

CYD Community Meetings Report

Overview

Between March and August 2020, the Mass Cultural Council held a space for Creative Youth Development programs to come together weekly on Zoom Calls to identify solutions to shared problems in real time and to support one another. In addition, Mass Cultural Council staff compiled and distributed Links and Resources each week to our grantees in YouthReach, SerHacer, and Amplify as well as other programs, youth, and funders who joined these calls from around the country. This report is a summary of the responses from a field survey distributed following the 16th call.

Total number of participants subscribed to weekly emails: 277

Numbers of emails sent each week to them: 2 - One invite for the Thursday Call and one attachment of Links and Resources for the week.

Average number of people on the CYD calls: 45 (ranging from 30 to over more than 80)

- **Have you attended any of our zoom calls?** 97% said YES
- **Have you received and opened our Links and Resources weekly email?** 97% said YES
- **Have you ever been a facilitator in a breakout room or presented?** 27% said YES

Survey Results

Rank the Vehicles of Effective Communication (30 responses)

Rank the following. Which mode of communication is or could be the most helpful for you in staying connected and informed with the CYD field? (Ranking: 1 for most helpful and 5 for least helpful.)

1. Weekly links and resources (57% rated this as the top choice)
2. Facebook (23% rated this as a top choice)
3. Listserve (10% rated this as a top choice)
4. Mass Cultural Council Website (3% rated this as a top choice)
5. Instagram (3% rated this as a top choice)

If you have participated in the CYD calls, what has been the most helpful? (28 responses)

- **Reflecting**
- **Sharing practices** around remote working/teaching.
- **Connecting** with youth and the amazing opportunity to connect with artists and organizations. Just staying connected to the network of other people doing CYD work in their own communities. Conversations on how to tackle challenges that similar disciplines are experiencing. Sharing resources. Receiving real time guidance from people in the same field.
- **Encouragement and** knowing that I have the support of others in the same position is very helpful.
- **Listening** to other directors and other organizations discuss the pros and cons of running programs remotely. It has given me a better understanding on what to do and what not to do as a program coordinator. I also learned new ideas on how to motivate and keep the youth in my program engaged. Listening to what youth are experiencing and needing during the pandemic.
- **Hearing strategies** from other organizations - challenges, solutions, practices, ideas. Hearing different entry points for engagement in this new world
- **Format and content are great** with advanced emails to frame discussion.
- **The resource packet each week is FANTASTIC** and so helpful.

Do you have any suggestions for improvement (21 responses)

Days/Time of calls:

- Cut the calls to 1 hour.
- Perhaps not the same time every week - schedule some of the calls on evenings or weekends.
- Have other times to invite others from our organization to join as well.
- Monthly meetings?

During calls:

- Breaking out in breakout rooms by media that you primarily teach in.
- Separate the meetings by role at the organization so we can address the immediate needs of our day to day responsibilities.
- I think smaller groups, shorter sessions and more focused objectives could be an improvement.

Engaging Young People

- Provide a one on one check-in with the young folks to allow them to express themselves freely and maybe ask questions they do not dare to ask in a big group.
- Youth voice. How do we make more space and allow for growth of young people to feel more comfortable with what we're doing?
- More discussions and ideas for how to move forward and connect with our teens.

Engage Us

- It would be great to have games or engagement strategies that are working for youth...if we could experience them with each other. It would encourage the younger folk.

- Models or virtual learning and other success stories.
- Help build an active community to continue these connections- a vibrant way our organizations can stay connected, if possible. We lack the structure of creating a vibrant portal.
- Perhaps there could be a video request/sharing option where org. leaders could present a topic/question/idea through a platform via MCC, and those who wish to connect about the feature can in a collaborative discussion to continue supporting one another on this journey.
- Follow-up from dynamic ideas of the majority in the way of desires, needs, ideas for systemic changes could be incorporated into a newsletter.

What topics or presenters do you recommend for future CYD calls? (23 responses)

Media and Virtual Technology

- Finding out more about teens and media literacy and exploring with them.
- What community orgs use to strengthen relationships with schools.
- Ways to outreach and engage new youth.
- Program practices for maintaining and/or establishing a sense of belonging among young people on virtual program platforms.
- Ice breaker games and activities/team building activities both for online and in person meetings (I know I missed the call specifically dedicated to this! is there a video recording?)
- Music recording/production basics for starting a program like this?
- Would love as much on technology and how it can help us.
- Ways to loosen up and engage through Zoom
- A deep dive on understanding and engaging with digital spaces that youth are creating and inhabiting online is critical for CYD workers.
- Providing faculty and teaching artists with both tech support and racial justice support.
- A How-To for socially-engaging platforms and methods for CYD organizations to help us better engage with our young audiences.

Equity and Social Justice

- Sexism, Culture, Race Discrimination and Socioeconomic themes.
- Working social justice issues into curriculum.
- More social justice and the arts -- how are people having these conversations in their arts organizations?

Youth Voice

- School year planning, how to get teens involved in advocating for funding from the state.
- Fielding economic and personal issues of teens that come up on the job.

Reopening and Cross-Sector Collaboration

- Addressing the anxiety leading up to the start of the school year and the uncertainty around what it will look like.
- Have other programs faced having to navigate barriers/old model of engagement and collaboration with school systems and how have they been successful in breaking out of the constraints typically found there?

- Keeping CYD (and our youth) at the table during conversations around rebuilding sectors.
- If there are any other organizations out there working in the sciences, we'd love to connect. Also, we do a lot of work around climate justice, so I'd be happy to host a session or participate in a session on this topic.

Trauma and Mental Health

- How art can be used for healing trauma. I am finding that all of my youth this summer seem to be impacted by both the BLM uprising and COVID19. They are uncharacteristically interested in mental health. They report their parents are concerned about their mental health.
- Adolescent physical/emotional development and how that ties into art making and learning.
- Trauma informed any and everything. Yoga/mindfulness from a trauma informed perspective?

Advocacy and Facilitation

- How to advocate when your city/state doesn't have an awesome commission, council/gov't supporter like MCC? How can we (the artists/arts orgs/arts advocates) make change or organize better?
- Creating and engaging the community of teaching artists in our own programs and neighborhoods, virtually or in person.
- How to run parent discussion groups similarly to how we learned from Riverside Trauma Center.
- Organization working group to pilot programs across disciplines together.
- I also applaud the MCC's advocacy to more clearly articulate to funders about the need to understand the work of CYD. CYD needs to be better seen as urgent and embedded in community health. Need to hone our messaging to external funders in order to be seen as necessary vs nice.

Idea for presenters?

- Creating healing-centered spaces, maybe hearing from someone like Shawn Ginwright; building partnerships across CYD organizations.
- Sam Marchan- He runs an El Sistema/CYD program in NY and maybe also Union City NJ? Excellent educator with fun ways to engage youth in person and virtually-might be a good presenter especially for string teachers looking to break out of a traditional mold while maintaining standards of excellence.

What do you find of value in the weekly email of Links and Resources? Is there anything that could be improved?

- These are awesome! I can't think of any way to improve it.

Your ideas, questions or suggestions?

- **WARM-UPS:** We should do more engaging activities during the CYD meetings.
- **MATCHMAKING:** It would be great to document some of the connections that have occurred through the Zoom calls. Who do we connect with (& how) to address needs that we'd like to hear from our peers in our CYD journey? What does MCC suggest? Needs arise at different times for all organizations, and it'd be nice to know how/where to connect with people who also have this desire for the collective.

- **OTHER FUNDERS:** It would be great for funders and other CYD stakeholders to be aware of the value of this endeavor and to perhaps become willing to invest in things like this, perhaps on the local level and/or cross-sector at the local or regional level.
- **WEBSITE:** The MCC website, while filled with information, is extremely hard to navigate. This is a comment that I hear regularly from staff.
- **SAFETY and TECH:** What is safe for me to do as a wind player? How can I navigate & utilize technology in the best way for my art form?

Would you be interested in being a facilitator in a breakout room or presenting?

- **30%** responded "YES"
- **17%** responded "Maybe"

Conclusions

During a time that has been defined by collective uncertainty, these meetings have been a remarkably valuable resource to the youth, programs, and the field of Creative Youth Development that the Mass Cultural Council and other funders support. The entire sector was forced to pivot without preparation and these calls served as a weekly up-to-date space to mine the field for new and effective practices. In addition, the Links and Resources that were sent each Monday organized an overwhelming amount of potential supports into one place for organizations and young people to utilize. We anticipate continuing these calls throughout the fall and into 2021 as the field continues to adapt to the environment COVID-19 has created.