

Why should philanthropists fund the arts?

Why do dictators lock up the poets first?

Fiona Ellis and Hania Aswad

Why should philanthropists fund the arts? Some have argued that as art is of lesser importance than basics like food, shelter, health and so forth, there is no justification for funding art until world hunger is solved. How then can one justify spending on so-called high arts? Can the arts be seen as effective tools to bring about personal and social change? Is art transformative? Our subject for this *Alliance* special feature is philanthropy's attitudes to and role in funding 'arts and social change'.



The guest editors for this *Alliance* special feature are:



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This special issue on arts funding was originally proposed by the Working Group on Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace (PSJP). They commissioned Moukhtar Kocache to do a scoping study which emerged with the title: *Framing the Discourse, Advancing the Work: Philanthropy at the nexus of peace and social justice and arts and culture*. Kocache's work made it clear that there is a dynamic intellectual debate about arts, culture and social justice among international grantmakers and artists and therefore an appetite to see some of the issues discussed more widely.

In looking at the issues and inviting contributors we wanted to confront head on some of the received

wisdoms, opinions and contradictions we have both encountered on the subject. Philanthropic funding for the arts provokes strong views; few are lukewarm or neutral. We are grateful to our contributors for joining us in the effort to stir things up and then to calm them down.

Art is not simple

Some artists see their work as entirely about social change. This is true of many of the so-called high arts as well as the community and participative arts. For others art is pure at the point of creation and need not have social or political content or drive. Many people, including funders, draw a sharp distinction between the art that a professional artist makes, which may well intentionally stimulate social change, and the art that people without training or particularly developed talent make for their own purposes. Yet the art of protest or affirmation on a street gable may be as powerful as, if more ephemeral than, Picasso's *Guernica*. And then there are those who believe that funding art at all is a frivolity while there is so much poverty in the world.

Given this complexity, what should foundations do? Should they fund artists to create the art they want to make because artists are intrinsically valuable to society? Should they fund the places where art is made and displayed to make it universally available? Should they fund only work that outwardly promotes social change? What about quality: does it matter if some

community art that makes change is of lower quality (whatever that means)?

We want this issue of *Alliance* to be a debate about art and philanthropy. And we have been determined to show that this debate is global; the same arguments happen everywhere and many of the same observations apply.

Issues of language and definition

Is art the same as culture? People warned us about issues of language: what about culture in the broader context where arts, crafts and sociology collide? Others thought perhaps philanthropists needed a schema illustrating different ways in which the arts and artists collide and collude: for example, arts for self-realization, arts for provocation, instrumental arts at the service of social justice, art for its own intrinsic value . . . We decided to pay our readers the compliment of not trying to unscramble these questions; they are important but not essential for philanthropists in considering their policies towards arts funding. As for the schema, we thought it might be amusing to do but that we would end up arguing about categories rather than ideas or inspiring practice.

What we are clear about is that there is no single cultural model to which everyone must aspire and no support in this special issue for arts that are thrust upon people because someone else decides what is good for us. One of us in a previous life as an evangelical public sector arts funder was reminded by a wiser man that there must also be freedom from the arts!

Putting Maslow to bed

One of the strongest oppositions people in the arts encounter when arguing in favour of philanthropic funding is the Maslow argument. As Barry Knight puts it: 'How could something essentially transcendental be relevant to something so practical?' Influential psychologist Abraham Maslow (1908–70) is widely held to have asserted that, in the hierarchy of human needs, arts and culture are of lesser importance than underpinning basics like food, shelter and health. Of course there is some truth in this. But superficial interpretation of Maslow's argument has given many philanthropists permission to say that, simplistically, until world hunger is solved, they cannot justify funding art.

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Even Maslow did not believe this so it is surprising that, despite evidence, the argument hangs around like a bore at a party. Katherine Watson, in her article, reframes the debate beautifully: 'The answer lies not in placing art and culture in a balance with the urgent questions of our times, but in recognizing that it is truly an integral ingredient of the solution.'

Sarah Mukasa also argues strongly for the role of arts in the African Women's Development Fund's work in promoting women's rights, while Santosh Samal shows how the significantly oppressed and underrated Dalits of India embrace literature, theatre and expressive crafts to make bold statements about cultural identity and the strength of their community.

The power of the arts and artists

If anyone doubts the power of art then a glance at a daily newspaper should offer some pause for thought. From the cancellation and obstruction of 'El-Fan Midan' (Art is a Square) in Cairo to the farcical 30 December police raid on Moscow's independent theatre company Teatr.doc and the tragic events in Paris in January this year, there is usually evidence somewhere in newsprint that even the highest political figures believe art to be powerful. As the Wilson Center's Blair Ruble puts it: 'the mystery is why does Vladimir Putin's government fear a minuscule drama company operating from a Moscow basement?''¹

Why *do* dictators lock up the poets first? We asked some of our contributors to address the question of the power of the arts and culture, especially in places of unrest and where civil and human rights are a central concern. Case studies from HIVOS as a funder and the Irish Human Rights Film Festival as a recipient show how both artists and funders prize the contribution that cultural organizations make to promoting attitudinal change and disseminating messages about rights, especially where fundamental rights are questioned or withheld.

These contributors accept the argument that change comes about not just through information, evidence and persuasion but also through empathy. And few things can help attain emotional engagement better than theatre, film and story-telling. Several of our case studies show how the encapsulation of thoughts and feelings into a form that can reach into the hearts and minds of many challenges the status quo and encourages citizens to think for themselves. Sometimes this is robust and argumentative but more often the arts deliver ideas more subtly, not by preaching but by showing and sharing emotion. ▷

So why would philanthropists *not* take advantage of such power? If social change is the goal then it must come from the ground up, as Katherine Watson reminds us: 'Art and culture is essential for building open, democratic and inclusive societies . . . Change begins with people. Ideas flourish at a local level and then scale up and out.'

Artist Mike van Graan from South Africa argues (p50): 'Freedom of creative expression is often made subject to political and economic interests. It is against this backdrop that philanthropy in support of the arts and of artists is necessary to promote and defend independent artistic expression and distribution.'

An act of faith?

For their survey article Andrew Milner and Caroline Hartnell asked a selection of foundations and artists from around the world why philanthropists should support the arts. The answers are fascinating: a broad consensus emerges about the intrinsic value of the arts in expressing who we are, extending our boundaries, formulating our aspirations. None of our contributors resorts to the simplistic old belief that 'art is good for you'.

Many of our contributors are happy to acknowledge that the arts can be used instrumentally but they emphasize that such reductionism does no favours to philanthropy, communities or artists. Barry Knight picks up the point: '... an assessment [of the value of art] should depend on the essential meaning of art itself, rather than on the attachment of a contingent purpose given to it by social activists. In other words, the value of art needs to be determined by its essence.'

Our survey respondents hold that it is axiomatic that arts and culture are central to our lives and that we would all be diminished by the absence of creativity. Funder Omar al Qattan voices the thoughts of several of them when he says: 'Art is part of culture and culture is that wider universe containing what we see and hear, smell and eat, renege and accept, analyse and consume, and hate and delight in every day.' He goes further; in his view philanthropists not only may but actually should fund the arts, particularly where the state cannot or will not do so.

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We believe that funding the arts is such a rich seam that philanthropists are spoiled for choice. It is a good use of philanthropy to support the arts with or without explicit social purpose. And sensible philanthropy also invests in artists and the arts infrastructure that helps them thrive.

India Foundation for the Arts grantee Ashavari Majumdar performing 'Surpanakha – An experiment in Kathak', at the India Habitat Centre. Majumdar offered a fresh view of Surpanakha, a much reviled character in the Ramayana.



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Philanthropy and access for all

Much philanthropic funding goes into projects that introduce people to cultural experiences they might not otherwise get the chance to enjoy. Will Miller tells us how and why the Wallace Foundation is investing \$40 million to help arts organizations build and retain audiences from a wide social spectrum.

But Miller also talks about how drawing together all kinds of people – not just those seen as disadvantaged – to enjoy and be stimulated by artistic endeavour provides a fundamental social good: 'Not every philanthropic act has to carry the full weight of all possible social benefits. Because the arts provide private value as well as public value, I think they can be, but they don't have to be, about social change.'

We do not wish, in arguing the merits of all varieties of arts funding, to pretend that everything philanthropists are doing for the arts is the best it could be. The US National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy

in *Fusing arts, culture and social change* by Holly Sidford (2011) takes American philanthropy to task for skewing its (then) \$2.3 billion annual arts funding towards elite institutions for elite consumers. But Sidford does not want an either/or stance. She and the grantmakers who supported the publication argue for thoughtfulness and awareness in grantmaking, for considering and understanding all the consequences of a grant to an arts body and trying to make sure that new and unfamiliar arts and minority communities also benefit.

Philanthropists can of course influence how great institutions use their money. John Nickson asked arts leaders from what might be thought 'elite' institutions in the UK about the effects of philanthropic funds on their work. As the Royal Opera House's Alex Beard says: 'philanthropists are active in helping us to change the way we work and to change the lives of others.' Welcoming the collaborative attitude of philanthropists, Beard and others like him willingly embrace the opportunity to expand audiences and participants.

Supporting artists to be artists

No craftsman would neglect their tools and so it must be with those who want to use arts as willing tools in the pursuit of social justice. Katherine Watson of the European Cultural Foundation is just one funder who advocates supporting cultural managers to share ideas and good practice across international boundaries. The Wallace Foundation's programme to help 25 arts organizations with their audience development programmes will help build the underlying capacity of the organizations so that by attracting more audiences from a wider demographic they can fulfil their social purpose while building economic resilience. They will also share their knowledge and help others to learn good techniques and approaches to audience expansion.

Activist artists themselves are playing their part by sharing their experiences and helping each other across international borders. Many readers will be familiar with PEN International, funded by numerous philanthropists to campaign for human rights, chiefly freedom of expression through literature and media. Fewer will know of Germany's Artist Organisations International – 'over 20 representatives of organizations founded by artists whose work

confronts today's crises in politics, economy, education, immigration and ecology'.

Proving it all

Both of us and many of our contributors can cite examples of lives transformed by exposure to or participation in arts projects. Yet artists in the survey article note that funders are sometimes deterred by the difficulty of measuring and attributing results for arts projects. Contemporary grantmakers need confidence in the efficacy and efficiency of the work they fund. So can we prove that the arts are effective agents of personal and social change? And can we show that they are at least as good as any other means? Speaking as a funder, arts project evaluations can be irritating: they are littered with confirmation bias; they tend to lack any base data with which to measure change; qualitative measures abound (and can be good) but for data geeks there is little to see.

If that last set of faults sounds familiar, it may be because the same criticisms are regularly thrown at other evaluations. Michelle Coffey of the Lambent Foundation highlights some of the challenges facing arts funders seeking to develop appropriate metrics.

Adrian Ellis tackles this problem from another angle, castigating the specious economic outcome studies that artists and arts organizations are forced to create to justify their subventions. He points us towards *The gifts of the muse*, Kevin McCarthy's 2004 report for the Rand Corporation, which shows how the question of evaluation and value has to be unpacked and only then does it make sense. McCarthy does an excellent job of showing how you can measure if you know which indicators are right for certain contexts and which are not. So you can, for example, demonstrate health or education or crime reduction outcomes arising from arts input. But importantly McCarthy and his co-authors also tell us: 'People are drawn to the arts not for their instrumental effects, but because the arts can provide them with meaning and with a distinctive type of pleasure and emotional stimulation. We contend not only that these intrinsic effects are satisfying in themselves, but that many of them can lead to the development of individual capacities and community cohesiveness that are of benefit to the public sphere.'²

So the answer to the questions we posed ourselves about proof is, effectively, yes, but you have to do a bit of work to make sure you ask the right questions, count the right things and approach the project with an open and honest mind. ▷

Contemporary grantmakers need confidence in the efficacy and efficiency of the work they fund. So can we prove that the arts are effective agents of personal and social change?



'This is my metal basket for catching fish. It already has erosion from the sea, what remains is just its structure, now it is just a memory ...' from 'Yemeni women with fighting spirits' a photography and illustration project by Amira Al-Sharif, supported by the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture.

You are allowed to change your mind!

The hearts of arts supporters fell when Bill Gates denounced funding of the arts by philanthropists as 'immoral', citing moral philosopher Peter Singer this time instead of Maslow, as Adrian Ellis tells us in his article. But recently the *New York Times* reported that 'the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is embarking on an online campaign using art to encourage immunization'. In fact GAVI, the worldwide immunization programme funded by Gates among others, is creating a wonderful partnership between artists and scientists to promote the development and use of vaccines. The website <http://artofsavingalife.com> is well worth a visit. Look at Christoph Neimann's animated story about keeping vaccines at the right temperature and you are guaranteed to remember the key points far better than if you simply read an article about it.

We know of other philanthropists and their employees who would not describe themselves as arts funders but who have decided, like Sara Llewellyn of Barrow Cadbury Trust, that '(if) an arts medium can contribute to our goal, we are open to that'. For some this involved a change of heart and a willingness to recognize the qualities and special abilities of arts projects that so many respondents to our survey pick out.

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From the Lascar cave paintings to wartime community singing to puppet shows in Syrian refugee camps in Turkey, people have used arts to talk about themselves, to communicate to others and to air difficult subjects, even while themselves struggling for survival. They have also enjoyed themselves. It should be no surprise that the right to a cultural life is enshrined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights (Article 27): people have voted for it with their dancing feet, their singing voices and their wielded paint brushes.

We hope you enjoy reading this special issue – yes 'enjoy', because arts and enjoyment go hand in hand. If you are already a committed arts funder we would like you to find more good and bolstering ideas and arguments to support and test your position. If you are a doubtful philanthropist we would like to stimulate you to ask more, better questions and to follow some of the leads our contributors have for you. We do not expect you to read this magazine and fling up your hands in surrender while simultaneously planning a major contribution to building a new gallery in an area of cultural deprivation. We would much rather you had a good think about where and how and when working with artists might help you realize your overall goals. And then think about how you might support artists to be there for you when you need them. @

1 www.newsweek.com/putins-punitive-theater-absurd-298179

2 www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG218.html (p 17)

Dancing is part of the revolution!

Katherine Watson

'If I can't dance I don't want to be part of your revolution.'

Attributed to Emma Goldman, 1869–1940, feminist, anarchist, revolutionary, free-thinker

Those of us who work, teach, present, support or participate in art and culture are often asked: why should art be supported when there are so many critical global challenges to address? When our social systems are crumbling, when millions of people are displaced or live in poverty, when conflict rages, when disease devastates the lives of millions, when the very future of the sustainability of the planet is called into question? The answer lies not in placing art and culture in a balance with the urgent questions of our times, but in recognizing that it is truly an integral ingredient of the solution. Taking the words attributed to Emma Goldman further, I believe that without dancing, without arts and culture, there will be no revolution.



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European Cultural Foundation (ECF) has a political mission. For 60 years, we have been supporting people, organizations and ideas because the founders were convinced that, in addition to coal and steel, Europe, in the words of Robert Schuman, 'needs a soul'. Without a soul, in good and in difficult times, the future looks very bleak indeed. Art and culture is essential for building open, democratic and inclusive societies.

While there are many areas in which art and culture contributes to this and as many different ways for foundations to lend their support, I will highlight three:

- ▶ Art and culture's contribution to community change-making and community resilience
- ▶ Arts and cultural organizations as safe havens for healing and reconciliation
- ▶ Artistic voices that crystallize, challenge and engage

Community change-making

Art and culture has an integral role to play in change processes. Artists themselves do not shy away from working in difficult situations, from contributing to change. Resilient communities are better able to weather times of crisis. Arts and culture is not *the* answer, but the power of culture is evident in the flourishing of imagination, creative thought and unexpected ideas that can result from cross-sectoral partnerships and from embracing 'common cause agendas'.

Change begins with people. Ideas flourish at a local level and then scale up and out. Connecting local change-making ideas and providing platforms for the exchange of knowledge and experience is vital to realize the potential to scale and to link to policy-making agendas. It is important to foster these spaces of exchange. Many ideas can be found on ECF's Idea Lab – such as fostering citizen journalism in far-flung towns across Turkey, developing broadband hubs in Greece's rural communities, or urban gardening to transform public space in Portugal. Other examples can be found in the re.think initiative of Mission, Models and Money (UK), whose website states:

'To make the leap to a liveable world, we need to find ways of activating and strengthening the kinds of values that will help us create more sustainable ways of living ... engaging with art and culture can help us do this.'

Or in Citte del Arte's (Bielle, Italy) Geographies of Change:

'Geographies of Change draws a new geography of places ... It is a geography of physical places, but it is also a cultural one, a network of networks, of practices from all different fields and disciplines.'

Beyond the urgency of a crisis, support needs to be both punctual and long term. For a number of years ECF has worked in partnership with MitOst (Berlin) on the Tandem Exchange Programme. Tandem is a process-based concept that supports long-term, inter-local cooperation, peer learning and networking opportunities between cultural managers whose organizations are engaged in cross-sectoral change-making endeavours in their communities. In 2014, the Tandem process was embraced by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who invested in a timely Tandem Ukraine stream called 'Dialogue for Change'. This is based on the belief that, especially in times of crisis and transition, working together on tangible inter-local collaborations not only promotes dialogue, but also allows for the development of new forms of civic engagement, supporting a process of social transformation.

One of the 12 EU-Ukraine Tandems includes a collaboration between the Beat Carnival community charity and social enterprise from Belfast and the cultural factory Izolyatsia, whose team was expelled from their premises in Donetsk when armed conflict erupted in Eastern Ukraine. Their Tandem exchange will build on both organizations' experiences of dealing with the long-term effects of historical and ongoing conflict in divided communities. By realizing a public carnival

Photo on p2: Belfast's Beat Carnival 2014.

parade in the former front-line city of Sloviansk, their project will explore visual symbols as an expression of local identity that can provoke and separate but also unite communities towards overcoming fears of 'the other'.

All of the hundreds of Tandem experiences across Europe, the southern Mediterranean, Ukraine, Turkey and Moldova are traced on the ECF website.

Another important collection of change-making through art and culture can be found on the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture website, which tells the personal stories of artists working in Syrian refugee camps and circus performers working with children in Palestine. It is incumbent upon funders to bring these experiences to a wider public since they attest to the power of art and culture in the change-making process.

Safe havens

Cultural organizations are safe havens in difficult and dangerous situations. They create safe open spaces for citizen participation and it is to them that the community turns when it is in turmoil. As a result of their openness and their commitment to the future of the community, they can help communities to heal. In Cairo we see this in a local partner such as Al Mawred Al Thaqafy, or in the spaces across Turkey that hosted the community meetings after the Gezi Park confrontations, or in the Visual Culture Research Centre (VCRC) in Kiev. In March 2015, ECF will award VCRC the Princess Margriet Award. As a platform for collaboration between academics, artists and activists, the centre has shaped an interdisciplinary environment that makes an immensely important contribution to cultural debate in Ukraine's post-Soviet condition, in terms of art, knowledge and politics. VCRC reconfigures the cultural political debate beyond the antagonism of polarized political stances.

Artistic voice and activism

The media often shows us the artist or celebrity as spokesperson or campaigner – adding that star quality to campaigns. What we do not often see are the artists on the front line, tirelessly working on the ground as activists for change. To quote Teo Celakoski, an ECF Princess Margriet Award laureate from 2014, he and his colleagues set out to '... connect with other value-based initiatives outside of the cultural sector

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to raise awareness of citizens and the capacity for confrontation'; at the same time they aim to work with public authorities, moving beyond activism. 'We aim for a civil-public partnership, a public institution with a governance model based on participative management.'

Through public and political advocacy, foundations must continue to raise the profile of the people and the work we support, stepping outside the specific cultural policy arena and broadening the spread of the message.

In 2013, the ZKM (Centre for Art and Media) in Karlsruhe curated experiences of global activism into a group exhibition called aCtIVISM.

'By means of objects, photographic, cinematographic, videographic and mass medial documents, the exhibition presents global activism as the first novel art form of the 21st century.'

A true valuation of the contribution of art and culture to social justice and community change must also take into account the incredible impact of single artistic voices or specific works of art. A film, a theatre piece or a visual art work has the power to engage, inspire and communicate, and to challenge us to confront, individually and collectively, the social, environmental and human rights injustices in our society.

One only needs to think of the impact on people, politicians and the market of the film *The End of the Line*, as attested by the in-depth evaluation made by the BRITDOC Foundation, supported by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.¹ Artists are citizens and community leaders and bringing their perspective to the issues that challenge us will take us a long way towards finding and sharing solutions.

In short, art and culture, through process and product, contributes to change-making in many ways. Foundations can and should engage with art and culture on every level – supporting processes as well as looking at 'products'. We should build on our flexibility and our independence to be able to respond to crisis situations and ensure that the artists and cultural organizations that contribute so fully to their communities in these times of crisis are supported. At the same time, through our interest in collaboration, we should work together to make the connections to support local initiatives to move to a wider scale. @

¹ http://britdoc.org/real_good/evaluation

Weighing the imagination?

Michelle Coffey

Many of us have a deeply held belief that art matters to society, that artists' experiments and creative explorations lead us to ourselves and teach us about our societies. Across generations and countries, there are a multitude of examples of art, in all its forms, connecting hearts and minds, challenging boundaries of understanding, propelling movements forward, awakening collective consciousness.



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While socially engaged art has long existed, it is only recently that the philanthropic sector has 'caught on'. Art and social justice funding is now a trend – after being marginalized within both the art world and social justice arenas. Foundations want to break out of programme 'silos' and explore creative interventions in order to be more efficient and relevant. Similarly, interest and attention have been focused on measurement and evaluation as a way for foundations to show impact and the potential 'scale up' of solutions.

Leading an 'arts and social justice' foundation, the Lambent Foundation, I rebel against the idea of designing metrics to validate the impact of arts and social justice work. Standardized measurements fall drastically short in allocating value to artistic practice, failing to notice and account for the transformative power of art. Along with other artists, organizers, and funders, I am struggling with this imposed mandate of measurement. How can meaningful acts of creativity and beauty and alternative ways of seeing and knowing be measured – measured against what? Can we really 'weigh the imagination'?

With a funding history in social justice issues and progressive movement building, Lambent Foundation was founded with the intention of elevating art and culture to serve as a strategy alongside organizing and advocacy to support progressive social change. But this isn't easy.

The problem is that artists and social justice organizers do not necessarily share the same vernacular: it's process versus tactics. Aesthetics operate within individual value systems shaping taste and notions of quality. Social justice organizing – intended to shift dialogues, mobilize engagement and potentially have an impact on public policy – has clear, campaign-oriented goals based on a collectively held

narrative with a determined timeline which is more adaptable to metrics and measurement. Targeted short-term outcomes such as audience engagement, increased access and awareness campaigns can promote general awareness of inequities and complex social challenges. However, art interventions around structural justice issues require a deeper investment of time, understanding and resources – often challenging philanthropic guidelines and grant periods. And there are very few opportunities for the two sides to come together to understand each other's intentions and practices.

Another problem is that people often take an oversimplified and limited view of art and culture as entertainment-focused rather than valuing the making of art as labour and artists as contributors to local and national economies and as community leaders of healthy, vibrant neighbourhoods. It is important for artistic practice to be equally valued and not marginalized within an art and social change framework.

Against these challenges, formal networks (such as Americans for the Arts, Animating Democracy and Grantmakers in the Arts) and informal local/regional collectives have developed shared-learning communities to develop 'better' practices and move the arts and social justice field forward. Multiple and diverse artist-centred organizations and individual artist practices have been attempting to design evaluative tools that value both artistic and justice-based objectives.

As grantmakers, it is important to work directly and collaboratively with grantee partners to explore and construct evaluative measurements and assessment models that address both funder and grantee needs. We need to share our learning and discoveries, not to provide a panacea but to engage in practices that are evolving, relevant and responsive to our complex and turbulent times. We, the funders, are the ones mandating metric models; we can also make a choice to work in partnership with our boards and grantees to design adaptive models that permit flexibility and really serve the generative and creative nature of our work.

A more just and beautiful world is truly possible. As funders, let's view ourselves as practitioners alongside artists and cultural workers and organizers and together we can create that world. @

Is access to art a human right?

Barry Knight

Two years ago the Working Group on Philanthropy for Social Justice and Peace (PSJP) began to investigate the relationship between social justice and art, leading to the recent publication *Framing the Discourse, Advancing the Work: Philanthropy at the nexus of peace and social justice and arts and culture*.¹ I was sceptical from the beginning. Art and social justice are surely about different things.



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Art belongs in the spiritual realm as something transcendental to be enjoyed like a beautiful landscape, which at its best can induce what psychologist Abraham Maslow called a 'peak experience'. Social justice, on the other hand, belongs in the material realm, concerned with practical issues of money, food, shelter, safety and relationships, which are way down Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. How could something essentially transcendental be relevant to something so practical?

As the work progressed, my doubts increased. A retreat for philanthropists and artists in the summer of 2013 brought together two groups, each with its own incomprehensible jargon. Lofty but ill-defined terms such as 'equality', 'social change' and 'human rights' vied for attention with 'art' and 'culture'. As well as being baffled, I found myself questioning the zealotry of casting art as subservient to social change.

At the end of the process, however, I have come to see that the relationship between art and social justice is vital if we are to make significant progress with the world's problems, but the relationship is the reverse of that envisaged in the PSJP publication. Indeed, I now see that art is so important that it justifies its place in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 27 states:

- 1 Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
- 2 Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Art as the pinnacle of human achievement...

A vital link between art and social justice is provided by John Maynard Keynes. In a paper published in 1930, he foresaw a future in which '...for the first time since his creation man will be faced with his real, his permanent problem – how to use his freedom from pressing economic cares, how to occupy the leisure, which science and compound interest will have won for him, to live wisely and agreeably and well.'² The answer, said Keynes, lies in art.

Keynes was influenced by philosopher G E Moore who, in *Principia Ethica*, suggested that 'by far the most valuable things we know or can imagine are certain states of consciousness which may be roughly described as the pleasures of human intercourse and the enjoyment of beautiful objects'. According to his biographer, Edward Skidelsky, Keynes lived most of his life in the 'nether regions of capitalist action, but he always had one eye on the heaven of art, love and the quest for knowledge'.

On Keynes' model, therefore, art is the purpose of social progress: we engage with practical action so society as a whole can engage with a higher state of consciousness. Keynes looked forward to the moment (to be achieved in around 2030 on his prediction model) when 'the spontaneous, joyful attitude to life now confined to artists and free spirits is diffused throughout society as a whole'.

This reverses the instrumentalist view that art should be used to further social justice. On this model, art is the pinnacle of human achievement, and the goal of social justice is to enable human beings to reach it.

... or a vehicle for social change?

Both Keynes in England and Malraux in France believed that the mass of the people should have access to 'elite' art, including opera, ballet and theatre. This was uppermost in their minds in forming organizations such as the Arts Council to make public funds available to the arts.

This approach has produced an important stream of funding for the arts. The Paul Hamlyn Foundation, for example, funds art in order 'to widen access and deepen participation in the arts, to improve education and learning through the arts, and to show that the arts make a difference to people's lives'.

However, the overall pattern of arts funding has been criticized on the grounds that it tends to reinforce, rather than challenge, existing divisions of wealth and power. A report by the US's National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy suggested that the large

1 www.p-sj.org at <http://tinyurl.com/FramingDiscourse>

2 John Maynard Keynes (1930) 'Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren', in *Essays in Persuasion*, New York: W W Norton, 1963.

sums (\$2.3 billion in 2009) awarded to arts organizations are ‘demonstrably out of balance with our evolving cultural landscape and with the changing demographics of our communities . . . it disregards large segments of our society’.

The study points out that a growing number of artists and cultural groups are working in artistic traditions from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific Rim, as well as in new technology-based and hybrid forms. Their art often addresses issues of economic, educational and environmental injustice as well as inequities in civil and human rights. This takes us back into the territory covered by the PSJP publication and its central thesis that the power of art should be harnessed as a vehicle for social change. A survey of arts funders prepared for that research revealed a split between those who funded art largely as an instrument to attain social justice and those who did not see it this way.

A fruitless distinction

I suggest that pursuing this distinction between ‘art for its own sake’ and ‘art for social justice’ is ultimately fruitless, for two reasons. First, the idea that support for ‘art for its own sake’ reinforces the elitism in society is at least partly out of date – not because of any philanthropic programme to increase access, but because of the ubiquity of social media. Ordinary people may not be able to afford a ticket to La Scala, but they can now watch performances of first-class opera on YouTube.

Second, and more fundamentally, art sometimes promotes social justice and sometimes it does not. Consider two original compositions by jazz pianist, Oscar Peterson. ‘Hymn to Freedom’ was born out of the struggle for civil rights in Birmingham, Alabama in the early 1960s and is clearly relevant to social justice. ‘St Henri’ was written to celebrate the hustle and bustle of the Montreal neighbourhood where Peterson grew up and has no relevance to social justice. Enjoyment of these pieces may be enhanced by knowing why they were composed, but is not a necessary condition, since art does not depend on having a purpose to have value.

Art and creativity

This is not to say that art does not have societal value. However, an assessment of that value should depend on the essential meaning of art itself, rather than on the attachment of a contingent purpose given to it by

This is not to say that art does not have societal value. However, an assessment of that value should depend on the essential meaning of art itself, rather than on the attachment of a contingent purpose given to it by social activists.

social activists. In other words, the value of art needs to be determined by its essence. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, ‘art’ is defined as:


‘The expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, . . . producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power.’

The arts cover: ‘. . . various branches of creative activity, such as painting, music, literature, and dance’.

The key concept – appearing in both definitions – is ‘creativity’. This is the essence of art and is, I suggest, the central contribution of art to individuals and to wider society. Art is the medium through which human beings engage with their higher selves to reach their full potential – what Maslow called the ‘self-actualizing’ process. According to the literature on aesthetics, there are two main ways in which this process occurs. The first is by developing new ways of seeing; the second is by developing new relationships with others. Through such processes we are all capable of attaining the state of bliss envisaged by Keynes.

The creativity of the artistic process is much required by the human condition. John Paul Lederach in *The moral imagination: The art and soul of peacebuilding* suggests that a society without art is a society without ways of creating solutions to complex problems. He notes that, as the pursuit of professional excellence in society has emphasized the technology, the technique and the skills of process management, we have too often lost a sense of the art. As a result, he suggests:

‘. . . our approaches have become too cookie-cutter like, too reliant on what proper technique suggests as a frame of reference, and as a result our processes are too rigid and fragile’.

This poses two challenges to philanthropists. The first is to infuse their programmes with art. This is the missing ingredient in a complex non-linear world where the log frame is only good for the technocratic aspects of development. The second is to embrace a new moral direction. Following Keynes we can see that there is the possibility of another narrative – away from the money-saturated universe of capitalism towards a space where we all have enough to ensure that we can be creative. We replace a materialist account of the universe with a transcendental one. The importance of social justice is that each and every one of us on this planet has sufficient wherewithal (money, food, shelter, education and so on) to be able to embark on our journey to reach our higher selves as set out by Keynes. I believe that this is our birthright. 

Can art be a tool for social change?

Santosh Samal

The arts can often be a powerful expression of a community's voice and identity, especially when that identity has been repressed by years of oppression – as demonstrated in our work with India's Dalit community. In Sanskrit, Dalit means 'oppressed' or 'downtrodden'.



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The Constitution of India classifies Dalits as Scheduled Castes. According to the 2011 census figures, Scheduled Castes constitute 16.6 per cent of India's population; of these, about 76.4 per cent live in rural areas spread all over the country.

Recent years have witnessed the emergence of a new collective cultural consciousness among the Dalit community, voicing 2,000 years of repressed feelings and a sense of discrimination and injustice through vivid forms of art. Dying art forms have been revived, rare art forms popularized, new ones created. The most remarkable development of the Dalit cultural movement has been the reconstruction of a Dalit identity by reversing the symbolism of previously 'defiled' and 'polluting' objects and recreating them as positive symbols of pride.

Perhaps the most critical point in this reformation of meaning and identity was when well-known Dalit artist Savindra Sawarkar pictorially represented a *Devadasi*¹ woman as the victim of an evil caste hierarchical system. In doing so, Sawarkar simultaneously challenged the inequality and injustice of the caste system and broke the historical silence of Dalits about their sufferings. His achievement also marked a victory in the struggle faced by Dalit artists to create space for their work in mainstream art in India.

The emergence of such artists as well as myriad forms of Dalit cultural expression – the revival of traditional Dalit crafts and the promotion of new ones; the rise of contemporary Dalit literature and Dalit theatre born out of the Dalit movement – is contributing towards building an identity that is proud, united and self-conscious.

As a community-based peace funder that supports grassroots Dalit activism for equality and justice, the Dalit Foundation has come to recognize that arts and culture are integral to positive social change and the struggle for equality and justice – first



Savindra Sawarkar's picture of a *Devadasi* woman.

as a means of communicating and dramatizing the condition of Dalits and second as a means of promoting Dalit identity, self-expression and pride. We have therefore built support for the arts and culture into our strategy.

The foundation has been supporting the use of cultural expressions in grassroots activism. Our partners on the ground have often employed the use of street-plays, song and dance as a strategy for building awareness and challenging prejudices. We run an arts and culture programme which provides grants and fellowships to Dalit artists and arts that have previously been denied recognition and space to grow, such as the 'Godna' art form. Perhaps most significantly of all, in March 2008 we staged a cultural festival called Utsav, a celebration of Dalit struggles against oppression.

While we still encounter resistance to acceptance of Dalit arts by mainstream arts in India, we remain convinced of the value of the arts in giving voice to the Dalit community and providing a platform from which to challenge deep-seated prejudices. @

¹ In Sanskrit *Devadasi* means 'servant of God'. A *Devadasi* is a woman, particularly from a 'lower caste', supposedly 'dedicated' to worship and service of a deity or temple

for the rest of her life. But in reality, girls are 'dedicated' to a life of sex work in the name of religion, despite the practice being outlawed in 1988.

INTERVIEW WITH SARAH MUKASA

Advancing the cause of women through the arts

The African Women's Development Fund's (AWDF) mission is to advance women's rights and gender equality in Africa. How does their Arts, Culture and Sport programme contribute to it, *Alliance* asked programme director Sarah Mukasa.



Sarah Mukasa is programme director at AWDF. Email sarahm@awdf.org

AWDF's Arts, Culture and Sports thematic grantmaking area seeks to engage with key players in philanthropy and the arts to produce alternative images and messages of African women, which challenge negative stereotypes and images. It also showcases the contributions and achievements of African women through the creation of platforms for self-expression and dialogue by African women on key issues of concern, and through skills building and technical assistance in addition to grantmaking.

Of particular interest is popular culture since its growth, influence and visibility have been exponential. For example, the Nigerian film industry is the third largest globally in terms of films produced. Of concern to us as AWDF is the fact that popular culture (especially music and film) is being widely exploited by fundamentalist religious and cultural groups to create ideas of African identity that are highly discriminatory to women.

There is considerable evidence that women in the arts can be a tremendous force for shaping public engagement and opinion. For example, the late Tanzanian folk musician Bi Kidude highlighted through her music the many ways in which traditional cultures have celebrated women's sexuality, thus creating avenues through which women's sexual health can be discussed in culturally appropriate ways. This is a taboo area, so it is a remarkable achievement in both artistic and activist terms.

In our short experience of supporting arts and culture, we would say it has enabled us to reach more people, to forge new links with young people's groups, and to create public awareness and debate.

I don't believe the arts are a neutral space. Every piece of art or cultural expression reflects an opinion or social commentary of some kind. There is a view that those who challenge the dominant narrative of the arts are using the arts for their own purposes. In my view, they are doing nothing different from any artist, which is demonstrating how they see the world.

Is there evidence that supporting women's arts organizations advances women's rights?

Yes, I think so. For example, traditionally sculpture in much of Africa has been dominated by men and as such carries higher status in the arts. We supported the Memory Lane Project in Ghana, which works with women artisans and challenges the notion that women have neither the skill nor the capacity to be sculptors. This has in turn challenged deeply held beliefs about women's role in society. It has also created opportunities for women artisans to increase their livelihoods and income.

The Arts, Sports and Culture theme also aims to mobilize young people to address areas of critical concern. For example, a group called the Katswe Sistahood in Zimbabwe uses theatre and poetry to tell the stories of young Zimbabwean women experiencing violence as well as to educate young women on sexual and reproductive health and rights. The group's work has strengthened the network of young women seeking greater protection from violence and has won the support of law enforcement agencies in and around Harare. More importantly, it has succeeded in bringing these issues to the forefront of public debate in Zimbabwe.

Do you also support arts activities as part of other programmes?

Yes, we do. For example, in 2012 we part funded a documentary, *The Witches of Gambaga*, highlighting the plight of many women in northern Ghana who are singled out as the cause of family and community misfortune and labelled witches. They are forced to flee their homes and seek refuge in 'witches' camps' where they are condemned to a life of hardship. The film portrayed the difficulties these women face and challenged the evidence of their supposed witchcraft. It became a topic of national debate and discussion. Many Ghanaians did not know of the practice. Two years later there has been significant change at the camp and in communities. While the practice has not died out, there have been significant improvements in conditions in the camps and in terms of protection from these accusations. @

Why art and philanthropy are natural partners

John Nickson

Art first appeared in caves 40,000 years ago. The arts define humanity and our ability to understand, imagine, create and communicate. Art and philanthropy have been synonymous since civilization began because art is dependent upon patronage, and yet debate continues as to whether philanthropists should support art or the needs of society, as if they were unrelated.

There will always be poverty and illness. What should philanthropists do? Why should they support the arts and what can they achieve by doing so? And should they support artists or arts institutions? I put these questions to two philanthropists, two arts leaders in the UK and a former Secretary of State for Culture.



Photo on p1: Tate Modern and the Millennium Bridge.

John Nickson was formerly head of fundraising for the British Council, English National Opera, the Royal Academy of Arts and Tate. He is a philanthropist, a charity trustee and the author of *Giving is good for you*. Email johnnickson@gmail.com

John Studzinski, philanthropist

John Studzinski runs Blackstone Advisory Partners and is a senior managing director of the Blackstone Group. His motivation in life as well as in philanthropy is the need to respect and to preserve human dignity. He is an active supporter of The Passage, a charity for the homeless in London, where he volunteers on the front line as well as serving on the board and both giving and raising money. As a board member, he has used his international contacts to help Human Rights Watch to expand so that it can draw attention to atrocities across the world, not least in Syria and the Middle East. He is also a significant arts benefactor with a particular emphasis upon mentoring artists at the beginning of their careers:

I support human rights and the arts. I created the Genesis Foundation more than ten years ago. We provide funding for young artists but beyond that we actively nurture them. Genesis has supported 900 artists, one of whom, Rufus Norris, will be the new director of the National Theatre. All the causes I support come back to identity, self-worth and dignity.

The arts are integral to life. What drives me up the wall is the idea that they are about entertainment.

Both the arts and philanthropy play a huge role in social change and always have.

The UK has the most open society in the world in terms of democracy, free speech and a highly critical media, and all of that is reflected in the arts. Look at the Royal Court Theatre in London. Writers from all over the world wish to write for it because free speech is one of the most precious things we have. Look at the impact that Jez Butterworth's play *Jerusalem* has made. Unless we encourage that kind of writing, we won't have the insight into contemporary society that we need to navigate our way through social change and to influence it.

Nicholas Serota, Tate

John Studzinski is also a benefactor of Tate, the UK's national museum of British and international modern and contemporary art. I asked Sir Nicholas Serota, Tate's director, about the role that philanthropy plays in the arts and its significance for Tate, not least in the building of Tate Modern, the world's most popular museum of modern and contemporary art:



There is an innate ambition in some people to leave the world a better place than they found it. The arts appeal to benefactors because they are an enduring part of society. We know a great deal more about the culture of

the Greeks, Romans and pre-Columbians than we do about their rates of inflation.

Most early philanthropy was about commissioning artists, and there are examples in recent times of that kind of patronage when Robert and Lisa Sainsbury bought Francis Bacon's paintings in the 1950s. The impact of the Sainsbury's philanthropy is felt today.

My aim in building Tate Modern was to encourage people to be less frightened of the art of their time, by creating somewhere they could feel welcome, a place in which they could find solace as well as intellectual stimulation and in which artists could make work that reflects our time.

None of Tate's expansion or the growth in audiences from 1.75 million to 7.75 million over 20 years would have been possible without a partnership between secure public funding – although that has declined by 30 per cent since 2010 – and philanthropy. One of our first significant donations for Tate Modern came from a man not noted for his enthusiasm for

modern art. He was motivated to give because he recognized the need for London to have a museum of international contemporary art and he knew that cultural investment in a relatively poor part of London could transform the area economically and socially.

Philanthropists are attracted to Tate because of our ability to reach young audiences, to provide learning opportunities and to take risks with artists. Through expansion, largely funded by philanthropy, we have been able to build new audiences and create programmes for local young people, and we now have an annual membership that has grown from 30,000 in 2000 to 114,000.

Tate has huge international appeal, particularly to the young, and attracts over 20 million online visitors a year. More people are engaged with and participate in the arts than ever before. Britain's creative industries constitute one of the fastest-growing parts of the economy, contributing 6 per cent of GDP and employing 2 million people. The positive impact of the arts upon urban regeneration is well documented.

Alex Beard, Royal Opera House

All this represents significant social change, and I wanted to know what if any contribution has been made by music. I spoke to Alex Beard, chief executive of the Royal Opera House, regarded by some as a temple of high art:

The concept of high art has no currency whatsoever. What opera does best is to use all the art forms to deal with the most significant forces in life: love, death, rebirth, betrayal, power, the tension between the public and the private. These emotions are central to the human condition and opera enables us to explore them with a power and intensity that other art forms cannot quite match.

Of course opera is expensive but it is nonsense that you have to be rich to come here. Forty per cent of the tickets for every performance are £40 or below. Our student standby scheme has 20,000 members.

Access is central to everything we do. Some may not see us as agents of social change but that is what we are. Philanthropy is vital, providing 25 per cent of our annual budget. This helps to subsidize cheaper tickets but philanthropists are active in helping us to change the way we work and to change the lives of others. For example, our recent production of *The Dialogue of the Carmelites*, Poulenc's opera about religious persecution in revolutionary France, engaged a community ensemble for the crowd

scenes made up of the homeless, the long-term unemployed and ex-offenders. The energy they brought to the performance was phenomenal. This is outreach of a new order.

Our new workshop in Thurrock, close to London but one of the most deprived areas in the south-east of the UK, is part of a cluster of creative enterprises working together with a combination of public and private funding in which philanthropy has been crucial. This has enabled us to work for the public good by providing employment and skills development where they are needed. As a result, Thurrock Council has asked us to work with 22 schools to develop a programme around cultural awareness and entitlement. This kind of venture should be a model for the future.

Our purpose is to enrich people's lives through opera and ballet. We must ensure that we reflect and contribute to society today. Those visionary philanthropists who support this mean that we are now playing to a whole different set of concerns that have changed the focus and character of the Royal Opera House.

I worked in the arts as a professional fundraiser for more than 25 years and I can confirm that priorities have changed. Education and access programmes were initially on the periphery and are now centre stage. This has changed the relationship between the arts and their public. Visiting the arts is no longer simply an act of worship but also a more democratic and social experience.

And what has been the impact upon those who sang in the chorus of *The Carmelites*? Participants were asked if there were areas of theatrical life that interested them. Some were offered work experience. One former prisoner said: 'I never dreamed it would work out like this. A year ago, I was in prison and had never acted in my life. In September, I will start studying at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.'



Victoria Robey, philanthropist

I asked Victoria Robey, a former banker and a philanthropist, for her view on the role of philanthropy in enabling music to serve society and contribute to social change. Victoria is the chairman of the London Philharmonic Orchestra (LPO) and a trustee of the Royal College of Music (RCM). She is also a founding director of London Music Masters (LMM), a music education charity undertaking pioneering work in primary schools in inner London with the involvement of the RCM and the LPO:

It is interesting that since the recession when most people have been worrying about having less money, attendances at cultural events have gone up. There is a need for the arts because they offer opportunities to reflect, learn and even to change. Moreover, people are united by the arts, and music is particularly powerful because it touches the lives of almost everyone through a shared language.

There is a thread linking music and my philanthropy. The LPO has one of the most vital education programmes in the country, working with people of all ages. At the RCM we are responsible for the musicians of the future and concerned that talented young people may study regardless of their means. However, the paucity of high-quality music education throughout the UK means that most poorer children don't have the opportunity to learn how to play an instrument properly and have a limited prospect of developing the skills needed to go to a conservatoire. Even worse, their ability to enjoy music is unnecessarily limited.

By working with the LPO and with Itzhak Rashkovsky, the outstanding pedagogue and violinist, we founded LMM to pioneer good practice in music education and to transform the lives of the very young in some of the most disadvantaged areas of London.

We are now working in five primary schools in inner London. Professional musicians teach entire classes how to play the violin from the age of four. Our credo is excellence. We give the children music tuition of the highest standard. This is about more than social change. Children learn to concentrate, to work together, to achieve and to aspire. This approach enhances academic performance as well as improving social behaviour. The programme pulls the parents in and has a knock-on effect on the wider community. Everyone aims higher.

We are mostly privately funded and therefore limited in how many schools we can work with. This is frustrating when there is proof that the arts are a catalyst for social change. Our government must understand that the arts should be embedded in the education system in a more thorough way rather than as a desirable extra. Philanthropy can achieve a lot and be pioneering but by working in partnership with public funding, we could achieve so much more.



Chris Smith, former culture secretary

No one knows more about arts funding than Lord (Chris) Smith, Secretary of State for Culture in Tony Blair's first government and currently chairman of the Art Fund, the Donmar Warehouse and the Wordsworth Trust. He is keenly aware that the link between social change and the arts is as important to government as it is for some philanthropists:

As a practical politician, I could not ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to increase funding because the arts represent beauty and truth. I had to emphasize their economic and social benefit and the need to improve access. I believed that it was my public duty to help people to enjoy the great things in life, and that led to free admission to museums and has helped to enhance the social and economic impact that arts are making in our towns and cities.

In the UK, a mixed economy for the arts has been crucial in their success in attracting audiences and enhancing our international reputation. The key factor is to ensure the independence of artists and cultural institutions. We have avoided plutocracy where donors influence artistic decisions. As a result, the arts are lively and challenging and this motivates audiences and donors. The arts are also fundamental to the success of our growing creative and knowledge economy.

Philanthropists in the UK like to be partners. We have to raise 50 per cent of our turnover at the Donmar Warehouse but this enables our small theatre to make an impact and exert an influence way beyond its size and to mount pioneering productions such as our all-female *Julius Caesar*.

Arts education and access programmes used to be a required extra but have now become integral. Look at what Vivien Duffield's Clore Foundation has done for arts education. She has helped to change the way museums and galleries think about the way they relate to the public and to the young in particular, and that is good for everyone.

By creating and supporting cultural learning centres for 50 years, Vivien Duffield has changed practice and helped to transform the lives of thousands of young people. Art and society should be inextricably linked in liberal democracies as art is the ultimate expression of freedom. By supporting both artists and arts institutions, philanthropists also serve society. We must feed the hungry, give shelter to the homeless and care for the sick. However, if we fail to nourish the soul and stimulate the intellect, we are lost. @

Why fund the arts: because we like it?

Adrian Ellis

A little over a decade ago, I suggested to the UK think-tank Demos that we organize a conference on the value of the arts. As an occasional assessor of Arts Council grant applications, I had read one too many fatuous, methodologically suspect 'economic impact' studies. These were a requirement for larger funding applications and purported to demonstrate the astonishingly potent effect that the project under review would have on jobs and the local economy. Although the poor assessor had to read these bulky submissions, I suspect no one else did. So was there any point in them?



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One consequence was that the question of the *value* of the project tended to get sidestepped. It was either 'economic impact', with capriciously chosen multipliers, and little discussion of displacement or opportunity cost, or it was the dogmatic assertion of artistic importance (basically 'because we like it'). And not much that you could get hold of in between, whether social, civic, psychological or ... cultural.

Valuing culture

The topic struck a nerve and the 'Valuing Culture' conference managed to get some traction; great, thoughtful speakers signed up – Chris Smith and Tessa Jowell (former and present Secretaries of State for Culture, Media and Sport) among them. In the framing paper for conference attendees I wrote:

'It would now [September 2003] appear to be a good time to reawaken and rearticulate interest in the fundamental contribution that artists and cultural institutions can make to our quality of life at the deepest level. The current language of performance and its quantification is unlikely to be jettisoned by this or any future administration. But it needs to accommodate the vocabulary of cultural value ...'¹

The general consensus on the day was indeed that there was something missing in the mix. The traditional justifications for philanthropic and public support for culture sit uncomfortably with the requirements of quantification and performance measurement. The language in funding contracts appeared to leave out everything that mattered to the speakers – even the economists.

Regrounding the case

In the intervening ten years, I am happy and surprised to report, there has been a remarkable amount of both empirical and theoretical work done on regrounding the case for public and philanthropic support for cultural activities. Earlier this year Arts Council England published a literature review – *Understanding the value and impacts of cultural experiences*. It summarized over 200 empirical and theoretical studies – mostly British, American and Australian – grappling with the value of culture, almost all written in the last decade.

The debate is international in nature. Although the Arts Council's literature review stops short of anything not in English, the actual literature extends well beyond the English-speaking peoples. While there is plenty of variety in approaches, the discussion is also cumulative. A paradigm is emerging! Data, from focus groups to scanning of orbito-frontal cortices, is being used to test the 'intrinsic' value of individual productions, exhibitions and performances. The new CultureCounts app² being beta-tested in the UK and Australia can build cumulative, longitudinal data sets measuring not the basics of attendance but levels of engagement with an art work.

Whereas traditionally most economic impact work was advocacy dressed up as analysis, much of this work is robustly analytical in nature, less prone to sweeping conclusions. While providing the raw material for advocacy, it leaves that to others closer to the fray.

So what is the emerging paradigm? Well, it's basically a consensus around a typology: a series of boxes into which the various impacts of the arts can be shuffled, with nothing important left over, and subsequently examined. The point is not the sparkling brilliance of the device. Rather it is the value that a broad consensus and a common framework affords researchers. The first significant step was made in 2004 by Kevin McCarthy in a heroic *tour d'horizon*, *The gifts of the muse*. In his report for the Rand Corporation, he parsed the various rationales for support of the arts, developing a matrix that embraced 'private' benefits from plain comfort and joy to improved academic performance in tangentially related subjects like maths, through to truly public benefits like the development of social capital, and of course economic growth.

The simple mechanism of a typology, and an iterative, broadly based discussion of its refinement, has created an invaluable division of labour for academics, policy analysts and arts advocates alike. It has proved possible to move from a generalized exhortation that

'the arts are good for you and create jobs' to specific research agendas exploring the idea that different forms of arts participation (joining a choir, attending a play), when undertaken by specific cohorts (disadvantaged youth, victims of early onset dementia), have a measurable propensity to generate specific individual or collective outcomes. As proof of the pudding, the news is not all good for the arts advocates. In December 2014, *The Stage* – the UK theatre industry's magazine – featured the headline 'Arts and culture have "zero" impact on the economy claims new report'. That's a long journey in a relatively short time...

This has taken me, for one, somewhat by surprise. I left the conference a decade ago without much optimism about the prospects of a discussion about the social and cultural value of the arts that could be couched in a way that would engage any policymakers and funders who were basically interested in some sort of causal relationships between funds allocated and results – that is, most of them...

Why the change in attitude?

I had failed to take into account three things: first, the speed with which the costs of data collection and analysis would drop; second, the continued visceral acceptance that culture in its broad and narrow senses is inextricably tied to quality of life, which means that the arts continue to have a place on the agendas of most progressive philanthropists committed to social equity. Third, I underestimated the place that the arts would continue to have in place-making globally. From China to Brazil, the processes of rapid urbanization are bringing in their train a continued cultural building boom and, willy-nilly, discussions about what cultural products should be available to whom and on what terms. The debate generally remains not whether to spend but how to spend intelligently on culture and in ways that advance specific social, economic and developmental agendas.

Bill Gates recently caused a stir in the arts community when he echoed moral philosopher Peter Singer's argument that philanthropic funding of the arts – and Gates specifically cited art museums! – is simply immoral, given the opportunity cost of lives lost that could be saved if those funds were redirected to health initiatives. As Gates put it: 'The moral equivalent

As Gates put it: 'The moral equivalent is, we're going to take 1 per cent of the people who visit this [museum] and blind them. Are they willing, because it has the new wing, to take that risk? Hmm, maybe this blinding thing is slightly barbaric.'

is, we're going to take 1 per cent of the people who visit this [museum] and blind them. Are they willing, because it has the new wing, to take that risk? Hmm, maybe this blinding thing is slightly barbaric.'³

There was a lot of defensive bluster from arts folk in response, but no one seemed to want to tackle the argument head on and point out the longer-term threats to a plural society if a single calculus were applied to all funding decisions. But the cavalry is coming. As the Arts Council literature review indicates, we are able with increasing sophistication to go beyond 'because we like it' without sacrificing 'because we like it'. It is becoming clear that 'instrumental' versus 'intrinsic' is a confusing oversimplification; and that the potential of big data has as radical implications for arts expenditure as for disease prevention.⁴

There is also a second line of attack, and a braver one, that goes back to John Stuart Mill's argument that 'it is better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a pig satisfied'. This is the argument that probably needs the most work, now that economic impact has been put in its place: that there are higher and lower pleasures and that it is a legitimate end of philanthropic and public expenditure to seek to ensure that those 'higher pleasures' are encouraged and access to them supported. They are, along with the qualities of empathy and curiosity, the opposable thumb and the gift of speech, integral to what makes us human; their flourishing is coincident with the fullest expressions of human potential, and the ultimate end of all rational policymaking, public or private.

Lots of money is misspent – on health care, fundamental scientific research, the arts. We can only strive constantly to spend it more intelligently; be clear about why we are spending it; and set things up in ways that enable us to learn from past mistakes. The arts, especially the arts associated with larger institutions, are playing catch up. Entitled and self-regarding as they are, they are behind the game, and reluctant to hold themselves to the same standards they would hold the world to. But they are catching up fast, and well-spent money on the arts does indeed prevent blindness, of the most fundamental sort. @

1 The background paper for the conference is at www.demos.co.uk/files/File/VACUAEllis.pdf

2 <http://culturecounts.cc>

3 See www.ft.com at <http://tinyurl.com/BGforFT> to read the November 2013 interview with Bill Gates.

4 See <http://tinyurl.com/MuseumsSoWhat> for a tightly argued piece to this effect by Rob Stein of Dallas Museum of Art, *Museums... So What?*

An act of faith?

Why should philanthropists fund the arts?

**Andrew Milner and
Caroline Hartnell**

Few things make so deep or immediate an impression, or can dramatize the human condition so forcibly, as a piece of art, yet it's an area where funders are reluctant to tread. We asked a number of funders who *do* support the arts and a number of arts organizations and artists from around the world to answer just one question: 'Why should philanthropists fund the arts?' Their answers suggest that the reasons for support resist narrow classification: the arts are neither just a minority interest for those with money to spare, on the one hand, nor simply a means to achieve social change, on the other.

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Farai Mpfunya of the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe believes that:

'The arts offer a unique way of appreciating the creative potential of the human mind, the innovative capacity of ideas, products and services, immensely benefiting humanity, often in immeasurable ways.'

Most of those we spoke to had something similar to say, yet art and culture remains a difficult 'sell' to many funders.

Why don't more funders support the arts?

It's difficult to measure the impact...

Some of the reasons will be fairly familiar – note the word 'immeasurable' in Mpfunya's remark. It raises the perennial question of tangible returns. If it's difficult to assess the effects of an initiative where there is at least an expected causal link between a project



India Foundation for the Arts supported *Mayabazar*, a film on Surabhi, a 120-year-old travelling theatre company from Andhra Pradesh.

and its outcomes, it's even more so with an arts project which works on the imagination and emotions of its purveyors and consumers and whose effects are unpredictable – unless one of the outcomes is simply more people participating in the arts and/or enjoying them as spectators.

For some of our funder respondents, access and involvement per se is a major part of the reason for what they do. One such is Kathleen Cravero of the Oak Foundation. Another is Jackie Netto of Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust in Sri Lanka:

'The show stoppers have been the projects that take art to audiences that would otherwise never be exposed to it.'

However, Ruwanthie de Chickera of Stages Theatre Group, also in Sri Lanka, sees the question of visible returns as an obstacle for some funders:

'It is easier for people to feel the "results" of their generosity when they deal with material things. Support education and give children school books, support health care and build a hospital ward, help eradicate poverty and build someone a house... these are all things that stand the test of time, which continue to be monuments to one's generosity.'

Rania Elias of Palestine's Yabous Cultural Centre, on the other hand, argues that there can be tangible impact:

'Philanthropic money directed to the arts can influence economic and neighbourhood growth and maturity. Some in the private sector have already come to this conclusion and collected great return on that investment. Arts revive communities and reinforce

ALLIANCE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR CONTRIBUTING TO THIS ARTICLE:

The funders

Kathleen Cravero
Oak Foundation,
Switzerland

Arundhati Ghosh
India Foundation
for the Arts

Evelyn Iochpe
Iochpe
Foundation,
Brazil

Ruby Lerner
Creative Capital,
US

Farai Mpfunya
Culture Fund of
Zimbabwe

Jackie Netto
Neelan
Tiruchelvam Trust,
Sri Lanka

Omar Al Qattan
AM Qattan
Foundation, UK
and Arab region

Shawn van Sluys
Musagetes,
Canada

Chris Stone
Open Society
Foundations, US

Leonard Vary
Myer Foundation,
Australia

Artists and arts organizations

**Ruwanthie de
Chickera**
Stages Theatre
Group, Sri Lanka

Mel Chin
Operation Paydirt,
US

Rania Elias
Yabous Cultural
Centre, Palestine

**Fernando
García-Dory**
Spain

Mike van Graan
South Africa

Marion Potts
Malthouse
Theatre, Australia

Lia Rodrigues
Redes da Maré,
Brazil

Jane Trowell
Platform, UK

An act of faith? Why should philanthropists fund the arts?

the economy, create an active and vibrant society, and enhance safety.'

There are more urgent things to support...

Then there is the idea that art is secondary to the more urgent concerns of our time and there are better uses for funding. Leonard Vary of Australia's Myer Foundation notes – and repudiates – this view. Ruwanthie de Chickera remarks that the arts are 'very low on the list of worthy causes to put money into' mainly because funders see more urgent uses for philanthropic money, what she terms 'the colossal and critical issues of human survival. Poverty, education, basic health care...'

But Evelyn Iochpe of the Iochpe Foundation in Brazil believes that:

'It is worthwhile to commit to the arts even in a world where we still struggle with hunger, because in such a brutal world as we are living in we need the space for thought, for reflection, for criticism.'

And, as we'll discuss below, many of our respondents agree with her.

Funding the arts is like building one's own pyramid...

Ruwanthia de Chickera also hints at a self-serving element in philanthropy which some see as particularly prevalent in funding for art and culture. 'Building an art foundation seems to mean building one's own pyramid,' says Evelyn Iochpe, who dubs this sort of activity 'artketing', while Rania Elias notes that 'some might see it as investment in prestige – especially if the result is their name being engraved on a new wing in a museum or a concert hall.'

Arts funding is elitist...

There is also an abiding idea that arts funding is elitist, that it goes to the promotion of so-called 'high' art and culture – classical music, opera, ballet – enabling the privileged to enjoy their privileges. Undoubtedly, some of it does, but it doesn't have to. Even if you don't subscribe to the dictum that 'art is anything', it should be fairly clear that it covers much more than *Swan Lake*, the *Mona Lisa* and Ibsen's plays.

Consider Lia Rodrigues' description of the founding of the Centro de Artes da Maré in the Maré slums of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the first cultural centre in the area. The Maré is an area of around 132,000 inhabitants, effectively controlled by three different drug-dealing factions. In common with many of Rio's slums, the area is rarely found on maps of the city, and is practically unknown to most Rio dwellers, as a result of a deliberate tactic by the city which consigns areas



Walking Path, a play without words, produced by Sri Lanka's Stages Theatre Group and written by Ruwanthie de Chickera. The play examines the widespread urban beautification drive in Colombo.

like this to silence, neglect and violence. 'We built this space in Maré not just for the company but for the whole community. It is a common asset.' She adds:

'To be based in Maré is certainly a political decision. It means going against this trend of exclusion, invisibility and empty spaces.'

Why philanthropists should fund the arts

For many arts organizations the world over, funds are in short supply, and this is one reason in itself. 'In Brazil,' says Rodrigues, 'there is no real funding programme for culture.' The same is true in Sri Lanka, says Jackie Netto of Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust: 'Whether it is art for art's sake, or art for social change, Sri Lankan artists have limited access to resources. Nor are there established structures or organizations that support them.'

When governments and development agencies support the arts, it is often in the service of economic interests, suggests South Africa playwright Mike van Graan.

'Freedom of creative expression is often made subject to political and economic interests. It is against this backdrop that philanthropy in support of the arts and artists is necessary to promote and defend independent artistic expression and distribution.'

Promoting discussion of sensitive issues in conservative societies

Funders tend to shy away from the sensitive, the controversial and the political. Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust takes the opposite course, says Jackie Netto, because:

‘We believe that arts (and culture) can be the vehicle for change . . . when other forms of expression are suppressed.’

It is one of the ways, she believes, that discussion of sensitive issues like gender-based violence (the example she cites) can take place in conservative societies. Since 2001, a quarter of the trust’s funds have gone to support arts projects.

Chris Stone of the Open Society Foundations in the US makes the same point. ‘In closed societies,’ he argues, ‘the connection of artists and their audiences upholds freedom of association and the exchange of ideas in circumstances that otherwise would not be possible.’

For Stone, investment in the arts is a good way of building societies whose difficulties are mediated through discussion, rather than violence:

‘Philanthropic investments in the visual, performing and literary arts are a powerful means of fostering societies where dissent flourishes, scepticism and criticism thrive, and speech – not violence – is the primary instrument of politics.’

Changing attitudes

Others emphasize the role that the arts play in changing attitudes. Ruby Lerner of Creative Capital in the US notes:

‘When change happens, one component is always cultural change. You can change legislation, but if people’s hearts and minds don’t change, true progress cannot be made.’

Understanding and shaping our world

Many of our respondents see the arts and artists as playing a role in helping people explain their lives and circumstances to themselves and guiding them in the exploration of solutions. As Omar Al Qattan of the A M Qattan Foundation puts it:

‘A people may be hungry and destitute, or simply troubled and violent, but only when they know why they are so, will they be able to change their condition.’

‘Art can help us reimagine our past and present, and transform our future,’ says Jane Trowell of Platform UK. ‘Supporting the risks associated with contemporary art practice . . . is the key to expanding the pool of

ideas essential for the health, and the survival, of an evolving culture,’ says Mel Chin of Operation Paydirt.

Finding ourselves in a world with increasing inequality, says Arundhati Ghosh of India Foundation for the Arts, with ‘no dearth of wars within and across nations in the name of religion, race, language and ethnicity’, growing intolerance of differences, and freedom of expression continuously at stake,

‘The arts enable us to explore ways of thinking for ourselves, connecting us together through shared experiences – to question, resist, build. Through the arts an individual’s struggle finds voices as many create common spaces to imagine a collective future. The arts make us human.’

‘Social urgency is the most crucial reason why the arts must be supported,’ she sums up.

Shawn van Sluys of Musagetes in Canada takes his starting point in the root of the word philanthropy as meaning love of humanity. ‘That’s a pretty basic criterion for the work of supporting people, projects

Green Man Flashing, a play about political corruption in South Africa by Mike van Graan.



An act of faith? Why should philanthropists fund the arts?

and organizations in sectors that are in the business of improving life for all people,' he argues. It also provides the most compelling argument for philanthropic funding for the arts:

'As a form of inquiry into our ordinary lives and the world around us, the arts lead us to see ever greater possibilities for ourselves and our relationships with each other and our environments.'

Quite simply, believes Marion Potts of Malthouse Theatre in Australia:

'In funding art, philanthropy funds our ongoing ability to define and shape our world.'

The relationship between the arts and social change

It would be wrong to conclude that funders – much less the artists themselves – see the arts as simply a means to a social end. The relationship between the arts and social change is a much less straightforward one. 'Everything we are doing is part of an artistic creation, as well as a political stance in the world,' says Lia Rodrigues. Even funders whose principal purpose is social change seldom see the arts as simply a form of social engineering.

Shawn van Sluys cautions us against assessing the impact of the arts in quantitative ways just to satisfy change agendas:

'We must eschew the reduction of the arts to mere instruments of social change, measured through the calculus of an over-emphasis on rational thinking. Since philanthropists love humanity, they must play the long game and support artists and organizations for their capacity to help us think deeply, critically and beautifully.'

The Switzerland-based Oak Foundation has no 'complex theories of change linking art to social justice', says Kathleen Cravero, but its trustees do believe that there is a connection, and feel strongly that 'everyone should have access to arts and culture':

'We don't know if these grants will change the world. We do know that they bring joy and beauty into the lives of children and families for whom both are in short supply. And that's enough for us.'

She instances their support to New York's Lincoln Center to create new public spaces and wider access to their live events; to Fondation Resonance in Switzerland, which offers classical piano concerts in hospitals and old age homes; to the Courtauld Institute and the Prince's Foundation for the Arts in the UK, which connect young people in low-income neighbourhoods to the creative arts and art history.



Supported by Culture Fund of Zimbabwe, Mbira in Schools is an initiative to introduce young children to a 900-year-old traditional Zimbabwean instrument.

While Cravero uses the words 'beauty' and 'joy', others speak the language of rights. Mike van Graan, for example, talks of the 'fundamental human right of individuals to have access to the arts and to participate in the cultural life of their community'. Most see art as a good in itself, which can produce other goods.

This is why Evelyn Ioschpe sees art education as so important: 'Through it we can guarantee a school that speaks deeply to the child and involves all her senses. We need brains but we need even more sensibilities to make this and our future world a livable place.'

Part of that wider universe . . .

None of our respondents see art and culture as something distinct from the rest of life, a diversion from the dour business of living; rather, it is an inseparable part of it. Omar Al Qattan makes this point eloquently:

'Art is part of culture and culture is that wider universe containing what we see and hear, smell and eat, renege and accept, analyse and consume, and hate and delight in every day.'

All and any experience is mediated through art and can be translated into art, and art can illuminate any experience. This is surely at the root of Ruby Lerner's remark that,

'No matter what philanthropists or foundations seek to support, they can find their missions manifested in cultural form, whether it be a documentary film or an art installation.'

Why philanthropy *must* fund the arts

Not only *should* philanthropy support the arts without blushing; it *must* do so, in the view of some of our

respondents. In societies where artists are critical of the state of things, there may be no alternative source of funding. In addition, suggests Omar al Qattan, 'there are many societies where the very principle of sharing our wealth, even for something as essential to survival as health or education, is still not accepted', and this is even more true of cultural life. Until and unless this changes, 'only philanthropy, or revolution, whichever comes first, will be able to fill the gap'.

Leonard Vary is equally emphatic that philanthropic support for the arts is imperative, not just desirable. More money is being given away than ever before, he observes, and more is going to find cures for diseases or to alleviate poverty and want, and yet these things persist. Why? Because money alone 'can't help us navigate our anthropological adolescence'.

'We need more than money. We need new ideas. We need creativity. We need compassion. And understanding. We need language and we need empathy. Money won't teach us these things, but art and artists will.'

We can't dig art up or find it, we have to make it. 'So we have to fund it. We don't have a choice. If we're to survive, we have to support the arts and artists.'

Spanish artist Fernando García-Dory also uses the language of need:

'The age of Anthropocene needs to define a new paradigm in order for human species to survive. This involves a total reconsideration of art and artists' role beyond contemporary arts establishment and the limited market and recognition system.'

Can philanthropy be a partner in transformation?

For Mel Chin of Operation Paydirt, the real question is not should philanthropy support the arts, but 'can it also become a partner in transformation'

'by being a critical partner, providing means for connections, collaborations, and expertise with the artist to build the capacity to respond to the "storm clouds" of our century.'

The view that funders can be allies is also held by Fernando García-Dory, who sees alliance with like-minded, resourced supporters as crucial to his 'total reconsideration' of art and artists: 'We need those who have an influential position or that have successfully operated in the current economic model, to share in this crucial quest.'

'It's an act of faith, for sure, but there is nothing more inspiring to an artist than someone's faith in the value of their work.'

Jane Trowell of Platform expands on the theme – Platform is a group of artists, researchers and campaigners working on social and environmental justice issues.

'For us it is important that the philanthropists we work with share this commitment and work with us towards joint ends. The most fruitful funder relationships flourish when ideas and creativity flow in both directions.'

There is another side to this coin, however, as she warns. 'Philanthropy is a fertile part of supporting arts and social change, but not at all costs,' she warns. Support from the wrong source can be inhibiting as well as damaging to reputation: 'Tate has been under sustained fire since the Deepwater Horizon disaster for taking money from BP; National Gallery and Science Museum promote Shell through sponsorship. This kind of corporate arts funding prevents transformation instead of enabling it.' What is important is that there is 'shared vision, ethics and values'.

With the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe, 'born out of the collective vision of sector actors to build Africa-driven approaches to nurturing and catalysing creative ideas into activities, events, projects and programmes', the organization belongs to the sector, says Farai Mpfunya.

Art for all our sakes

In funding the arts, philanthropists need not be afraid that they are fiddling while Rome burns, that they are exalting the inessential at the expense of the indispensable. As our respondents point out in their various ways, artists have been and will continue to be critical in interpreting the world for us, denouncing its defects and proposing alternatives for us to explore. In the words of Marion Potts, 'art allows us to experience possibility'.

Through the beauty and exhilaration they offer, the arts can lift us out of a condition that might otherwise be scarcely tolerable. Not a bad return on anyone's investment. If this is impossible to prove, it's almost equally hard to doubt.

'I can't get away from the constant anguish of asking myself if my work is worth it,' says Lia Rodrigues. It's something that many funders would probably also ponder, but the constant self-questioning is what keeps artists at the forefront of imaginative and intellectual exploration. In the end, as Ruwanthie de Chickera remarks:

'It's an act of faith, for sure, but there is nothing more inspiring to an artist than someone's faith in the value of their work. It is what keeps us going.' @

Will Miller Interview

The Wallace Foundation has announced a six-year, \$40 million initiative to assist up to 25 performing arts organizations across the US to attract and retain audiences. How will this further the foundation's mission to 'foster the vitality of the arts for everyone', Caroline Hartnell asked Will Miller, president of the Wallace Foundation?

Will Miller is president of the Wallace Foundation.

Non-profit arts organizations in the US face many challenges, including more competition for leisure time, changing demographics and the weakening of arts education, which helped introduce previous generations to the arts when they were children. As a result, the percentage of American adults reporting that they attended any performing arts event in a given year dropped from 41 per cent in 1992 to 33 per cent in 2012. So it's not surprising that non-profit arts organizations tell us they're concerned about their long-term financial viability.

We hope that if we can help those 25 or so artistically excellent organizations develop effective ways to attract and retain new audiences in ways that contribute to their financial sustainability, and then share what they learn with the entire field, we can contribute to spreading the benefits of the arts to a lot more people.

Do you see experiencing the arts as important for social change or is it valuable in itself, for enriching lives?

It's both/and, not either/or. Based on a 2005 study we commissioned from RAND called *Gifts of the muse*, we believe the arts have both intrinsic benefits, such as opening people up to new perspectives, and extrinsic benefits such as economic development. This value can accrue either at a personal level or at the level of a community or society, but the critical point is that the broader social benefits stem from individual encounters with art, so without that personal engagement the social benefits aren't possible.



'Not every philanthropic act has to carry the full weight of all possible social benefits.'

Can you say a bit more about the social benefits?

On the intrinsic social benefit side, RAND identified things like expression of communal meaning and creation of social bonds. On the extrinsic side, they identified public value coming from economic growth and the development of social capital. They also

identified a set of benefits where value is primarily private but there's some public spillover, such as growth in cognitive abilities or individuals' greater ability to feel and act on empathy.

So you see yourselves as trying to strengthen something that's increasingly missing from people's experiences?

Yes, and it's increasingly fragile, because these organizations are under a lot of stress.

Another article in this special feature talks about homeless people being given the opportunity to sing at the Royal Opera House in London (p45). Homeless people singing is great

but what does that change, one might ask. Will the experience warm them in the winter nights? But does art have to be about social change? For better-off people we see the arts as enriching their lives – isn't that enough for homeless people?

The question seems to me based on a presumption that either economic benefits or social change are the only apt aim for a philanthropic effort. It can certainly be one, but it's not the only one.

Not every philanthropic act has to carry the full weight of all possible social benefits. Because the arts provide private value as well as public value, I think they can be, but they don't have to be, about social change.

I understand homeless people have more immediate needs, but that doesn't mean they can't benefit from those values intrinsic to the arts. We like to believe they can, in line with the personal philosophy of one of our founders, Lila Acheson Wallace, that 'the arts are for everyone', which informs all our work.



Is there evidence that access to the arts can help produce social change?

I think there is. All social change begins with shifts in understanding and awareness, so by helping us understand others, particularly others who are different from ourselves, art can lay the groundwork. A couple of examples: first, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's cabin*, which played a significant role in the spread of the abolitionist movement in the years running up to the Civil War. More recently, the cumulative effect of Hollywood's shift to a more sympathetic portrayal of homosexual people and relationships over the last couple of decades. While no one would claim this has caused the change of public attitudes towards gay marriage in the US, I believe it has contributed to it.

Merit School of Music is a Wallace Foundation grantee, as part of the Wallace Excellence Awards initiative.

The other part of your mission is 'to foster improvements in learning and enrichment for disadvantaged children'. What is the connection between the two parts of your programme?

Arts education is the connection, in both schools and afterschool programmes. We think it's important for children of all backgrounds to have access to engaging arts experiences. On the arts education side, there's a greater emphasis on personal participation in making the art as well as experiencing the great performances of others. *Gifts of the muse* suggests that over time, when experiences are of a high quality, students get a variety of benefits, including learning how to learn, to be persistent, to work in teams; they're exposed to the idea there's never only one solution to a problem. At school, for instance, I was an actor rather than an athlete, but I believe the value of teamwork was as powerfully taught to me by the ensemble work of putting on a play as it would have been by being on the basketball team.

Is there a link between the lack of arts education and subsequent decline in participation in arts events?

There's a very clear pattern of arts education being eliminated from US public schools, starting in the 1970s, and the decline in arts participation. I don't think the decline in arts education in public schools was the only thing driving the decline in arts participation. There are a lot of other factors: there's a lot more media; technology has changed the way arts are delivered; the competition for leisure time is huge – and there have been changes in the demographic make-up of the US. But we think it has contributed to the decline.

The new programme involves strengthening about 25 performing arts organizations so that they can serve as examples for others of how to build, and sustain, audiences. Do you believe there are best practices in this area that others can learn from?

I do. In October, we released a report, *The road to results*, which pinpointed nine practices that successful efforts have in common. This is illustrated by the results of another of our programmes to expand audiences, which found that many organizations using these practices saw significant gains in audience size – 27 per cent in general audience size among those interested in that area, and 60 per cent where they wanted to attract a specific group, like teens or families. So we've asked the organizations that we've invited to submit proposals under the new initiative to consider which of these practices are relevant to their efforts and to incorporate them into their plans, so that we can learn more about when and why they might work. In that way we're hoping that the 25 organizations can build on, and add to, existing knowledge.

Looking at the figures you quoted, there was a much greater increase among particular segments. Does that suggest that it's more effective to aim at smaller, specific groups?

RAND's research demonstrates that there are different barriers to attending arts performances for different groups of people, so strategies focusing more narrowly on those barriers are more likely to be effective. There's a saying in the business world that 'a strategy that attempts to boil the ocean is doomed from the beginning'. If you take on too many things at once, you're likely to significantly reduce your chances of success. Being focused is a much better bet. @

For more information

The publications cited in this article are available for free downloading at www.wallacefoundation.org

INTERVIEW WITH SOPHIE LEFERINK

The power of film

International grantmaker Hivos is based in the Netherlands but funds in Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is, in the words of staffer Sophie Leferink, 'a development organization based on humanistic principles'. Why, then, does it fund arts and culture, Fiona Ellis asked Leferink.



Sophie Leferink is senior advisor arts & culture at Hivos. Email sleferink@hivos.org

One of our focuses is expanding freedom of expression and supporting the development of open societies in which individual citizens feel empowered to address social, political and economic challenges. Supporting arts and culture is part of this freedom of expression, as is supporting alternative and critical views. Artists are often unique people who produce ideas. We also see culture as a binder, a mirror, a safe space – all these roles are important in society.

How do you respond to philanthropists who think arts and culture are self-indulgent?

That is quite a traditional view. The walls around the traditional arts sector have been crumbling. We are interested in those interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary initiatives that combine culture with media, with technology. The initiatives that foster topical dialogues. I don't see the cultural sector as inward-looking or unrelated to our goals.

Do you have to convince your funding partners about your approach?

Some philanthropists do see the role and others less so. But if you look, for example, on an urban development level, the power of culture and creativity for social and economic growth and development is widely acknowledged.

In countries where we are active, which are not the low, low-income countries, you see this on a smaller scale. In Kenya, for example, the creative sector is increasingly acknowledged as economically relevant. And globally citizens show an increasing dynamic of do-it-yourself, taking the initiative, being disappointed by governments, institutions and even civil society organizations that have failed to address the global and local challenges that everyone is feeling. So you see the creative sector is part of a new dynamic in society: there are social and creative start-ups popping up everywhere.

It is really relevant for organizations like Hivos and partners like Open Society Foundations to tap into that energy and dynamic. It's a logical step if you are focusing on empowering individual citizens.

Some philanthropists acknowledge what the arts can do but say the results come too slowly and for too few people. Do you agree?

I think the complexity of today's world requires more than immediate or short-term solutions. At Hivos we support and promote film, which is very powerful for reaching broad audiences addressing important issues. For example, a film in Indonesia, *The act of killing*, brings a significant dimension to the discussion in that society about its history and people that played a role in the massacres.

Besides which you could also argue that change does not always emerge from mass movements. We need to keep up with and invest in the front-runners, the changemakers, whom others will follow later.

Could you describe an arts project that you are particularly proud of?

It's so hard to choose! Here is one: a new space we support in Kenya, called The Nest, has produced a film *Stories of our lives*, about being gay in Africa. The film was anonymously produced but when they presented it at the Toronto Film Festival in September 2014 the producers decided to come out. The film has been banned in Kenya but it is a major success. And that's not an LGBT grant programme or an LGBT community working on it – it's the artists in the creative space that decided to make this film. We're really proud of The nest for being so thought-provoking and making so many interesting interventions in Nairobi in a very short time.

We're convinced that if we have an ambitious social innovation agenda, arts and culture should be part of it and we should make an effort to integrate it into our programmes and projects.

In fact this was already happening – almost no Hivos programme is without a cultural partner. Our cultural partners bring strong added value in raising the quality of what Hivos is doing. After almost 20 years of investing in the capacity development of the creative sector, we will move towards a broader definition of arts and culture, to include the creative industries – media and technology – but focusing on those initiatives that promote social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development as well as economic results. @

NASEEJ FOUNDATION

The Birds of Revolution

It wasn't the 'origami' alone that triggered Naseej's acceptance of Ossama Helmy's application for a travel grant in 2010. It was rather a collection of values and practices that form an integral part of our working principles and overall social justice giving framework.

Ossama Helmy is a young Egyptian origami artist determined to introduce this foreign art to the Arab region. He has a deep conviction that it is one of the most powerful arts, able to transform people's minds and hearts. While Naseej is not an arts organization, we strongly believe in the transformational power of 'arts and culture' among individuals and communities, and affirm it as a 'holistic strategy' in supporting change and advancing social justice.

When submitting his application to Naseej, Helmy said that for the past two years he had knocked on the door of many philanthropy organizations – including some in Japan, where this art originated – and was constantly rejected. The arts funders did not see it as an art project, while the social justice funders could not see its relevance to social justice. This is a challenge faced by most artists and organizations implementing arts and culture projects for social change, including us at Naseej.

However, Helmy's application didn't just fit in with our capacity-building and networking programme. As he was eager to build a real constituency, it also

resonated with our concern for 'neglected and underserved' target audiences, which include young people, newly established community-based organizations, women and minority groups.

With the US\$2,200 travel grant, Helmy spent 27 days in five countries (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Bahrain and Yemen) searching for origami lovers and origamists in an attempt to develop a network of 'Arab origami artists'. During his trip, which he called 'Fold with Us', he worked with eight Naseej partner organizations and set up 25 origami workshops, involving 58 teachers and coaches and 340 children.

Helmy established the Arab Origami Center in Alexandria in 2011, the only one of its kind in the Arab region. Through learning by doing and genuine hard work, often for very small fees, they have worked with children on issues like equity and acceptance of others and introduced teachers to innovative tools to stimulate students' interest in learning, especially in maths and engineering. They have worked with young people, parents, disabled people, drug addicts, the elderly, artists, architects and others. To date they have reached more than 15 cities in Egypt and participated in forums and conferences in ten Arab and eight foreign countries, where they were invited to train, share their experiences and innovations, and network with others.

In 2012, Naseej provided another grant to the Arab Origami Center to implement the 'Birds of Revolution' project, which aimed to work with young Egyptians to emphasize the link between personal revolutions and national ones and their effect on justice and change – a project that was rejected by all other funders approached for the same old reasons.

Naseej acknowledges the challenge of supporting experimental, risky and/or what some funders consider 'less serious' interventions on 'very serious' issues. But we believe that unless we put our social justice values into practice, trusting in people and allowing them to lead, learn and experiment, we run the contrary risk of neglecting something whose impact on individuals and communities is proven. @

For more information

www.facebook.com/ArabOrigamiCenter
<http://naseej-cyd.org>

Ossama Helmy
at an origami
workshop in Saudi
Arabia in 2012.



BARROW CADBURY TRUST

Forum Theatre

Sara Llewellyn

The Barrow Cadbury Trust is a UK family foundation with strong Quaker roots and a long history of working for structural and systemic change in areas of economic, gender, racial and criminal justice. We aim to use all our resources in pursuit of our mission. Our model is to work collaboratively with others to build an evidence base for new ways of tackling old problems.

Sara Llewellyn is chief executive of the Barrow Cadbury Trust. Email s.llewellyn@barrowcadbury.org.uk

When deciding how to deploy our resources, we therefore focus on the question 'What contribution will this make to our specific change agenda?' We are not expressly an arts funder but where an arts medium can contribute to our goal, we are open to that.

Our criminal justice programme focuses on systemic change in the criminal justice system for young adults. The Transition to Adulthood Alliance (T2A) is a mature campaign of key civil society organizations. The larger part of our funding for this work is used to support and robustly evaluate key demonstration projects. The Ministry of Justice will not commission services on the basis of hearsay or poor evidence of efficacy. We are also committed to supporting community-led grassroots work where it can contribute, albeit less robustly, to that emerging evidence base.

Engage Youth Empowerment Service (EYES) is a youth project in Wolverhampton, a town with challenging social needs. The piece of work we are funding uses Forum Theatre (an idea based on Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed) techniques to highlight systemic problems in the criminal justice system while also challenging young people themselves to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

On 16 September I attended a performance. The actors had all been in the criminal justice system and the audience included probation officers, police, magistrates and a crown prosecutor. Maybe parents were there; if not, it would have been a good idea. The performance was powerful and well rehearsed. After one run-through, the audience were invited to stop the actors when they could see how a different outcome could have been achieved by a different intervention. I was astonished to see representatives of all the professions walk onto the stage in turn to 'rewrite' the story by suggesting another approach. I've seen quite a lot of Forum Theatre and this was among the most powerful.

However, written reporting to the Trust is not sophisticated. We know the project will not provide the kind of robust evidence our criminal justice programme requires, so from that point of view, the work is only a qualified success. But if you want to see the arts engaging and transforming young people before your very eyes – pardon the pun – this does the job. @

Real Talk performance on 16 September 2014.


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ATLANTIC PHILANTHROPIES

ICCL Human Rights Film Awards

Founded in 2008 by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL), Ireland's independent human rights watchdog, the ICCL Human Rights Film Awards have established themselves as a major focal point for human rights filmmaking both in Ireland and internationally.

The project aims to inform new audiences about human rights issues through the powerful medium of film – and ultimately to inspire people to want to make a difference in the world around them. The arts – and in particular film, with its immediate visual impact – can be an effective means for human rights education and awareness-raising. It also provides a unique platform for socially minded filmmakers to show their work. As a core funder of ICCL, Atlantic Philanthropies has supported this project since its inception.

The awards have fulfilled ICCL's major aims, giving voice and profile to key human rights issues and creating a platform for socially minded filmmakers. There were also some unexpected and very welcome results, including the warm and heartening response of filmmakers and the film industry, both in Ireland and globally. When the competition was launched, ICCL wasn't sure how it would be received, but they have

been simply overwhelmed by the support they have received – from award-winning jury members, including Jeremy Irons, Kirsten Sheridan and Rebecca Miller, to filmmakers from Mexico, Spain, Germany and Guatemala, to name a few of the countries from which entries have come. For us, this has demonstrated that the awards really have met a need for filmmakers to have their voices heard and for important stories to be shared.

Our hope is that, as a result of viewing the films, people will have a better idea of what human rights are and why it is so important to protect them. From the thousands of people who have attended screenings, and who have seen, shared and engaged with the films, both through screenings and through online channels, it is clear that the awards are doing what we hoped. ICCL also worked with the Irish Department of Curriculum Development to launch a series of lesson plans based on the films for use in secondary school classrooms throughout the country, which further enhanced the educational outcomes of the project.

It is our experience, in Ireland and elsewhere, such as in South Africa through support for the Out In Africa Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, that working with the arts, and in particular with film, is an effective way of advancing advocacy and education objectives. It allows you to reach a much wider audience, thereby potentially building broader support for what are often unpopular and misunderstood issues. @

For more information

www.iccl.ie
www.humanrightsfilmawards.org

Still from *Machine man*, by Roser Corella and Alfonso Moral, which explores the role of manual human labour in a globalized 21st century; winner of the 2012 Human Rights Film Awards.



THE MORIAH FUND

Puntos de Encuentro's *Sexto Sentido*

Shira Saperstein
with Amy Bank

This is a story about thinking outside the box, taking chances, and trusting your instincts. It's the story of how and why the Moriah Fund decided to fund an audacious TV drama project in Nicaragua when neither 'the arts' nor Nicaragua were within Moriah's funding guidelines. And it's the story of how funding the arts can lead to demonstrable and measurable social change.

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Amy Bank is co-founder of Puntos de Encuentro and executive producer of *Sexto Sentido*. She is now a consultant to Puntos and other organizations. Email: amy.bank@puntosdeencuentro.org

One day in 1999, I got a call from a colleague urging me to meet with Amy Bank, who had come to Washington DC on a fundraising trip from Nicaragua. Amy was part of the leadership of the Nicaraguan feminist NGO, Puntos de Encuentro ('Meeting Points'), which was developing an innovative new project using television drama to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights in Nicaragua.

I told my colleague that despite our commitment to women's rights and reproductive health, it was unlikely that Moriah would fund such a project: our docket was full, Nicaragua was not a priority, and arts funding fell outside Moriah's guidelines. But I trusted my colleague, and agreed to meet with Amy anyway.

When we met, Amy told me she and her team wanted to produce a home-grown youth-oriented 'social soap' TV series, a hybrid of the highly popular *telenovela* format and commercial series like *Friends*, but with a twist: the show, *Sexto Sentido* (*Sixth Sense*), would focus on working class teens and young adults dealing with sex, violence and discrimination, the trials and tribulations of relationships and rites of passage, and the complex themes of sexuality, gender and reproductive rights.

I was intrigued. I loved the idea of using television to reach the kind of mass audience that workshops and pamphlets could never find. I shared Amy's belief that issues of sexuality, reproduction and violence are rooted in deep-seated beliefs about power relations and gender norms, and that addressing these would require young people to question the attitudes, beliefs and behaviour they've been taught since childhood.

And I was persuaded by Amy's argument that dramatic human stories could draw an audience in on an emotional level; that as the stories unfolded, audiences would think and feel alongside the characters; and that this would inspire self-reflection and public discussion about issues often deemed too personal or controversial to talk about.

But Amy wasn't just pitching a TV show as a creative way to put issues on the agenda to a mass audience, she was pitching the series as part of an integrated strategy that would combine mass media – Puntos also had a radio show and a magazine – with community education and organizing. The mass reach of the media would both reinforce and be reinforced by local organizing work. *Sexto Sentido* would be used to connect individual viewers to social and health services and to help local organizations open up community dialogue on issues that had long been considered taboo.

Now I was excited about the project, and thought that Moriah's board might be as well. The Moriah board was not afraid to take risks, was flexible in its approach, and was committed to providing seed funding for innovative projects that, because of their 'thinking outside the box' nature, had difficulty raising funds from other sources. Upon reflection, this 'out of our guidelines' project seemed like a perfect fit.

Raising the money

The budget for *Sexto Sentido* was far larger than the \$30,000 Moriah could provide, and while Amy had already raised roughly half a million dollars to develop infrastructure, put a team together, train scriptwriters and actors and get ready for production, she still needed close to \$200,000 dollars to start production.

Fortunately, I was able to connect Amy to the Summit Foundation, which agreed to provide \$150,000 for the project. Now Amy had enough to produce the first season (35 episodes) of *Sexto Sentido*, to develop accompanying educational materials, and to promote creative community events to extend outreach and maximize impact.

The project not only got off the ground, it was a hit – so much so that Puntos started getting requests to show the series in other countries. Then they hit a snag. At that time, Nicaragua had no real intellectual property laws, and Puntos had been using songs off the radio for each episode without any problem. But when the possibility of broadcasting internationally came up, they could only do so with legal rights to the music.



Amy came back to Moriah and asked if we'd be willing to make another grant so that Puntos could pay for licences for use of songs by Nicaraguan musicians, and then re-edit the first season of episodes. Since we wanted the project to have the broadest impact possible, especially if our funds could help get the series into other countries, we decided to make a second grant.

This turned out to be a great investment on two levels: it permitted the 'internationalization' of *Sexto Sentido* (it has now shown in ten countries) and it facilitated the development of a unique model of licensing and paying for local artists' work that Puntos continues to use in all its productions. Not only did Nicaraguan musicians reach a broader audience, they got paid.

Several years later, Puntos decided to develop a second TV series, and Moriah provided seed funding for what would eventually become *Contracorriente* (*Turning the tide*). *Contracorriente* tackled emerging issues of migration and globalization and the impact of these on gender, family dynamics and social change. Like *Sexto Sentido*, *Contracorriente* enjoyed tremendous success and has been broadcast in half a dozen countries to date.

Supporting innovation

In many ways, *Sexto Sentido* was ahead of its time, serving as a springboard for 'transmedia' storytelling – telling a story through multiple platforms. So the actors went on tours to schools and communities; campaigns were developed around the different themes; and Puntos developed thematic educational packs made up of 'mini-movies' edited from the *Sexto Sentido* and *Contracorriente* episodes and accompanied

by discussion guides. The educational packs are used over and over in schools and community groups throughout Central America and will soon be available online.

Another innovation was in the realm of philanthropy. Based on the success of *Sexto Sentido*'s first season, Puntos was able to put together a 'basket fund' for the next season and phase of the multi-year project. This involved getting almost a dozen funders to agree to co-fund the project on the basis of a single project proposal and budget, and a single narrative and audited financial report. This not only helped reduce the amount of time spent on administration and report-writing, but increased transparency as well.

An important side benefit was bringing funders together for twice-yearly meetings to talk about the project. These meetings led to another innovation – an ambitious external evaluation that took on the challenge of measuring the impact of this kind of cultural advocacy on behavioural and social change. The results were impressive. Quantitative research showed that *Sexto Sentido* had achieved tremendous reach and significant impact in Nicaragua; qualitative research and analysis revealed how some of that impact was achieved. Findings from the evaluation were widely shared, providing lessons for others interested in utilizing arts and popular culture to shift cultural norms to advance social justice and human rights.

Looking back

The three grants we made to Puntos de Encuentro were tremendously satisfying. Thinking about them now, I'm glad my board was open to funding outside its guidelines, didn't demand to know precisely what the 'measurable results and impact' would be before approving the first grant, and was willing to respond to unanticipated obstacles and opportunities with additional grants along the way.

Since then, Moriah has provided funding to other women's rights, adolescent health and gender justice organizations that use artistic/cultural expression as part of their approach, including, for example, ProMundo in Brazil, Raising Voices in Uganda, and Life Pieces to Masterpieces in Washington DC. Like Puntos de Encuentro, these organizations have shown that popular culture and the arts can be worthy investments for philanthropy and powerful tools for social change. @