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FINDING PARTNERS AND COLLABORATORS

Many youth media facilitators find it useful to collaborate with community-based organizations, agencies and schools to recruit participants. By partnering with an institution, your project can gain access to specific populations the organization serves or people interested in the issues it addresses. Organizations with well-established youth recruitment processes, like the YMCA and 4H, can identify and recommend potential participants. Partner institutions may also be able to provide training and meeting space for your project or help out with other needs like transportation. When you start working in a new neighborhood or cultural community, collaborating with an organization that has a good reputation can also give your project legitimacy.

“Our work with American Indian youth living on reservations would have been impossible without the help of partners. Transportation is a big problem on the Indian reservations where we work, so we partner with schools to hold workshops at their facilities and use their buses to transport participants. This makes it very easy for youth to take part, by removing a major barrier to attendance. When introducing youth media to a community that has never been exposed to it, you are served well by collaborating with schools and agencies.”

PAUL SANTOMENNA, NATIVE VISION

There are lots of other reasons to collaborate with local organizations. Partner institutions can:

- ▶ bring new viewpoints and ideas to your project.
- ▶ share resources such as group process exercises, leadership development activities, conflict resolution skills and guest speakers.
- ▶ introduce your project to unofficial cultural or community leaders who have a stake in your work and the well-being of youth.
- ▶ provide social service resources (e.g., counseling) to your participants.
- ▶ coordinate adult volunteers to help with the media project.

“One strategy we use involves getting community organizations to partner with youth on projects at the onset. For example, a community organization was interested in addressing drug abuse prevention, so we proposed that they do it through youth production of PSAs. The organization agreed and helped us secure matching funds. Since they were involved with us at the ground level, there was a greater community interest in the youth productions. The organization helped us organize the screening event, did the promotion and community organization, and presented the students with a certificate.”

ARTURO VASQUEZ, KXCR YOUTH IMPACT

Collaborations are also a great way to get internship placements for your project participants. In return, youth media projects can help partner organizations promote their programs to the community by creating PSAs and other media pieces about the services they offer. These kinds of partnerships and collaborations are good for communities since they strengthen non-profit networks and increase local capacity to implement community development efforts.

“I recommend collaborating with other organizations and networks that are also working on the same issue or theme of the video. For example, we partner with International Rescue Committee on our New Immigrant Youth TV program. They advocate for refugee youth and have connections with the UN and specific immigrant high schools that are often good places to conduct workshops and screenings of our videos.”

SUSAN SIEGEL, GLOBAL ACTION PROJECT

Hey Teens!

Are you interested in
TEEN GLBT issues?

Do you like or want to
learn... **Editing**
Shooting Video
Acting
Storyboarding

Would you like to make
Public Service Announcements?

Call 279-8099 Or Email:
matthew@outnorth.org

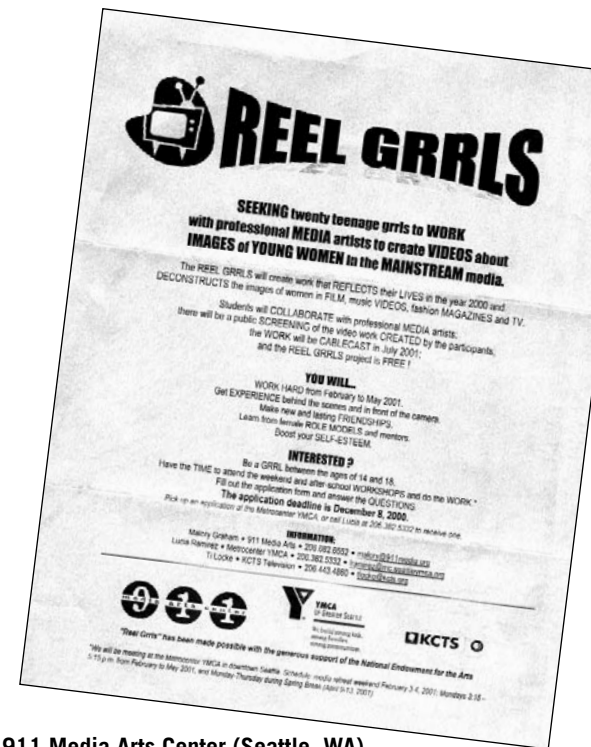
Out North Contemporary Art House
East Anchorage in blue and green building at
Primrose and DeBarr, one block west of Bragaw

Visit www.outnorth.org

Courtesy of Out North Contemporary Art House (Anchorage, AK).

Some organizations and agencies that Listen Up! sites have collaborated with include:

- ▶ Americorps
- ▶ City arts councils and commissions
- ▶ Ethnic/cultural centers
- ▶ Faith-based organizations
- ▶ Hospitals
- ▶ Housing authorities
- ▶ Immigrant community groups
- ▶ Law enforcement agencies
- ▶ Museums/art galleries/art organizations
- ▶ National community-based organizations like YMCA or 4H
- ▶ Public health groups
- ▶ Rural migrant organizations
- ▶ Social action groups
- ▶ Social service organizations



911 Media Arts Center (Seattle, WA)
"Reel Girls" program has partnered with
a number of local organizations like the
YMCA.

"We regularly visit high schools and after school programs to show videotapes, discuss our activities and philosophy, and give interested youth details on how to participate."

DALIDA MARIA BENFIELD, VIDEO MACHETE

Youth media programs can also collaborate with schools, since schools focus on youth development too. However, it is very important that you spell out your program's goals and objectives, not only for a teacher with whom you may want to collaborate, but for their administrators as well.

"It's extremely important that school administrators be brought into any media project early on. In 1999, when we were first starting the Listen Up! network, we approached a high school in Detroit with an energetic teacher and all of the technical capabilities to produce audio and video public service messages. There were many phone calls, much correspondence and even a site visit where we held a dynamic meeting with students who were overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the prospect of hooking up with other producers across the country. Because of the teacher's own personal enthusiasm, we assumed that the school was on board."

It turns out that at the same time, the Mayor of Detroit declared that if school performances did not improve, his office would take over the system. According to the teacher, all school administrators were now “walking on needles and pins.” The level of tension that developed in the school prevented us from even getting started.”

AUSTIN HAEBERLE
DIRECTOR, LISTEN UP!

There are specific ways to promote your program through schools:

- ▶ ask teachers and counselors to identify specific individuals who would be well matched to your media program.
- ▶ make school administrators aware of your intentions early on.
- ▶ visit media/social studies classes and make a short pitch for the program, showing a sample of youth-produced video work and discussing media activism.
- ▶ conduct media equipment demonstrations in classrooms followed by a pitch about how to get involved in your media project.
- ▶ work with a school club (e.g., African American Student Union, MECHA, Key Club, Thespians, Student Government, etc.) to help design and circulate promotional materials, make recruitment presentations to classes or school groups, and do one-on-one outreach to targeted individuals.
- ▶ have participants who have been through your program recommend it to others at their school.
- ▶ put announcements in school media outlets such as newspapers, Web sites, radio programs, closed circuit TV systems, and home rooms.
- ▶ post flyers around campus.
- ▶ create media projects that can be done as a collaborative effort between teachers and media facilitators, such as artist-in-residence after school programs, media literacy presentations and assignments for individual classes, or units on media analysis and/or production as part of a larger course (e.g., English or history) that can be team taught.

“Students present their video work to other art classes, share their experiences, and encourage people to sign up. This has a very positive impact on enrollment. Seeing the work students produce is the best way to encourage kids.”

DIANE NERWEN, JOHN JAY HIGH SCHOOL

TOOLBOX**Strategies for Collaboration**

BY SUSAN SIEGAL, AMY BASKIN, MALLORY GRAHAM,
PAUL SANTOMENNA, & KRISTIN KONSTERLIE

Because partners may have differing expectations for the collaboration, it is a good idea to put things in writing to ensure that everyone has a clear understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and resources involved. Collaborations are time-consuming and a lot of work. If there is not a shared sense of purpose, run away as fast as you can! Partners will be more invested in the success of the project if all the collaborating partners are involved in the design from the start.

When collaborating with community-based organizations (CBOs), agencies, or schools to recruit youth into your media program, think about:

- ▶ using community needs assessments to discover potential partner organizations that share your interests and goals.
- ▶ developing a relationship with one or two persons at the organization/site. Having inside allies is crucial and depending on the organization's structure, *they can make the project happen*.
- ▶ signing letters of agreement that spell out exactly what is expected of each party in the collaboration.
- ▶ writing partnering organizations into grants you submit so that their staff time is covered while working on your youth media program.
- ▶ remembering that most CBOs have youth that are already committed to a number of projects. Don't recruit their youth for your programs.
- ▶ making sure to achieve a balance between work to be done and benefits to be reaped.
- ▶ recognizing that if you do build partnerships, new CBOs will come to you seeking partnerships of their own.

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OUTREACH STRATEGIES

In addition to working with institutional partners and collaborators, there are a lot of other ways to recruit media project participants. Below are some of the most common methods and approaches.

Word of Mouth

Good programs with enthusiastic youth media producers have a recruitment advantage: their past and present participants are their best form of advertising.

“The Community Arts Center was originally located in one of the public housing projects in Cambridge. Today we are located across the street from this project. Because of the close relationship among the center, the residents of the public housing project and the Cambridge Housing Authority, most residents are aware of the center and its programs. They send their youth to the center’s school-age program at an early age. Many of these students see participation in the Teen Media Program as a graduation of sorts. These school age graduates form the core group members in the Teen Media Program. When they enter the program I try to encourage them to invite their friends to the weekly group meetings. Having their friends join helps with retention because wanting to hang out with their friends is often a reason why they don’t show up. This friend/word of mouth process is our main recruitment strategy.”

JOE DOUILLETTE

CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY ART CENTER

“We use word of mouth. By talking to community leaders we get calls from interested parents and teachers.”

JENNIFER PLEVIN, COMMUNITY MEDIA PROJECT

Using the Media

To reach potential participants through various forms of media, Listen Up! sites currently:

- ▶ Place paid advertisements on radio stations and cable channels.
- ▶ Send press releases promoting the program to area media outlets.
- ▶ Get feature stories in local newspapers and other print publications.
- ▶ Distribute flyers to schools, youth hangouts, youth group mailing lists, and youth service organizations.
- ▶ Send e-mails with applications to youth group listservs.
- ▶ Post contact information describing how youth can get involved in media production at the end of public access television programs.

Courtesy of KQED Youth Media Corp
(San Francisco, CA).

“We send press releases to radio stations with all kinds of audiences. We sent one to a senior citizen’s radio station and a grandmother signed up her grandson!”

AMY BASKIN, NOVAC

“For each semester of workshops, we create a visually engaging publication that lists workshop times, descriptions, goals, and gives details on how to participate. The publication features images from videotapes made in previous workshops. This publication is distributed to teachers, youth service providers, schools, community organizations, churches, libraries, coffeehouses, etc. It is also distributed through a sidewalk dispenser that sits in front of our storefront space.”

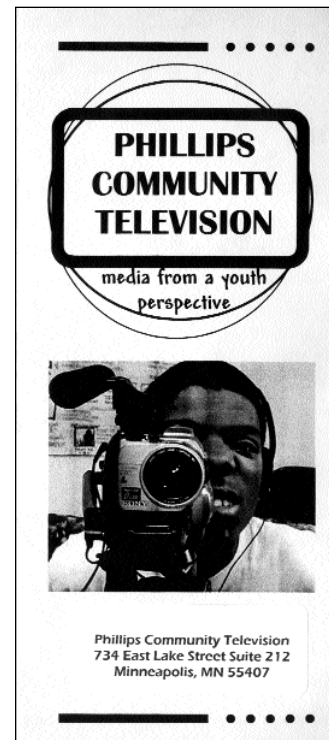
DALIDA MARIA BENFIELD, VIDEO MACHETE

See the **SAMPLES** section at the end of this chapter for examples of flyers for recruitment of youth participants by PCTV and the Davis Video Project.

Using Events

Community events are also excellent vehicles for recruiting program participants. These events can take the shape of award screenings, ceremonies, festivals or presentations. Listen Up! sites use a variety of methods:

- ▶ At the end of a media project, hold a public screening to show or display the work. Make a recruitment pitch during the presentation.
- ▶ Hold an award or certificate ceremony for participants in the youth media program. Invite their friends and family to attend. During the ceremony mention how other youth can get involved in mediamaking.
- ▶ Conduct screenings or exhibitions of youth media during local arts festivals, film festivals and community cultural celebrations. Have literature and speakers available to discuss your youth media project.
- ▶ Encourage youth media makers to organize their own media festivals. Have them talk with press, community leaders, and other young people about how to get involved in your media program.
- ▶ Organize presentations and discussions of student work during school lunch periods, assemblies or after school. Let students know how they can get involved in your program.
- ▶ Participate in school open houses, community college activity fairs, public library literacy events and teen center activities by having an information table with information and someone who can promote your program.
- ▶ Collaborate with community-based organizations that hold public events.



PCTV (Minneapolis, MN) uses a small brochure to help recruit participants. See samples section for full brochure.

“In the Fall 2000, a graduation style event punctuated our most successful Listen Up! Project. While we don’t always do a recognition event for participants who complete a training sequence, this was a special opportunity. We launched the project with support of teachers, administrators and community residents who believed in the students’ potential to produce effective media messages about drug abuse and prevention. Once the PSAs were done, the energy, pride and enthusiasm of the students just called for a celebration of their accomplishments. We felt that to share this creative energy with the rest of the community would . . . breed more success. And, indeed, it appeared to have raised students’ interest in staying engaged with Youth Impact. They clamored for a continuation of the project and inspired us to seek additional funding for a more long-term project.”

ARTURO VASQUEZ, KXCR YOUTH IMPACT