

# Coalition Building Workshop 1, Part A

## Stronger Together than Apart: Building Trust & Relationships

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### Who?

Decide whether this meeting is just for youth arts leaders, or if youth, donors, or board members are also encouraged to attend.

Incentivize attendance. For example, a funder can make participation in the meeting a condition of receiving grant support. Or key youth arts leaders can be invited to co-host and asked to send personal invitations and encourage their networks to attend.

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### Where?

Consider holding a coalition-building meeting in an unusual, artistic space; participants will feel inspired to think outside the box.

Ask a coalition member from a school, museum, theater space, or music studio to host; it will encourage a sense of shared ownership and active engagement within the new coalition.

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### Why?

Great coalitions are based on strong relationships. A workshop or gathering that builds trust and supports new relationships early on will create a solid foundation for powerful collective work.

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### What?

Provide food. Allow for unstructured breaks that provide opportunities for people to talk and interact freely.

Have nametags; make nametag creation an interactive, artistic activity for participants.

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### How?

**Part A (2 - 3 HOURS)** *Part A can precede Part B for a full-day retreat, or can be held separately.*

### Goals

- Get to know one another, explore the richness of the group, build trust and relationships.
- Develop a shared sense of needs, challenges and opportunities.

### The group will explore these questions:

- What kind of leader am I?
- What are my current leadership challenges?
- What are my current organizational challenges?
- What are my (or my organization's) current opportunities and successes?
- Where do I feel stuck, alone, siloed?
- What shared needs and challenges do we have?
- What shared opportunities/possibilities do we see?

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### 1. Welcome! (30 MINUTES)

In addition to welcoming the group and sharing the day's agenda, have someone (e.g., youth artist, member of the host organization, etc.) offer a personal greeting. For example:

*"This organization was founded in my living room 15 years ago when I saw kids from my neighborhood with nothing to do in the summer. Five years ago, we bought this building, and now..."*

Or

*"The exhibit that surrounds you is about..."*

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### 2. Break the Ice (15 MINUTES)

Set up an open circle of chairs with no table in the middle. Invite each person to introduce themselves, their organization, and share something "fun" or personal. For example:

*"The last artistic activity I did, or witnessed, was..."*

*"Choose one word that best describes the kind of day you are having..."*

*"One thing nobody in this room knows about you..."*

*"My favorite song is..."*

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### 3. Activity: The Wind Blows (15 MINUTES)

Remove one chair from the circle (e.g., if there are 15 people, have 14 chairs). The person left standing starts the activity by saying:

*"The wind blows for everyone who ate breakfast today."*

Everyone for whom the statement applies stands up and moves to a new seat NOT directly to their left or right. A new person is left standing; they say:

*"The wind blows for everyone who..."*

And the game continues.

#### **Four critical things happen during this activity:**

1. People learn a lot about each other.
2. Group members accustomed to only verbal discussions interact physically, changing the environment and interrupting normal patterns of thinking.
3. It introduces humor and ease into the group dynamic.
4. By the end of the activity, everyone is sitting next to a new person, breaking up pre-existing, comfortable relationships and encouraging new ones in a neutral space.

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#### 4. Discussion: Shared Challenges & Opportunities (1 HOUR)

Now that people feel welcome, have learned about one another, have spent some time moving and laughing, it's a good time for people to share and discuss leadership and organizational challenges and opportunities.

In small groups (pairs or groups of 3-4): Spend 15 minutes sharing your biggest leadership challenges and opportunities with one another. Then spend 15 minutes on your biggest organizational challenges and opportunities. One person from each group should capture key issues, themes, words, and ideas to share back to everyone.

Re-convene the entire group, writing all of the key ideas on big paper or a white board.

Facilitate group discussion, inviting all participants to reflect on what they have heard and learned.

- What patterns or themes emerge? Are there shared challenges and shared opportunities?
- What feels hot and urgent?
- What is most inspiring or exciting about the group's collective challenges and opportunities?

#### Break: Meal & Venue Tour (30 MINUTES)

#### If end of day:

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#### 5. Closing Activity (10 MINUTES)

Reconvene to remind people of workshop Part B, share contact information, and do a quick closing activity:

- A performance by a young artist.
- Sing a song as a group.
- Stand in a circle, and take turns re-enforcing one key idea, feeling, or word from the day.  
For example:

*"I re-enforce agreeing and disagreeing"*

*"I re-enforce young people"*

*"I re-enforce Joanne"*

*"I re-enforce art galleries"*

*"I re-enforce my new colleagues"*

- Have each person write one hope they have for the group on a post-it; place them around the doorframe as you exit.

#### End of Day

OR

If reconvening, continue to Coalition Building, Workshop 2, Part B.