



TAP

**Transformative
Arts Process
Evaluation
Executive Summary
May 2019**

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The Heinz Endowments

The Transformative Arts Process (TAP) was a participatory grantmaking project that aimed to engage artists, arts organizations, educators, arts funders and Heinz Endowments staff in a collaborative process to develop a new arts and culture grantmaking strategy, and then to distribute grants that would build the field of artists and arts organizations working in African American and “distressed” neighborhoods in Pittsburgh.



Renee Rosensteel

On the cover: Teaching Artist Kontara Morphis participates in TAP awards day activity “Ashe Watoto Dollmaking”, inspired by Kendizi, *The Art of Babysitting* by A.M. Lukondo-Wamba and Kimbwandende Kia Bunseki Fu-Kiau.



Justin Laing



Renee Rosensteel

TAP was led by Justin Laing, then the Endowments' Arts & Culture Program Officer. Laing had been brought into the Endowments by Janet Sarbaugh, Vice President of Creativity (then Arts & Culture), because of his skills and experience as a Black artist leading an arts education organization. The design of TAP was meant to enable the Endowments to benefit from the expertise and on-the-ground knowledge of artists and arts organizations working in African American and "distressed" communities in Pittsburgh, and to be a way to shift power towards those artists and arts organizations by enabling them build relationships with the Endowments and learn how to navigate and influence philanthropy.

In its first phase in 2013 through 2014, TAP engaged more than 50 people from a variety of sectors in helping the Endowments answer the question, "How can the arts play a transformative and empowering role in the lives of youth living in 'distressed' neighborhoods?" The group traveled to the Bay Area, Boston and New York to see transformative work there. The Arts & Culture Program gave out almost \$2 million in grants to support the development of a youth creativity center, engage youth in community development issues through the arts, and to incubate the ideas of artists focused on social justice.

In its second phase from 2015 through 2016, TAP set up an 18-member TAP Advisory Board made up of practicing artists, teaching artists, youth, arts funders, community leaders, arts practitioners, and members of the Endowments' Arts & Culture team. Over two years, the Advisory Board developed a field-building grantmaking strategy, the "TAP Grantmaking Strategic Plan, 2016–2019."

The plan had five field-building strategies:

1. Invest in teaching artists who are challenging structural inequities through their practice.
2. Invest in transformative arts education organizations that are in or engaging youth from African American and "distressed" neighborhoods.
3. Invest in the arts practice of young people to encourage their pursuit of the arts as a profession.
4. Increase the relationships, knowledge and visibility of the teaching artists, arts organizations, young artists, and grantmakers working in or with these communities.
5. Experiment with philanthropic practice by partnering with grantees and youth in implementing and evaluating the TAP strategy.

In 2016, Laing asked Dragonfly Partners to develop a participatory evaluation process that would mirror the transformative goals of TAP: transformative practice; transparency in process; shared power in analysis and decision-making; and experiences that serve as a mechanism for professional development of the participants. Advisory Board members and grantees collected data and interpreted the findings, defining for themselves the impact of the grants, as a way to expand the circle of who decides what kinds of knowledge are created by philanthropy.

The first part of the evaluation reviewed the grantmaking strategy development process and found that Advisory Board members felt fully engaged in the process. They built strong, honest relationships with each other that enabled them to have difficult conversations about race, gender, sexuality, money and philanthropy. The youth members of the Advisory Board participated fully, shared decision-making and influenced those around them. Being on the TAP Advisory Board was transformative both personally and professionally

TAP highlights the term "distressed" to indicate a need for more thoughtful reflection on the inequities of access to powerful arts experiences in Pittsburgh. We acknowledge the Allegheny County Health Department's definition of "distressed" neighborhoods, which characterizes these communities as areas of high unemployment and pervasive poverty. But we contend that while the term provides a geographic focus and places a clear emphasis on issues of socioeconomic inequity, the word "distressed" does not remotely capture the resilience and humanity of these neighborhoods. We use the term because of its prevalence, but place it in quotation marks to note its shortcomings as a description of communities that are home to so many Pittsburgh residents.



Germaine Williams

for those involved. The grantmaking strategy that the Advisory Board developed was a holistic approach to field-building and included types of grants that the Endowments would not have thought of, for example grants for young artists. However, by the end of the strategy development process, some Endowments staff had become frustrated that the participatory grantmaking approach took much longer than traditional grantmaking methods.

In 2016, TAP gave out grants to teaching artists residency partnerships with arts organizations and to young artists working with mentors. It also gave one-off awards to teaching artists in 2017 and 2018. During the 2017–2018 period, TAP distributed a total of \$800,000 in grants. TAP also supported a pivotal networking, learning and support program for grantees delivered via Praxis sessions. Overall, TAP invested \$3 million (including all phase one pilots, capital grants, the 2016 grantmaking and program costs) in 21 African American arts organizations, or 84% of the African American arts organizations in Greater Pittsburgh, which means TAP's impact on that sector was extensive.

The second part of the evaluation looked at the impact of the TAP grants and Praxis, and used data collected over two years in interviews, focus groups, surveys and site visits. It found that TAP successfully delivered on its five field-building strategies.

84%

Overall, TAP invested \$3 million in 21 African American arts organizations, or 84% of the African American arts organizations in Greater Pittsburgh.

The networking, learning and support sessions—which Laing called Praxis, purposefully to evoke Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*—were designed as a way to transfer power to grantees. There grantees engaged in an iterative process of defining what they meant by transformative arts education. Building on the definitions from The Wallace Foundation's commissioned report, "The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education," and Laing's work on culturally responsive pedagogy, which included a framework that centered the culture of Africa and the Diaspora and undoing internalized racism in Black children, the grantees defined transformative arts education as education where everyone in the room would "build cultures of liberation and deconstruct racism"—an approach that would be referred to by TAP participants as "BCLDR." As such, the following elements would be present during teaching: All in the room are teachers and learners; everyone engages with nature; metaphysics is included; experiential learning and historical context is provided for the lessons.

Praxis was an effective learning environment for grantees. They learned transformative teaching practices and skills. They increased their confidence as facilitators and teachers. Praxis expanded their understanding of Black culture and identity. It provided a safe space for them to build relationships with each other and support one another. African American grantees described how being part of the community built by Praxis made them feel less alone and more supported, and helped them in the delivery of their teaching. White grantees described Praxis as a space to understand their whiteness and how to support cultures of liberation for Black people. Laing's role was crucial to the success of the Praxis sessions.

Teaching artists delivered transformative arts education to children and young people in African American and “distressed” neighborhoods. These transformative experiences were defined by the TAP community as ones where children and young people were able to experience, wonder, joy, curiosity; where they could share their insights and experiences and were listened to; where the teaching was adapted to meet their needs; where their Black identity, culture and history were centered; and where internalized racism was undone. The teaching artists improved the quality of their teaching. The teaching artists developed their careers, experiencing more visibility as artists, more financial stability and more employment opportunities.

TAP successfully invested in arts organizations that are in or engaging youth from African American and “distressed” neighborhoods both in its first round of capital and programs grants in 2014 and then in 2016 via the TAP Grantmaking Strategy. Physical environments were improved in these organizations. The arts organizations felt that the children and young people they served benefited from the TAP arts education. But arts organizations did not see a noticeable increase in attendance or outside funding as a result of being part of TAP. Some of the partnerships between the teaching artists and the arts organizations experienced challenges over the course of the two years. The Endowments viewed this as instability in the partnerships. The evaluation found that the partners involved adjusted to any changes needed but reflected that the partnerships would have benefited from more upfront planning in terms of budgets, management, and clarifying roles and responsibilities and teaching ethos.

TAP had a major impact on young artists. The youth members of the Advisory Board, who were also artists, participated fully, shared decision-making and influenced those around them. The TAP young artist grantees shifted into a professional artist



Scott Goldsmith

space taking advantage of the financial stability offered by the grants; the mentoring support and guidance; and the opportunity to learn about how to build a career as an artist, how to develop their own artistic practice and how to teach art. The young people inspired the other teaching artists at Praxis events, reawakening their pleasure in and enjoyment of teaching. Some of the young artists went on to become teachers themselves because of TAP.

TAP successfully increased the relationships, knowledge and visibility of the teaching artists, arts organizations, young artists, and grantmakers working in or with African American and “distressed” communities. As noted above, the key mechanism for doing this was via the TAP Praxis sessions. TAP built a model of professional development for teaching artists and young artists via the successful and innovative Praxis sessions. This model for professional development focused as much on emotional support, healing, pleasure and freedom to discover and create for Black teachers as it did more traditional ideas about developing “quality” education teaching practices. The model was built on mutual learning and liberatory practices per Freire. The model enabled teaching artists to improve their teaching both in the ways that the Endowments wanted them to (engaging with new pedagogies, lesson planning) and the ways that they had identified themselves as critical in terms of Building Cultures of Liberation and Deconstructing Racism (BCLDR), centering the culture of Africa and the Diaspora, and undoing internalized racism in Black children.

TAP built a model of professional development for teaching artists and young artists via the successful and innovative Praxis sessions.

Executive Summary

continued



Sam Fairchild



Joshua Franzos

TAP was a way to counteract the racism and cultural erasure Black artists face when they work and make art in predominantly white spaces.

As a result, TAP also built a model of Black arts education practice. It included these pedagogical elements of Building Cultures of Liberation and Deconstructing Racism (BCLDR) that build on Laing's work on culturally responsive pedagogy, centers the culture of Africa and the Diaspora, and addresses internalized racism in Black children. This model can be used by Black arts educators working in African American and "distressed" neighborhoods, and supported by arts education funders, even if TAP is not there to act as a vessel for that work. In addition, white arts educators who want to use anti-racist arts education practices could engage with the Building Cultures of Liberation and Deconstructing Racism (BCLDR) model as a way to understand their own whiteness and unlearn their white-normed teaching practices.

The evaluation showed that for the grantees and Advisory Board members involved in TAP, the centering of Black culture and identity was crucial to generating transformative experiences for the grantees themselves, and the children and young people they worked with, all/most of whom are Black. This was the most effective way to bring transformative arts-centered experience to youth in and from African American and "distressed" neighborhoods, as opposed to applying a "race-neutral" lens. It was a way to counteract the racism and cultural erasure Black artists face when they work and make art in predominantly white spaces, which is what the majority of art spaces are in Pittsburgh. Centering Black culture and identity in the arts teaching was the best way to ensure that the children and young people could learn about their own culture and identity. Finally, it also opened up a space for white partners who were part of TAP to explore their white privilege and learn to talk about whiteness.

In terms of experimenting with philanthropic practice, TAP grantees and Advisory Board learned a great deal about philanthropy generally and the

Endowments specifically. They felt that they had built new and strong relationships with Endowments staff, and Endowments staff agreed. Funding partners who were members of the Advisory Board had changed their own philanthropic practice as a result of being in TAP, for example, engaging earlier with artists in the grantmaking process and seeking them out rather than waiting for them to come to the foundation. Endowments staff talked about how they had learned about racism and inequalities, how to consult more widely with grantee and potential grantees, what kinds of intensive management support participatory approaches like TAP need, and how to pay people for their time in order to support meaningful engagement. They also explored their own white privilege as a result of TAP. They said that TAP had planted a seed in the Endowments about the potential benefits of participatory grantmaking models. However, the Endowments also noted that participatory grantmaking came with relatively high "transactional costs," namely financial and administrative costs. The Endowments took no institution-wide action to develop participatory grantmaking models. TAP, as an experiment in participatory grantmaking, will not be funded after 2019.

It seems correct but lackluster to say that TAP was a successful program that achieved almost all of its strategic outcomes. This does not convey the powerful transformative experiences that grantees, Advisory Board members, and children and young people in African American and "distressed" neighborhoods members experienced. TAP was a place for creativity and growth. It was a place where African American teaching artists took power and defined for themselves what transformative arts education practice should look like—for their own children and young people. Strong and caring relationships were developed that formed a bedrock for a new community of African American artists and arts organizations. Mistakes were made and courses corrected. It wasn't perfect, but it was inspiring.



These are recommendations for future action for the Endowments or other foundations that are supporting transformative arts education programs.

1. Lift up the learning from TAP

- a. The Endowments should support the TAP model of professional development for teaching artists that was developed in the Praxis sessions. A model that focuses on encouraging emotional support, healing, pleasure and freedom to discover and create for African American teachers, and on developing transformative and liberatory arts teaching.
- b. The Endowments should support the TAP model arts education practice that includes the pedagogical elements of Building Cultures of Liberation and Deconstructing Racism (BCDLR), centering the culture of Africa and the Diaspora, and undoing internalized racism in African American children. This is an arts education practice model that will support African American arts educators, and white arts educators who want to center anti-racists arts education practices in their work.

2. Further explore participatory grantmaking models

- a. The Endowments should establish a working group to explore participatory grantmaking. The working group should be made up of staff from across the strategic areas. The purpose would be to explore whether or not the potential benefits of engaging grantees more in grantmaking are worth making institutional changes inside the Endowments. The answer may be no they are not, but the Endowments should explore the question as an institution-wide process, rather than via an individual project.
 - i. The working group could look at the following question:
 1. What are the potential benefits of engaging grantees more in grantmaking?



Germaine Williams



Joshua Franzos

2. What institutional changes would the Endowments need to make in order to accrue these benefits?
3. What models of participatory grantmaking would be a good fit for the Endowments' organizational culture, history and mission?

3. Funding for arts education programs in African American and "distressed" neighborhoods

- a. If a foundation has as a goal to enable children and young people in African American and "distressed" neighborhoods to benefit from transformative arts education and creative learning, then it should:
 - i. Fund arts education programs that are not "race-neutral," but rather center African American culture and identity and culturally responsive pedagogy, because they are more likely to be successful.
 - ii. Identify ways to provide tailored support to African American teaching artists and young artists.
 - iii. Identify ways to support networking and learning mechanisms like Praxis so that African American teaching artists and young artists can build a professional support community, because doing so will increase the effectiveness of their teaching and increase the likelihood that their careers will blossom.

4. Teaching residencies and mentoring programs

- a. If a foundation funds residencies for teaching artists and mentoring for young artists, then it should ensure that the funding supports more upfront planning on budgets, roles and responsibilities, and teaching ethos and pedagogies to make sure there are clear expectations in the partnership and that there is a good match. It should also ensure that the residency host organization's full administrative and finance needs are covered in the project budget.

A strengthened and more visible
network of emerging teaching artists



8 teaching artist residencies yielding strengthened programming for arts organizations; sustained, transformative arts experiences for 500 youth; and strengthened teaching practices



16 skilled young artists with improved visibility, tools for successful careers and celebration of their work



Supported capital improvements at arts organizations in African American/“distressed” neighborhoods, providing well-equipped quality spaces in which to house transformative arts experiences for youth



A well-managed networking plan with a focus on facilitating knowledge sharing, visibility and connections



Participatory evaluation yielding significant and informative data aiding in the growth and sustainability of the field



A philanthropic grant maker that is partnering with an involved and developing advisory board, as well as taking input from the field and allowing it to inform their work

which leads to

A Stronger Field



**A More Just
Pittsburgh**

List of TAP grantees and Advisory Board members

2017 Transformative Teaching Artist Award Awardees

Richena Brockinson
Thomas Chatman
Kim El
Akil Esoon
Celeta Hickman
Bekezela Mguni
Mario Quinn Lyles
Jordan Taylor
Shimira Williams
Alisha Wormsley

Young Artists

Imani Chisom
Giordan Dixon
TJ Hurt
Raynard Lucas
Breydon Prioleau
Alleah Rose
Toddja Thornhill
Tonee Turner

Organizations Where the Young Artists Were Based

Braddock Carnegie Library
Dreams of Hope
The Corner@Friendship Presbyterian Church
Ujamaa Collective
YMCA Lighthouse

Teaching Artists In Residence

Michael David Battle/Rashod Xavier Brown
Darnell Chambers
Blak Rapp MADUSA
Trevor C. Miles
James Robertson
Sister Nadiyah Stowers

Dawn Sturges/LaKeisha Wolf
Ahmed Tacumba Turner

2018 Transformative Teaching Artist Award Awardees

Ira Cambric III
Gena Maria Escoriaza
Kontara Morphis
Maggie Lynn Negrete
Christian Nowlin
Jayla Patton
Junyetta Seale
Khalillah Shabazz
Sister IAsia Thomas
Brett Wormsley

Mentors to the Young Artists

Angie (Maxine) Garrett
Amos Levy
Bekezela Mguni
Ja'Sonta Deen
Bekezela Mguni
LaKeisha Wolf
Moses Perkins
Katie Johnson/Dana Bishop-Root

Host Arts Organization

Garden of Peace Project
Assemble/FlowerHouse
1Hood Media
Father Ryan Arts Center
YMCA Lighthouse
Legacy Arts Project/Union Project with
Mt. Ararat Community Activity Center
Ujamaa Collective
POORLAW Hazelwood

Advisory Board Members

Tom Akiva	Adil Mansoor
Chauncey Alexander	Neil Martin
Taliya Allen	Nadine Masagara-Taylor
Tracey Reed Armant	Sean Means
Nia Arrington	Delante Murphy (Chris Butler)
Dana Bishop-Root	Kendal Nasiadka
James Brown	Alexis Payne
Darnell Chambers	Erin Perry
Alicia Chatkin	Breydon Prioleau
Thomas Chatman	Ja'Sonta Roberts
Imani Chisom	Thena Robinson
Giordan Dixon	Janet Sarbaugh
Miciah Foster	Maria Searcy
Mac Howison	Celeste Smith
TJ Hurt	Rev. Tim Smith
Medina Jackson	Nadiyah Stowers
Tyra Jamison	Sister IAsia Thomas
Jermalle Johns	Germaine Williams
D.S. Kinsel	Carol Wolfe