cannot be divided from the success of its place, its natural setting and surroundings: its soils, forests, grasslands, plants and animals, water, light, and air. The two economies, the natural and the human, support each other; each is the other's hope of a durable and livable life.«

3. The Arts, Community Cultural Development and Collaborative Work in the U.S.

In order to understand and perhaps model new efforts in cross sector collaborative work currently being conducted in the U.S., it is necessary to at least briefly examine the historical and contemporary forces that have resulted in the increase in the practice.

3.1 Historical Events and Forces that Shape American Understanding of Arts, Culture and Community

U.S. political and social history demonstrates a serious conflict and deep ambivalence with the concepts of culture and multiculturalism. The social, political and cultural remnants of slavery, the Civil War that ended it and the civil rights movement that continues today, is a major force in how Americans understand and participate in the arts, culture and communities. Similarly, the notions of honor, justice and rugged individualism that developed during the settling of the American West during the 19th century – succeeding alone, without the help of community, as personified by characters portrayed on film by Clint Eastwood and others – continues to shape the American character and how people in geographic communities relate to each other. The conflict between policy and practice was clearly demonstrated during the early to mid 20th century. President Theodore Roosevelt (in office from 1901–1909) declared ›hyphenated-Americans‹ (German-Americans, Irish-Americans, etc.) to be traitors to the country. This era spawned the ›melting pot‹ theory which declared that all Americans and new immigrants in particular, should blend their cultures into a single uniquely American way of believing and acting. At the same time, community activists, such as Jane Addams who founded the Settlement House movement in the U.S., sought to help people retain their native languages,

cultural traditions, heritage, and those elements that comprise a community's cultural assets.

Interestingly, during periods of internal crisis the U.S. has utilized arts and culture as part of the solution to repairing ailing communities. Certainly the federal New Deal and the Works Progress Administration's Federal Art Project (1935–1943) tapped the power of local culture and employed artists, resulting in the creation of more than 200,000 works of literature, public art, architecture, and symbols of American culture which still exist. In fact, our newly elected President is speaking in such terms once again. The outcomes, however, remain to be seen.

3.2 Infrastructure for Funding the Arts, Culture and Community Development in the U.S.

Patronage was the earliest form of support for the arts and culture in the U.S. Individuals or families with means established and provided the financing for museums, orchestras, symphonies and schools of art. The first major change came at the turn of the 19th Century with government policy in a tax reform act that deemed such organizations as educational in nature as they »enriched and civilized the masses«. As a result, arts groups were freed from paying corporate taxes and individuals and businesses began receiving significant tax deductions for their donations to the organizations' operations and programming. This created considerable confusion and conflict; the organizations continued to be seen by the public as elitist at the very time they had been handed a public service imperative.

It was not until the establishment of the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities in 1965 that the federal government began providing significant financial support to the arts/cultural sector based on the premise that the production and preservation of culture through artistic endeavor was of value to the nation. Shortly thereafter, states began establishing their own agencies to augment and distribute the federal funds. County, regional and local agencies were founded to add further support and coordinate local arts programming. It took quite some time, however, before the Endowments' policies began to force arts and cultural groups to address the public service mandate. Over the past 44 years public policy has evolved so that it now demands all publicly funded organizations to offer full and open access to their programs and services. Organizations face increased requirements for detailed information on who they serve and what tangible effects the programming has on those individuals and communities.

Still, the private sector, through foundations, corporations and individual donations continues to comprise the vast majority of financial support to arts and culture organizations in the U.S. Over the past decade economic and social factors have furthered the public service approach to the delivery of arts/cultural programming. Foundations are increasingly interested in what outcomes the production and preservation of art has for populations. Corporations are increasingly providing funds through sponsorships via their marketing departments, with the expectation of gaining visibility among the organization's

audiences, rather than making straightforward philanthropic donations. In addition, following various scandals involving mismanagement corporations have become more concerned about accountability which has spilled over to their giving practices. They have begun viewing their support of non-profits as investments and are carefully monitoring the returns.

The cultural sector has assimilated the public service imperative. There has been a major shift in orientation even in our nation's most traditional theater and opera companies and museums; almost all have an educational component in their mission or a department dedicated to community engagement. Collaboration has become an imperative. Combining our own expertise and experience with others working to understand, manage and solve problems ranging from sweeping demographic changes in small locales, to the legacy of entrenched prejudice, growing economic disparity, and educational inequity is the best way to ensure that we remain relevant and solvent.

3.3 Current Collaborative Practice

The U.S. cultural sector has never enjoyed entitlement to public financial support and private support has become more difficult to access, particularly for smaller more locally based organizations. Therefore, early collaborations within the arts community focused on advocacy for its own survival. Studies were commissioned to document the positive effect of arts education on increased capacity to learn and economic impact studies were conducted to demonstrate the financial contributions arts organizations make to communities as audiences also spend on meals, parking and shopping. Through such efforts the arts and cultural community has developed significant partnership experience and skills which are now being transferred to working in cross-sector collaborations.

The current challenge is to simultaneously maintain our artistic and cultural integrity while being of service to individuals and communities in tangible and meaningful ways. Economic crisis and greater awareness of the principles of sustainability are pushing all sectors to re-think how to deploy critical resources, the most vital being human creativity and knowledge, to meet their goals. Non-profit organizations, by their very nature, must evolve according to the needs and resources in their communities. Therefore, they are forced to constantly consider their stated mission and ask themselves ›why do we exist?‹. New non-profits are being formed to address emerging issues while existing ones are changing operating structures and programming goals, or going out of business. The reality is that more can be accomplished by collective work. As Bob Lynch, Chief Executive Officer of Americans for the Arts summed it up, ›1+1=3.‹ Organizational change and collaboration with others is imperative for success and even survival.

Highly Collaborative and Successful Organizations[2]

Perhaps the best way to understand current practice in the U.S. is to consider what experienced collaborators are doing and how they are doing it. The

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[2] See for other interesting examples in Scheff/Kotler 1996.

following profiles describe highly collaborative organizations that demonstrate the following characteristics:

- The collaborative work is intentional and has been sustained over several years.

- Collaboration is central to the organization's mission and core values.

- The collaboration addresses dynamic issues, challenges, or concerns in a definable community.

NY Writers Coalition (New York City, New York)[3]

The New York Writers Coalition (NYWC) gives voice to marginalized New Yorkers through free and low-cost creative writing workshops. Last year NYWC provided 1,000 workshops in 45 locations. NYWC provides expertise in teaching and facilitating writing workshops. Its partners – youth centers, social service agencies, immigrant and refugee associations, schools, housing authorities, neighborhood associations, libraries, homeless shelters, senior centers, prisons, and churches – provide a knowledge of and an access to individuals and groups in the community who NYWC would otherwise be unable to reach. Programmatic success depends on a range of factors including the depth of the partner's commitment to and engagement in the effort, consistency and depth of client participation, staff dedication to accomplishing stated goals, and artist commitment to working with the given population. NYWC is a relatively young organization (7 years), but Executive Director Aaron Zimmerman says that funders are impressed and interested in reaching the populations that the partners serve.

Appalshop/Roadside Theatre (Whitesburg, Kentucky)[4]

Any article discussing community cultural development work in the U.S. should note Appalshop and its Roadside Theater. Appalshop began in 1969 as an economic development project on the War on Poverty. Appalshop's philosophy has always been that »Appalachian people must tell their own stories and solve their own problems.« Over 40 years Appalshop has grown into a nationally-recognized media center working in film, video, audio recording, radio broadcast as well as live performance of music and theater. The subject matter ranges from documenting traditional arts to exploring history to dealing with the social issues currently effecting life in the Appalachian region. Appalshop has partnered with the Letcher County Kentucky Schools for several years on teaching traditional folk music in the public schools. This collaboration is growing due to the skill of the Appalshop musicians working in the schools and to the commitment of the school superintendent to the arts. When asked to share an insight on the collaboration with the schools, Appalshop Managing Director Beth Bingam said »Developing a partnership and meeting the needs of the schools has required patience and a commitment to working together.« In addition to local partnerships, Appalshop has a long tradition of initiating and supporting national collaborative projects, such as Alternate Roots, a national resource organization

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[3] See www.nywriterscoalition.org.
[4] See www.appalshop.org.

to artists, organizers, and cultural workers. Appalshop recently published a national research project on community cultural development curriculum.

Conscious Youth Media Crew (San Francisco, California)[5]

Conscious Youth Media Crew is a San Francisco-based, youth-driven, digital media production studio. CYMC provides the technology and training necessary for inner city youth to create quality media that represent their experiences, stimulates meaningful dialogue, and promotes social change. Partners are most often schools and social service organizations serving at-risk youth. Debra Koffler, Executive Director of CYMC, stresses that collaboration is her »mode of working.« She stresses that regular, consistent communication is often the key to successful collaborative work. »You support each other, and the more you communicate, the more you learn. Partners must maintain respect and be clear on values, expectations, and resources. Definitely be clear on what you are looking for, expectations, logistics of the programming, do regular communication check-ins, and develop and sign a memo of understanding!«

Portland Center Stage (Portland, Oregon)[6]

Portland Center Stage (PCS), now in its 20th season, is Portland's largest professional theater company. Guided by the mission of »inspiring our community by bringing stories to life in unexpected ways«, PCS has become known for both its commitment to excellence in theater and its ability to facilitate dialogue around key community issues. In 2006 PCS renovated a historic armory building into a new theater complex. The facility is the first historic rehabilitation on the National Historic Register, and the first performing arts venue to achieve a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum rating.

Central to success was development of new strategies for community partnerships, civic engagement, and innovative uses of public space in and around the building. Tim DuRoche, PCS Community Program Manager proudly says that »the results of the ›green‹ design, coupled with a very active community engagement program that reached beyond traditional arts/theater audiences to preservation/sustainability communities, as well as other cultural, education, human service and civic organizations have reaped stunning results in terms of new audiences, rising subscriptions, broadened community partnerships and a sense of collective efficacy in line with Portland's ›Green Dividend‹ – the idea that building and connecting green returns handsome social and economic dividends.«

Regarding community partnerships and collaboration Mr. DuRoche says that »process is as important as end product, and impact can be achieved as much by failure or unintended successes.« That lesson was learned by reaching out to both likely partners and unlikely partners. Anticipated partnerships with literary and historical groups on the stage adaptation of Ken Kesey's Sometimes a Great Notion found little success, but the dialogue the project opened grew into collaborative programming about regional concerns including forest stewardship,

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[5] See www.consciousyouthmediacrew.org.
[6] See www.pcs.org.

urban/rural difference, and environmental history with the public library, civic groups, universities, writers and poets and environmental organizations. As a result doors were opened to present an exhibit of works by Buckminster Fuller that explores issues of equity, shelter, new growth economy and a less-is-more ethic through new partnerships with Portland State University's Urban and Public Affairs Department, the Coalition for Livable Future, Museum of Contemporary Craft, and the Metropolitan Service District (Portland's regional planning organization).

PCS' new ›green‹ facility is often the site for community meetings and workshops. Through a ›civic ecology approach‹ it is truly positioning itself as an organization serious about its mission.

Cart'm Recycling – Conservation Action Resource Team of Manzanita (Manzanita, Oregon)[7]

Cart'm is a recycling center in Manzanita, a community on the north Oregon coast with a population of approximately 1,200. Cart'm was founded in 1998 out of a vision for a place that would be both the county's transfer center for recycling and re-adaptive use that would also raise attention to the critical state of the natural world by serving as a community gathering place. In order to achieve this Cart'm engaged the arts early and, over the past 10 years, has blossomed into a center for art, creativity, humor and fun. Cart'm works collaboratively with multiple public agencies, community groups, businesses, and schools. Many artists living in the region are highly involved with Cart'm, creating works of art from discarded objects. They lead the Center's ›trash art‹ classes and work in Cart'm's resale store. The Center's annual festival/fundraising event, ›The Trash Bash‹, features a fashion show and artwork created from materials obtained at the site, attracting up to 1,000 people. Cart'm is becoming a magnet for eco-tourism through its artistic approach to environmentalism. Lane DeMoll, one of Cart'm's founders and first Executive Director, says that collaborations are essential in a small town. »There aren't enough people and resources to go around otherwise. So we share material resources like slide and digital projectors, sculpture display stands, table cloths, flip chart easels. People often serve on multiple boards.« She sees collaborative work as essential to the sustainability of Cart'm and to Manzanita. »Absolutely (collaborative work) stretches resources and people. The interconnections benefit the communications and effectiveness of the community as a whole.« In rural communities such as Manzanita, people play multiple roles, get to know one another, and are able to establish trust. The model of collaboration, trust, shared resources shown by Cart'm is being replicated by other non-profits in and around Manzanita.

4. A Practical Guide to Cross-Sector Collaborative Readiness[8]

Now that we have defined cross-sector collaboration, reviewed how it came to be an important tool for arts and cultural organizations in the U.S., and examined selected collaborations, we turn to the discussion of how to plan and carry out

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[7] See www.cartm.org.
[8] See also Kohm/La Piana 2003, Winer/Ray 2002.

collaborative work that is successful, sustainable and creates tangible change in the organizations and the community. In order to ensure that the planned collaborative effort is reasonable and can be successful it is critical to reflect on who you are and what you hope to achieve as an organization.

The first step is to determine whether collaboration will help achieve the organization's mission and if the practice reflects its core values. At this stage you must consider why your organization exists. If it is simply to present or preserve works of art but not to expand the ways in which audiences participate or benefit, full scale collaboration is probably not the best approach. In this case targeted alliances with others that can help attract new audiences may be of use. If, however, the stated mission includes words such as community, outreach, expand or educate, collaborating probably should be part of your organizational culture and practice. Some additional questions that must be considered include: Are there adequate resources available to continue operating in isolation or do you need to work with others to access the money, people or facilities you need? Have you encountered social, cultural or infrastructure-based barriers to reaching constituencies that you have wanted to serve? Have you been unsuccessful at developing deeper, more direct and meaningful connections to audiences? If you can answer yes to these questions then the organization clearly has a value system conductive to collaborating with other sectors within the community.

The second step is to determine whether your organization is in fact ready to collaborate with an entity working in another sector. This can be assessed by considering several key questions. Is there a community concern or issue that the mission or values drive the organization to address? Is the organization dedicated to ensuring its artistic products or are programs an integral part of how the community identifies itself? Is there consensus among and commitment from all stakeholders including board, executive and program staff and artists? Are adequate human resources in place? This is actually a two-part question: does your existing staff have the necessary skills or expertise and, does the staff have the time for the ongoing communication, planning and assessing critical to successful collaboration? Successful collaborations are based on an understanding that there will be mutual responsibility in order to reap mutual benefits. Therefore you must consider your motivation for collaborating. If it is to gain something simple such as increased ticket sales, stop and re-think whether it makes sense to invest in all it takes to collaborate. On the other hand, if you are approaching collaboration as a means of improving your operating practice, learning more about your community, or expanding skills and capacities you most likely possess the flexible spirit needed to partner well with others and are ready to proceed.

This is also the time to look for compatible partners. Is there an appropriate partner available in the community, one that can contribute what your organization lacks and seeks something of value that you have to offer? Even if there is such an organization, it is important to determine whether it is also ready to collaborate – that is, what are their answers to the questions posed above?

When collaborating across sectors there are a variety of issues to take into account. Perhaps the most important is that organizations utilize structures and operating processes that reflect their intent and constituencies. Therefore, even if the partner is also a non-profit organization it will have a very different working culture than yours and will be guided by different mandates. This presents both challenges and opportunities. Time is the best investment to avoid potential misunderstanding. Partners need to learn as much as possible about each other. Determine where power lies, whether the organizational chart reflects the actual flow of authority, how decisions are made, how information is shared internally, what public profile is intended, and how progress is marked and success defined. One of the most important things to discover is if individuals and departments freely share information and assist each other in reaching overarching goals. Organizations that are skilled and practiced at working this way internally tend to be more successful when attempting to work with others from the outside. The great opportunity is the potential infusion of new information, skills and methods into your organization. You will learn a great deal about the other sectors' concerns, practices and constituents which will only enhance your ability to reach your own goals. It is essential to remember that your artists are not necessarily prepared to work in other settings or with specific communities, just as the partner's specialists are not trained in the arts. Provide opportunities for the individuals who will be delivering the programming to engage in joint professional development so that they can share skills and information and come to understand and respect each other's perspectives on the community issue they are working to address.

Be mindful that collaborations are like making a work of art; they constantly evolve and change. Since cross-sector collaborations are formed to address a community issue the situation is inherently dynamic. Some organizations are better than others at accepting change. There will be transitions in leadership, staffing, working conditions and within the community at large. You may be dealing with shifting demographics or economics. You may be in an environment of cultural or social transformation. Flexibility is critical. Partners need to be willing to alter course mid-stream, adjust timelines and objectives, and adopt new methodologies, definitions and measures. All of which points to an imperative to engage the program participants in planning. Allow them input into where and when services are delivered and welcome them to share their hopes and fears.

Finally, collaborations are never perfect. If a problem is identified, either formally or informally, address it as soon as possible. Determine what resources are needed to resolve the situation in a way that is acceptable to all partners and the audience. At times the specific cause is not obvious, there is just a sense that something is not working well. In such cases get help. Bring in a facilitator to uncover what the conflict is, smooth lines of communication and develop renewed consensus.

The following chart is intended to help organizations prepare to collaborate, overcome challenges as they arise, and reap the benefits of working together. While we are always somewhat prepared to partner, entering into collaboration

with another organization should be treated with care and respect, especially when reaching across sectors to provide new services.

Challenge	Management Implication/Action
There is lack of consensus within your organization in regard to the mission, core values or motivations or expectations for the collaboration	• Clarify, revise and rededicate to the mission and core values. • Identify opportunities, challenges, and feasible solutions that relate to your mission. • If you are satisfied with the status quo and do not want to grow, learn, meet new people or expand services, you are not ready to collaborate. • Planning is not just a pre-program activity, it is a continuous practice. • Involve the artists, partner's specialists and participants in planning and debriefing.
Deploying Resources	• Accept that leadership may come from your partner. • Determine what your organization can afford to devote to the collaboration in terms of time and money. • Identify who holds authority and can make decisions on behalf of each partner and for the partnership as a whole. Ensure that they are allowed and encouraged to exercise that authority. • Select staff with appropriate skills or provide them with training. • Be open to hiring someone with experience in the other sector. • Create and agree to a budget and monitor it regularly.

Defining arts and other sector outcomes while maintaining the integrity of each	• All partners must articulate their intended outcomes, ensure that there is agreement and that there will be both individual and shared benefits.
	
	• Build attainable benchmark goals into plans and celebrate when they are reached.
	
	• Share your methods of marking progress with each other and if necessary engage a facilitator to help you develop a process that utilizes both. Develop a system for continuous assessing progress then commit the time and funds needed to assess outcomes as well as whether the collaboration is working effectively.
	
	• Assess measurable outcomes in at least three ways:
	
	  1. Community issue – how has the collaboration measurably impacted the community?
	
	  2. Clients – how has the collaboration measurably changed the lives of individuals?
	
	  3. Your organization – how has the collaboration changed your organization? What have you

	learned? Are you ready for deeper collaborations?
	• Agree on who the products belong to.
	• Maintain individual identity while growing a separate identity for the collaborative work.
	• Document the collaboration – this will help you market the services and obtain future funding.
Building cooperative spirit, trust and good communications	• Ensure that information flows up and down both organizational charts and between organizations.
	• Identify the roles and responsibilities of all individuals involved in the collaboration.
	• Establish and maintain a system to share information. Be sure to keep the boards of directors and staffs fully informed.
	• Be sure to schedule regular project meetings, and encourage informal fun get-togethers between staff, board, artists across both organizations. The more you know and trust one another, the deeper the collaboration will become.
	• Become a skilled listener.
	• Commit to working in the best interest of the program and to taking risks to achieve excellence. Trust that your partner will do the same.
	• Be accountable to all stakeholders including boards, staffs, clients, funders, and the community.
Managing change	• Be flexible in your definitions.
	• Do not let organizational hierarchy bog you down.
	• Celebrate when a problem has been solved, when it's time for the collaboration to end, or when it's time for one or both of the collaborators to change forms.
	• Revisit your own mission and motivations to keep the larger purpose rather than the daily details at the forefront.
	• Use the collaborative experience as a means of learning to evolve and adapt.
	• Be ready to embrace uncertainty and live with ambiguity in process and outcomes.

5. Reflections on Personal Practice

After observing, supporting, and participating in many cross-sector collaborations, we suggest the following:

- People are key. You don't have to ›love‹ your partners, but you must respect and trust them, and want to work together. Spending time with your partners informally is a good thing.

- Clarity and trust are probably the two most important factors in successful collaborations.

- Be clear on the issue you are addressing, and then find the right partner(s) to help you create the change you envision.

- Be ready for extra work – defining expectations, training each other, keeping the lines of communication open, monitoring progress, evaluating outcomes, and documenting accomplishments take a great deal of time.

- Assume that your partner has never worked with an arts/cultural organization before. A common challenge in cross-sector partnerships is that the non-arts partner does not understand the time and preparation it takes for artists to work successfully in community settings.

- Communicate, communicate, communicate – clearly and consistently.

- Be open to change, stay flexible. Be ready to shift direction when a challenge or opportunity arises.

- Work in incremental steps that can be realized. Build in small, attainable, meaningful successes as you work toward the larger goal.

- Document outcomes.

- Always consider what needs and expectations all involved have. Most importantly, stay true to your own mission and values.

- Do not forget, »There is no other way!« The result (usually) will be more than you could have accomplished alone.

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