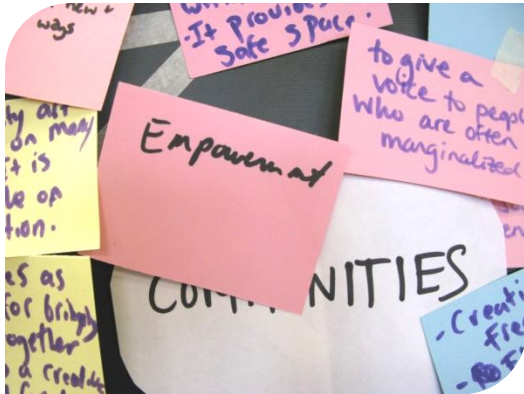


## Arts & Equity Project Overview



The Arts & Equity Project is a research and educational initiative of the **Neighbourhood Arts Network** and **Manifesto Community Projects**.

The Arts & Equity Project was launched in 2011 with support from the Ontario Ministry of Culture's **Cultural Strategic Investment Fund**.

### Goals

- **Learn from, document and share** the experience of arts and community groups who are working to reduce barriers to community participation and collaboration
- **Increase access to resources** that support community engagement and equity
- **Strengthen connections** between the arts and social service sectors

### Timeline

**Phase 1:** Research **interviews** and consultations with individuals and groups from the arts and the social service sectors.

**Phase 2:** A series of **workshops** on arts, equity and community-engagement, informed by the research interviews.

**Phase 3:** Compilation and publication of an Arts & Equity **resource toolkit**, informed by Phase One research and Phase Two workshops.

## Workshop One Overview

Arts, Equity & Planning was the first of a four-part *Arts & Equity* workshop series. The workshop took place October 11, 2011 at the O.I.S.E. Peace Lounge. The workshop contents emerged from the Phase One interviews and consultations, with sessions designed to address key themes and concerns raised during the research process. The workshop provided an important opportunity for critical reflection, networking and discussion with members of the cultural and community service sectors.

### Session One: Why Community Arts?

Facilitated by Anna Camilleri, Red Dress Productions



This participatory session encouraged participants to explore motivations and nuances for working in community-engaged artistic practices. Through arts-based activities and discussion, we explored personal and community/political contexts, process and product, and aesthetics and ethics, and how and where they intersect.

**Process:** Workshop participants were invited to respond to three questions: What is community arts? Why is it important? What are the ingredients for community arts? Responses were then physically mapped out as an ecosystem with four major areas: artistic/socio-political, communities/self, ethics/aesthetics, and process/product. The four major areas were chosen to reflect critical tensions common to community arts practice.

## Themes & Questions

- Authenticity and trust are among the most important factors when it comes to both product and process in community-engagement
- Is the motivation political, social, economic, artistic? Are these mutually exclusive?
- It is important to know the context and community in which you work
- The term “community” may be exploited for the benefit of an individual. How do you determine whether something is meaningful to the community? Who defines the terms of engagement?
- What is art, and to whom? Is art a separate entity from other areas of experience?
- How do product and process interact in community-engaged arts? How do we connect to the process?

### **Session Two: *Arts & Equity Project* Findings**

Facilitated by Leah Burns, Arts & Equity Project

Leah Burns provided a synthesis of findings from the Arts & Equity research project, with a focus on ideas related to organizational and project-based planning.

### **Session Three: Anti-Oppression Tools From RHN**

Facilitated by the Rainbow Health Network

The Rainbow Health Network shared information about their anti-oppression tools and resources, including their Anti-Racism Policy and their Anti-Oppression training tools. The session closed with an interactive group activity and discussion that explored the process of stereotyping.



## Workshop Two Overview

Partnerships & Outreach was the second of a four-part *Arts & Equity* workshop series. The workshop took place November 23, 2011 at the O.I.S.E. Peace Lounge. The workshop contents emerged from interviews and consultations, with sessions designed to address key themes and concerns raised during the research process. The workshop provided an important opportunity for networking and discussion with members of the cultural and community service sectors.

### Session One: Partnerships Panel & Group Activity



**Process:** Panelists from three community-engaged arts organizations (Scarborough Arts, Arts for Children and Youth, and Diaspora Dialogues) spoke about their experience and learnings in relation to partnerships. Participants then split into three small groups to work through a partnerships case study in problem-solving.

#### Panelist Tim Whalley, Scarborough Arts

- Partnerships are not about documents: they are about people and relationships
- Know your capacity and scope
- Partnerships are a learning experience and a growing experience
- Evaluate the impact of partnerships: how do they affect mission and mandate of the organization?

**Panelist Julie Frost, Arts For Children and Youth**

- Partnership formation often happens outside of the office
- Working in partnership is not a static thing
- Always aim higher, think ahead to how partnerships might grow

**Panelist Helen Walsh, Diaspora Dialogues**

- In partnership, partner values and biases can take a long time to surface
- Partnerships come down to the value they provide for artists
- Important to be transparent about whether programs are needed or not

**Session Two: Arts & Equity Project Findings****Facilitated by Leah Burns, Arts & Equity Project**

Leah Burns provided a synthesis of findings to date from the Arts & Equity research project, with a focus on ideas related to partnerships, outreach and communications.

**Session Three: Social Media & Relationship Building****Facilitated by Skye Louis (Neighbourhood Arts Network) and Jai Sahak (NewYouth.ca)**

Skye Louis highlighted similarities between social media skills and community-engagement skills, and touched on the value of social media strategy. Jai Sahak shared a behind-the-scenes look at NewYouth.ca's social media and outreach efforts.

