

Coalition Building Workshop 1, Part B

Stronger Together than Apart: Building Trust & Relationships

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.

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.

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.

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.

How?

Part B (3-3.5 HOURS) *Part B can follow Part A for a full-day retreat, or can be held separately.*

Goals

- Explore assumptions and develop new ways of thinking and working together.
- Build on previous work around shared challenges and opportunities to better understand the community's environment, landscape, and ecosystem.
- Begin developing a shared identity and defining possibilities for collaboration.

The group will explore these questions:

- What is the current organizational, funding, youth arts environment and landscape?
- Where does my organization fit?
- Who do we work with? What group of stakeholders/allies do we share?
- How can we together make each of our organizations stronger?
- How can we make our sector stronger?
- How can we together change our environment?

1. Welcome (Back)! (15 MINUTES)

If this doesn't immediately follow Part A, consider changing locations! In addition to welcoming the group, have someone (e.g., youth artist, member of the host organization, etc.) offer a personal greeting.

If continuing directly from Part A, quickly re-cap morning, outline the afternoon, and go to the next activity.

2. Striving for Balance, or the "Youth Arts Juggling Act" (30 MINUTES)

Re-engage members of your newly formed coalition in thinking about the challenges and opportunities they face individually, organizationally, and collectively.

Research shows that people think and interact differently if they create while they talk.

INSTRUCTIONS

Facilitator:

"As youth arts leaders, everyone here works hard to find balance, to juggle a lot of priorities, to maintain equilibrium. Using these materials, create a piece of art that personally represents your current balancing act."

Provide simple materials and 10-15 minutes for the group to sit together and work on individual 'balance sculptures' or 'juggling mobiles.'

Materials needed:

Balance Sculptures

- Rocks or pieces of wood as a base.
- Clay or Playdough to create various items to balance.
- Wire or pipe cleaners to attach the items to the base.
- Pencils or sharpies for people to write with.

Juggling Mobiles

- Wire hangers as a base
- Found items (paperclips, colorful electrical tape, pictures from magazines, pieces of colored paper to write on) to create various items to balance.
- String or twine to suspend items from the hanger.
- Pencils or sharpies for people to write with.

Invite the group to display their art collectively. Encourage a few people to discuss their creations. Ask the group to reflect on shared themes, issues, ideas that emerge. Add or reinforce shared challenges and opportunities to the notes or white board used previously.

3. Agree or Disagree (75 MINUTES)

This activity will help the group identify and discuss their points of view, assumptions, and feelings about the youth arts community, their funding community, and the greater community's involvement in youth arts.

In advance of the meeting, design a set of statements (see examples below) and write each on a single card.

Number the cards and hand them out one at a time to coalition members; have them read each statement out loud when their number comes up. This way, no one voice is dominant, which promotes joint leadership.

One wall should be designated "Agree," and the opposite "Disagree." As the statement on each card is read, each person should align themselves accordingly. If you strongly agree or disagree, stand against the relevant wall. If you "sort of" agree or disagree, stand on that side of the room but closer to the middle. If you are unsure, stand close to—but not at—the center of the room. You cannot stand directly in the middle; you have to take a stand somewhere on one side or the other.

Each time people position themselves, pause and ask what they notice and if anyone wants to share why they chose that spot, and allow for any short discussions. Then move on to the next card.

Samples statements or questions to use:

- Coke is better than Pepsi. Agree or Disagree?
- There is a right and a wrong way to put toilet paper on a roll. Agree or Disagree?
- We have a strong youth arts sector in this community.
- I feel included as a leader of the youth arts sector.
- As a group, we are good at sharing ideas and resources.
- It is a good idea to share our donor lists.
- It is a good idea to do collaborative fundraising.
- I am hungry for more contact and collaboration with other youth arts leaders.
- I don't have time to work on collective work while running my organization.
- Funders in our community are great partners and allies.
- Funders in our community understand what it takes to run our organizations.
- I believe our community has a healthy arts ecosystem.
- I have a good relationship with our public officials.
- Our public officials are friends to the arts and arts advocates.
- I believe we tell our organization's story well.
- I believe we tell our collective youth arts story well as a sector.
- Our organizations are stronger when young people help to lead.
- I feel I have a seat at the right tables in this community, and my voice is heard.

After each statement has been read and discussed, have everyone sit a circle and spend 10 minutes reflecting on what emerged during the activity.

- What assumptions does the group hold about each other, their funders, their communities, their public officials, and one another? Did these assumptions surprise you?
- Did this activity help anyone to think differently or even change their point of view?
- Did any clear, shared group priorities emerge?
- Given the shared experience the group just had, what might they want to work on together or explore further as a group?

Break: Meal or Snack (15–30 MINUTES)

4. World Café™: Shared Vision, Shared Goals (45 minutes)

Recap the shared challenges, opportunities, and priorities the group has explored throughout the day. Identify 3-5 of the strongest emerging priorities and key areas they may want to continue working on collectively.

Create 3-5 small, World Café™-style workspaces with tables and chairs. Supply each area with big paper and crayons or markers.

Connect each of these spaces with one of the emerging priorities for the group. For example, one table dedicated to collective evaluation, one to expanded leadership development opportunities, one to collaborative fundraising, and so forth.

INSTRUCTIONS

Ask one coalition member to anchor each space, meaning they will stay at that table throughout the activity. The other coalition members can choose one content area they are interested in and spend about 10 minutes there. Ad hoc groups will form at each station, and together they will discuss, draw, name, and explore their topic and possible next steps. After 10 minutes, ask people (other than the anchors) to switch tables. New ad hoc groups will form. Repeat until everyone has spent time at three different stations.

Place all of the paper centerpieces—now covered with drawings, ideas, structures, and thoughts—on the floor or the wall. Invite the group to do a gallery walk and look at each one. What do they see? What crucial new ideas, dreams, and questions are represented? Have the anchor of each group give a 1-minute share out of next steps discussed at their table.

5. Closing Activity (10 MINUTES)

Remind people of next meeting, 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, dream, or idea they have for the group on a post-it; place them around the doorframe as you exit.

End of Day

To continue with ARTWorks for Kids workshops, go to [“Fund It: Collaborative Fundraising.”](#)