

CHICAGO INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS FUND

The MacArthur Foundation established a fund on its thirtieth anniversary in 2008 to encourage a greater sharing of experiences and international learning between its local Chicago grantees and their counterparts in other countries. Its premise is that Chicago is a global city that benefits from interaction between its citizens and organizations and their counterparts outside of the United States. This program was renewed in 2009 and the original fund of \$1 million was extended with an additional \$500,000.

AT A GLANCE

- The Chicago International Connections Fund was established in January 2008 at the MacArthur Foundation's 30th Anniversary Celebration.
- The fund recognizes Chicago's place as a global city that benefits from the interactions between its citizens and their counterparts outside of the United States.
- The purpose of the fund was to help eligible Chicago-based nonprofit organizations further their work by making connections with organizations and individuals internationally.
- Between June 2008 and September 2009, the Foundation awarded 39 grants to 35 organizations.
- More than half of the grant recipients were arts and culture organizations, a quarter were community development organizations, and the remainder a mix of groups focused on juvenile justice, conservation, human rights, and reproductive health issues.
- Almost 40 countries were touched by exchanges with 450 Chicagoans traveling abroad and 160 representatives from international organizations welcomed to Chicago.



BACKGROUND

Eligible applicants to the Chicago International Connections Fund included nonprofit organizations in the Chicago area that were recent grant recipients of the Foundation directly or through the MacArthur Funds established at the Driehaus Foundation, the Prince Charitable Trusts, or the New Communities Program directed by the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC).

Applications for exchange with any country were considered; however, preference was given to projects that involved one or more of the Foundation's focus countries: India, Mexico, Nigeria, and Russia. Preference was also given to new collaborations or projects.

The objective of the program was to nurture relationships and collaborations between Chicago organizations and their counterparts around the world. These were not intended to be one-time travel grants, but rather funds that would foster meaningful, long-term relationships that might lead to new or improved program work, continued collaboration and/or subsequent exchanges.

The outcomes demonstrate that this objective was met:

- More than 60% of groups continue to collaborate with the same international organizations that they worked with during MacArthur-funded exchanges.
- Half of the organizations have developed new or expanded work as a result of this exchange.
- Almost 90% of groups have developed new collaborative or performance opportunities because they were able to present their work to a different cohort of peers and reviewers.
- Twenty-five percent of groups were

able to garner additional funding from other sources for their programs as a result of the experiences and program development that occurred during the exchange.

GRANT RECIPIENTS

Below are one-year grants made to Chicago-based grantees of the MacArthur Foundation through the International Connections Fund. Please note that grants in this program were not limited to arts and culture organizations.

ANIMA, YOUNG SINGERS OF GREAT CHICAGO
\$50,000 to support the organization's tour to Spain and Morocco to encourage greater international understanding through music.

ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO
\$40,000 to support a cultural exchange with Nigerian scholars and dignitaries for the Institute's exhibition, *Benin-Kings and Rituals: Court Arts from Nigeria*.

ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CREATIVE MUSICIANS (AACM)
\$15,000 to support the organization's participation at the "Insolent Noise Festival" in Pisa, Italy.

CHICAGO CHAMBER MUSICIANS
\$10,000 to support a special performance of *Strange News*, a multimedia musical production by a Norwegian composer about child soldiers in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

CHICAGO CHILDREN'S CHOIR
\$40,000 to support the Choir's 55 singers and nine staff members as they represent Chicago on a summer tour of the Republic of Korea.

CONCERT DANCE, INC.
\$50,000 to support an exchange program between the contemporary dance company and the Department of Music and Dance of Nanjing Normal University in China for performances, lectures, and classes.

CHICAGO HUMAN RHYTHM PROJECT
\$40,000 to support a five-week tour to China, where the Project will present 216 master classes and perform 20 concerts in nine cities.

CHICAGO HUMAN RHYTHM PROJECT
\$50,000 to support an exchange with the Beijing Contemporary Music Institute's dance ensemble and the China Performing Arts Agency to allow 14 dancers to attend CHRP's Chicago summer festival of tap, *Rhythm World*.

CHICAGO MOVING COMPANY
\$15,000 in support of a month-long dance residency in Mongolia.

CHICAGO ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY (BROOKFIELD ZOO)
\$50,000 to launch a conservation leadership development program between teenagers in Chicago and the South American nation of Guyana.

COMMUNITY JUSTICE FOR YOUTH INSTITUTE
\$50,000 to support an exchange between juvenile justice advocates in Chicago and South Africa so they can learn from each other's strategies to rehabilitate youth offenders.

ERIE NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE
\$45,000 to support a study tour to Guanajuato, Mexico, the region of origin of many of Chicago's Mexican immigrants, to better understand the needs of the organization's local clients.

FREE STREET THEATER

\$25,000 to support an exchange program with Makhmon Theatre Company in Chiang Dao, Thailand, to share experiences in using performance art to mediate conflicts and improve relationships among different communities.

FACETS MULTIMEDIA

\$36,000 to enable international dialog between 20 high school age filmmakers and film critics from Illinois and 20 youth producers of media from India, Italy, Korea, and French-speaking Canada.

FACETS MULTIMEDIA

\$50,000 to support Media Bridge: Global Exchanges in Youth Filmmaking, a curating and screenwriting initiative for 13 youth ages 15 to 19 from Chicago and 13 youth from India, Mexico, Russia, Sri Lanka, Ghana, and Portugal.

HEARTLAND ALLIANCE FOR HUMAN NEEDS & HUMAN RIGHTS

\$45,000 to support leaders from five lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender organizations operating in global areas of conflict and oppression to participate in a Human Rights and Organizational Leadership Development Fellowship in Chicago.

HOUSE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (FIREHOUSE COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER)

\$50,000 in support of twenty Lawndale youth traveling to the University of Veracruz in Mexico to study race relations and improve cross-cultural understanding.

HUBBARD STREET DANCE CHICAGO

\$40,000 to support artistic collaborations with Holland's Nederlands Dans Theatre and Israel's Batsheva Dance Company.

KALAPRIYA FOUNDATION

\$25,000 to support the Chicago-area and Illinois portion of a national tour of

Rupayan, a world-renowned musical ensemble from Rajasthan in northern India.

KOREAN AMERICAN RESOURCE AND CULTURAL CENTER

\$40,000 in support of an exchange between cultural artists in Chicago and South Korea.

LATINOS PROGRESANDO IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CHICAGO YOUTH BOXING CLUB

\$45,000 to support youth and staff to visit a rural community in the central state of Guanajuato, Mexico that has been experiencing high levels of emigration].

LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION

\$42,500 to connect the Chicago Sunday Parkways Stakeholders Committee with civic leaders in Ecuador to learn about efforts to better use public space to promote health, civic engagement, and economic development.

LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT CORPORATION (LISC)

\$50,000 in support of an exchange between Chicago New Communities Program leaders and community development leaders in Russia.

LOGAN SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

\$45,000 to support an exchange between parents, artists, and educators in Chicago and the Mexican states of Veracruz, Mexico, and Hidalgo.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MEXICAN ART

\$40,000 to bring speakers from Mexico to Chicago to participate in five roundtables in partnership with local universities as part of the Year of Mexico in Chicago, a city initiative to advance residents' understanding of Mexico.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF MEXICAN ART

\$50,000 to support artist exchanges between Chicago-area artists and artisans and those from the Mexican states of Chiapas and Oaxaca resulting in traveling exhibits, public discussions, and educational programs that will be held at the Museum and in institutions in Mexico.

NEXT THEATRE COMPANY

\$7,500 to support a collaboration with theater colleagues in the Czech Republic to develop a world-premiere adaptation of War with the Newts based on Karel Capek's 1936 novel.

OLD TOWN SCHOOL OF FOLK MUSIC

\$50,000 to establish the Folk Arts Exchange Program. Teaching artists from Mexico, Russia, and India will teach and perform at the School, while Chicago faculty will travel to do the same at institutions in each of those countries].

OPTIONS FOR YOUTH

\$50,000 in support of an exchange between leaders of its Illinois Subsequent Pregnancy Program and partner organizations in Guanajuato, Mexico to share approaches for reducing second pregnancies among adolescent mothers.

PEGASUS PLAYERS

\$50,000 to support the expansion of the Global Voices program, which uses theater arts and language to increase cross-cultural understanding among Chicago high-school students and their peers around the world].

PUERTO RICAN ARTS ALLIANCE

\$25,000 to expand the Taino Project, which teaches Chicago Public Schools students about the culture and history of indigenous people of the Caribbean by allowing Kelvyn Park High School students to travel to Puerto Rico to learn from anthropologists and archaeologists about historical and culture sites on the island.

QUAD COMMUNITIES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

\$50,000 in support of an international study tour in Brixton, London.

REDMOON THEATER

\$45,000 to support Firehouse, a community arts project and performance about fire stations in County Donegal, Ireland. The three-year effort will involve travel between Chicago and Ireland for research; the work will be performed in Ireland and in Chicago].

THE SELDOMS

\$25,000 in support of a reciprocal dance performance and education exchange with counterpart companies in Russia].

SHAWCHICAGO THEATRE COMPANY

\$50,000 to support the organization's participation in the Annual Selcuk University International Theater Festival in Konya, Turkey.

The Goodman Theatre

\$30,000 to support the newly established Eugene O'Neill festival featuring international productions of his work from Holland and Brazil].

TUTA THEATRE COMPANY

\$25,000 to support a collaboration between TUTA and the National Theatre in Belgrade, Serbia, to stage the Balkan premiere of Tony Kushner's Homebody/ Kabul.

URBAN GATEWAYS

\$50,000 to support an exchange between arts educators in Chicago and Tanzania to promote literacy, creative self-expression, and critical thinking among youth.

About The MacArthur Foundation

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. In addition to selecting the MacArthur Fellows, the Foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, make cities better places, and understand how technology is affecting children and society.

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John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
140 South Dearborn St., Suite 1200, Chicago, Illinois 60603-5285
Telephone: (312) 726-8000
www.macfound.org
TDD: (312) 920-6285