



Tuesday, 4 October 2011, 1:30 pm.

Roundtable 7: Global Connectivity

Speakers

Joanne Dorras, Wan Smolbag, Vanuatu

Katelijan Verstraete, Asia Europe Foundation

Mario Merialdi, World Health Organisation

Moderator

Rose Hiscock, Executive Director, Arts Development, Australia Council for the Arts

Rapporteur

Mark Stapleton, Manager, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board, Australia Council for the Arts

Description of the session

This session focused on the actions and politics of developed nations and intergovernmental organizations towards developing countries in terms of supporting arts and creativity.

The discussion was marked by the high level of honesty and generosity of all participants in talking about successes and mistakes.

Threads of the conversation included the strengths of artists and the arts in the examples discussed, the responsibility of national and international agencies for the restrictions and requirements placed on the funds and programs they make available.

Creative intersections discussed in the session

What was discussed did relate to the theme of Creative intersections – the elements of which are people, places and projects.

Examples of good examples and practices

- Connectivity really works best when there is a high level of or at the very least a growing level of cultural understanding or cross cultural; understanding. At times this was referred to as mutual understanding or multilaterality.
- What would really help is knowing and actually identifying the blind spots that all individuals, groups and institutions have.
- Participants noted that many of the examples discussed are situations where organisations locally, regionally, nationally and globally have a specific utilitarian purpose.
- People and organisations working in this space can be most valued and understood when they are clear about the values and the intentions of parties involved.
- Development is not a neutral, uniform term. It can be driven by one agent or by many working together. The latter situation is difficult and challenging especially when working across divisions of wealth, power and understanding. It was also the stuff of every example discussed in this session.

Identified problems

- Interventions by one party (from grass roots practice by an individual to national agencies and governments to global institutions such as the UN) can be blind to the real impact or lack of impact. What would really help is knowing and actually identifying the blind spots that all individuals, groups and institutions have.
- Where organisations locally, regionally, nationally and globally have a specific utilitarian purpose it is important that this is shared candidly with artists so that artists can exercise choice about what kind of work they engage in.
- Connectivity as discussed in this session does and will open up questions and judgements about the values and the intentions of parties involved.
- Connectivity at a mere logistic level faces challenges of incompatible visa requirements and internet access etc

Recommendations for futures actions

The discussion returned to themes of reciprocity, of international responsibilities for positive development and in particular the responsibilities of funding and development agencies to reshape some share of resources affecting the mobility of artists and constructive development work in the world or at the very least those regions which have mechanism for exchange in place (e.g. the Asian-European dialogue, the Pacific region).

It was noted that both the UN and IFACCA have a formula that is used to make contributions that is based on the size of GDP. It was also noted that developing nations do not necessarily have the greatest wealth in terms of cultural knowledge or understanding and that therefore there is an opportunity for artists and agencies globally to stage a multilateral exchange of art and culture for positive constructive development.