

National Youth Media Summit

Working Paper

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The National Youth Media Summit is a convening of 43 participants in the youth media field in Lake Forest, IL from August 5-7, 2009.

“Considering the progress that has been made thus far, establishing a national network is far from being a lofty, pastel-colored dream. We just need to be smart about making the field more defined, tangible and welcoming. We must reach beyond our personal networks, cities, regions and country to collaborate in ways that amplify the voice of the youth media community.”

*-Antoine Haywood, People TV and Youth Media Summit Steering Committee Member
(Youth Media Reporter, Print Volume 2, 2008)*

“Youth media as a field is, at many levels and by its very nature, a community of reflection and inquiry...There is much to say when we talk about the field—its principles, boundaries, capacities. But what might happen if we were to hone our occasional and expansive conversations about youth media into a more intentional and critically reflective examination of our work?”

*-Timothy Dorsey, Open Society Institute and Youth Media Summit Steering Committee Member
(Youth Media Reporter, Print Volume 1, 2007)*

Youth media is dedicated to making a difference in the lives of young people—often especially those in marginalized populations. Based on testimonies and examples of youth work, it’s succeeding.

So why isn’t youth media on the radar of major decision-makers? Why are so many organizations struggling for funding? Why do practitioners so often say they’re under-resourced and understaffed?

The answer, in part, is that youth media has not yet come together to address its collective needs. For instance, by improving research and evaluation *overall*, individual youth media practitioners can more effectively demonstrate their effectiveness and persuade funders and advocates to support the work. Identifying and sharing high-quality curricula could enrich everyone’s programming. By partnering with each other, as well as universities, government, businesses, and community organizations, youth media organizations could increase their capacities and expand the number of young people they reach.

It’s time for youth media to come together as a field. We must strategize collectively; leverage resources rather than compete for them; capitalize on organizations’ unique characteristics; and invest in a strategic plan to grow together over the next five years. Collectively, we can advance best practice across differences, advocate for the importance of youth media as a whole, and amplify the voices of all the youth we serve.

Youth media has an opportunity to become a more prominent part of how young people engage with themselves, each other, and society. No organization can achieve this on its own. However, the near-hundred organizations with a shared commitment to youth voice can not only support each other but fulfill the potential of youth media.

Elements of field-building:

To build a field, educational researcher Melinda Fine, Ed.D. determined that “typically, a field’s practitioners require preparation in research- and craft-based knowledge, share a common language, and have access to ongoing opportunities for professional education. They also acknowledge standards for practice, use vehicles for communication and information exchange, and enjoy credibility in the eyes of critical constituencies.”

Many of these field-building elements have emerged as priorities in conversations among youth media practitioners. Steering Committee members¹ used a Youth Media Sector Survey (65 respondents; released by AED Spring 2009) and a 3-year meta-analysis of Youth Media Reporter (released by Youth Media Reporter/AED Spring 2009) as tools to determine the six issue areas with which youth media is most concerned and which this document will discuss. They are:

Youth and adult leadership. Regardless of the leadership model or focus in a particular organization, preparing youth and adults to make meaningful and authentic contributions requires resources, time, and effort. We need to identify the elements, guiding values, and outcomes of youth leadership, adult leadership, and youth-*and*-adult leadership in order to sustain the dynamism of the field.

Strategic partnerships. More work must be done to connect organizations that are not a part of an existing youth media network. It is also crucial to define what strategic partnerships can look like, and to set common goals at both a local and national level, in order to engage not only organizations, but also like-minded fields that are community based, as well as government, foundations, institutions of higher education, and media industry leaders in youth media.

Research and evaluation. Key leaders in the field of youth media have presented and published consistently about the need for youth media programs and projects to establish rigorous and systematic strategies for research and evaluation. Reliable evidence about the characteristics and outcomes of youth media is the first step in field-building.

Distribution. Young people are highly motivated to reach an audience, and when they face the challenge of making work that will be seen, they respond with increased creativity and attention to detail. The youth media field has long recognized that the work should not exist in a vacuum, but be promoted and

¹ Special thanks to Rebecca O’Doherty, Appalshop; Na Tae’ Thompson, True Star Magazine; Antoine Haywood, People TV; Moriah Ulinksas, Bay Area Video Coalition; Kathleen Tyner, University of Texas-Austin; Joellen Fisherkeller, New York University; Jeff McCarter, Free Spirit Media; Jamilah King, WireTap Magazine; Meghan McDermott, Global Action Project ; Jessica Collins/Andrea Quijada, New Mexico Media Literacy Project; Timothy Dorsey, Open Society Institute.

shared in order for young people to have access to technology creation and expression. We can play a critical role in bringing opportunities to both youth and distributors in a way that respects authentic youth voice, the goals of youth development, and the needs and challenges of society at large.

Curriculum. The field must collaborate on sharing resources, innovative idea and lessons learned to ensure the production of high quality curricula. To do that, it is essential that practitioners debate, engage and push-back about their practices and communicate about their methods, outcomes and challenges. By generating new means to dialogue and assess curricula together, curriculum will reflect current thinking and generate new practices for the field to grow stronger.

Professional development and networks. Opportunities for networking will yield a set of common principles that highlight the unique strengths of the youth media field; influence future research in, of, and by the field; identify new strategic partners; and demonstrate to a broad audience that media-making is both a critical component of young people's lives and a critical mechanism for defining culture, identity, and representation in the 21st century.

Youth & Adult Leadership

To grow and sustain youth media we need effective and capable leadership. Because youth media is committed to amplifying youth voice, we particularly need to examine best practices that integrate youth leadership alongside adult leadership—to create the space for those served by the field as it evolves.

The field uses a variety of leadership models that call on youth and adults to have varying responsibility. In most instances, adults are leaders of youth media programs and youth participate in governance. Youth may sit on boards and contribute their ideas and opinions, but adults are the leaders of last resort. Other organizations have intergenerational leadership where adults and young people together create the vision for the organization, manage its operations, and make decisions about policy. In these cases, leadership is often more closely tied to experience or other factors and not necessarily correlated with age.

It is important to acknowledge that the term “youth leadership” can apply to young people’s roles both in and outside youth media organizations. In fundraising, people often talk about building leadership capacity which speaks to the often-urgent need in struggling communities for young people to be leaders in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods, as well as to be functional leaders or exemplars within the youth media organization.

Obstacles and opportunities:

Emerging leaders working in youth media offer incredible, proven potential. They have helped young people develop the knowledge, abilities and perspectives to work as artists, organizers, and educators, and they are poised to be real assets. They are also hungry for the opportunities that would connect their abilities to greater outcomes. Unfortunately, many people eventually outgrow the opportunities available with limited resources and staffing within youth media organizations.

Furthermore, for many young people the transition from youth participant to emerging leader can be challenging. Helping young people make this transition is particularly urgent now because youth leadership can provide much-needed staff capacity to struggling organizations. Appropriately preparing youth to be authentic leaders in their organizations and communities would respond both to the need for additional organizational capacity and to young people’s desire to more fully realize the potential promised them by youth media organizations, be at artistry or leadership.

At the same time, the field needs to be developing adult leaders who see youth media as a career path; who can work over time with dedication and creativity; who can understand how to work collaboratively with youth leadership; and who have opportunities to develop the knowledge and abilities needed to be effective.

Discussion and suggestions:

- What is “good and effective” leadership?
- How do we support the development of this leadership—especially so that young people are not merely mouthpieces or satisfying funder guidelines?
- What kinds of leadership models best support healthy organizations and a thriving youth media field?
- Given young people’s other responsibilities and desires, is leadership within youth media organizations the right and best use of their time?
- Does leadership within the field and organizations reflect constituency in terms of class, race, gender and sexuality, background, and geography?
- How can we develop leadership that is responsive to changing conditions, needs, and opportunities and also be reflective and inclusive?
- Does leadership in the field reflect the different kinds practitioners (grassroots coalitions, youth-initiated efforts, after-school programs, university and academic-based efforts, established non-profit institutions)? If not, why not?

The call: Regardless of the leadership model or focus in a particular organization, preparing youth and adults to make meaningful and authentic contributions requires resources, time, and effort. It also requires leaders to craft strategies and learn best practices framed by other field-building elements, including excellent professional development resources, strategic partnerships, and research and evaluation. We need to identify the elements, guiding values, and outcomes of youth leadership, adult leadership, and youth-*and*-adult leadership in order to sustain the dynamism of the field.

Developing Strategic Partnerships

A number of professional networks committed to building youth media work on local, regional and national levels are already thriving across the country. Many overlap and share resources such as curricula, membership, funding sources and distribution outlets. At the same time, there is a demonstrated need to develop a common language and evaluation of the field. The purpose of having a common language is to effectively link practice to resources and solutions and more broadly, young people to opportunities for voice. It is extremely important for organizations and practitioners to understand their explicit role within the larger community of the youth media field so that experiences and resources can build longitudinally and the competition for resources and duplication of efforts can be streamlined.

Practitioners need to clearly identify our partners—including organizations, educational institutions, government, and industry—in order to make the best connections for youth people. For local partnerships it is important for practitioners to define ways that serve their immediate community that can contribute to the field more broadly.

Obstacles and opportunities:

Following the tremendous youth turn-out in the 2008 presidential election, the public is increasingly recognizing that young people are knowledgeable, creative, eager to engage—even powerful. In this climate, we have an opportunity to articulate clearly and advocate for youth media’s value in education, industry, and in other neighboring fields. Strategic partnerships can create opportunities for organizations, professionals, and youth participants to expand their experiences and networks and deepen their knowledge and skills. They also connect communities—via organizations—to government, philanthropy, institutions of higher education, and professional industries.

It is especially imperative that we create strategic partnerships now, designing a network that is youth-centered and increases opportunities community building—versus the potential of a top-down approach in which the government or industry would design the experience.

Overall, youth media is in dire need of funding, capacity building and human resource support. Strategic partnerships would allow us to communicate our challenges and successes, to reach out to similar organizations in other regions of the country, and to demonstrate the strength and geographical expanse of the youth media field to potential supporters.

Discussion and suggestions:

As a field, we must structure and resource real parameters and goals for local, national, then international networks by which we can:

- define curricular and project-based standards to demonstrate competency in training and production within the youth media field;
- evaluate and disseminate best practices in program delivery with measureable outcomes leading to certification or credentials which can be recognized within institutions of higher education and/or professional industries;
- establish consistent resources and opportunities to advance professionals within youth media training and networking; and
- organize opportunities and outlets for the dissemination and distribution of youth media within existing and emerging platforms.

What can this look like?

- Recognized credentials or certification for youth which carries weight in the academic and professional world on a national level.
- National network of distribution of work and dissemination of practices.

The call: More work must be done to connect organizations that are not a part of an existing youth media network. It is also crucial to define what strategic partnerships can look like, and to set common goals at both a local and national level, in order to engage not only organizations, but also like-minded fields that are community based, as well as government, foundations, institutions of higher education, and media industry leaders in youth media.

Research and Evaluation

When describing a field, it is important to remember a field is envisioned as a sum of its parts. In other words, a field is characterized by a more general “bird’s eye view” of the professional practices across many programs instead of from the more isolated perspective of individual programs. This is not to say that there are no idiosyncratic programs within the boundaries of a field or that isolated case studies are not useful. It is to say that aggregated data from large samples provides more of a foundation and framework for characterizing a field.

Building the field happens when the purposes, practices, and outcomes of youth media become a base of knowledge for all of the stakeholders involved and for a more general public, and when this base of knowledge can be considered and promoted in terms of its relevance and application to various local youth media contexts. Research and evaluation, along with other related strategies (such as professionalization, networking, and partnerships) need to be vigorously supported to contribute to the growth and circulation of this knowledge base. Reliable and valid evidence is key for building arguments that can be used to reinforce all of the field elements.

Although evaluation is often conducted using established research methods, it is more likely to be used as a more pragmatic and efficient strategy for program improvement, identifying best practices and strategic planning. Both research and evaluation evidence are most useful for field-building when studies can be replicated and when data can be aggregated over many programs over time.

Obstacles and opportunities:

Veteran New York practitioners Diana Coryat from Global Action Project (G.A.P.) and Steve Goodman from Educational Video Center (EVC) identified four capacity-building strategies that are essential to field building: a) peer-to-peer professional development; b) venues for sharing ideas and resources, such

as conferences, clearinghouses, and publications; c) university collaborations; and d) internal and peer-to-peer systems of accountability (Coryat & Goodman, 2004).

An important addition to Coryat and Goodman's list is a research strategy for data collection and analysis. Since field building depends on compelling arguments to move the field forward, the disconnect between evidence and argument is currently a barrier to successful advocacy, sustainability, and growth of youth media programs and projects. Although individual organizations rely on persuasive cases, a strategic research agenda is needed to reconcile and advance the whole field (Tyner, 2008, p. 110). As Fisherkeller has noted:

...youth media organizations and higher education institutions can create partnerships and collaborations, giving faculty and students opportunities to be participant observers, evaluators and co-providers of youth media (see for example, Hull & Schultz, 2002; Fisherkeller, Butler, & Zaslow, 2002; Tyner, 2008, 1998; Seiter, 2005; *Youth Media Reporter*, 2008, Academic Issue). The research emerging from such partnerships is absolutely vital to building the field of youth media, which can only benefit from publications and presentations that analyze and reflect on the best practices, outcomes, and processes of youth media, given the different goals and contexts of youth media implementation and action. At the same time, faculty and students in higher education can connect with the "real worlds" of youth interacting with media and communication, applying various theoretical and methodological perspectives, and ultimately, contributing to the fields of media and communication research (Fisherkeller, in press).

Discussion and suggestions:

Tyner (2008) recommends the following key strategies for youth media research and evaluation, drawing from the fields of media education, educational technology, and "new" media literacy:

- **Statewide inventories of existing media education.** Most state educational agencies would be challenged to present hard data on the number and kind of media production tasks and programs taking place in their states. What is needed is a large sample survey to map the level of commitment and advocacy to youth media in public schools and after-school programs. Partnerships with professional organizations for teachers, school boards, and administrators would strengthen the effort. In addition to qualitative information that can be used to argue for need and impact, quantitative data of this type helps to lay out parameters to define and shape the field.
- **Tracking changes in teacher preparation.** In order to assess new media literacy trends in credentialing programs for prospective teachers, it is useful to identify and describe existing efforts by adding tags and indicators to central state and federal databases. As a crosscutting

activity, media studies of this type would undoubtedly be a multidisciplinary effort. The data could be used to track changes in policy, state standards, and related university requirements over time.

- **Strategic partnerships to share expertise, data, and cross-training.** Research and evaluation undoubtedly stretch the capacity of youth media organizations. However, successful partnerships with universities and research and development firms provide affordable expertise that can be used to plan and implement ongoing data collection. In many cases, tenure-track researchers and graduate students will be happy to work with nonprofits pro bono in order to collect and publish the results. In the process, researchers and practitioners can cross-train as they become stakeholders and advocates for the field. Strategic partnerships build organizational capacity and contribute to the sustainability of community-based organizations by enhancing program quality and increasing a broader spectrum of community involvement. In the process, successful partnerships also attract the interest of donors and volunteers.
- **Collective data collection.** Peer-to-peer networks provide unique opportunities to collect and share data. Ideally, a peer network would come up with common measurement indicators and then aggregate and compare results. Over time, it is useful to establish a cross-program archive for storage and retrieval of evaluation studies related to best practices and lessons learned in the field. Larger, coherent samples of this type are easier to generalize and use to support program improvement, as well as larger policy decisions.
- **Innovative test beds and pilots.** The field has no shortage of innovative programs. Some of these could be used to study experimental ideas related to the design of successful youth media programs. Theories related to pedagogy, medium, audience, and distribution could be built into the research design, isolated, and tested in small pilot programs before opening them up to the field. In other words, this is an opportunity to test the viability of a number of field-building strategies before rolling them out to a larger network of practitioners. For example, the uses of authentic assessment strategies could be demonstrated and studied as an alternative approach for formal educators. When shared with practitioners, promising practices can reverberate throughout the field, resulting in widespread program improvement and innovation.
- **Innovative funding strategies.** Most youth media organizations depend on philanthropy to accomplish their missions. Innovative funding strategies such as tax incentives for media corporations, paid work for young people, and royalties and fees for student-produced work are on the horizon. Implementing new strategies of this type require evidence of cost benefit that can be used by businesses, policymakers, and legislators to refine, shape, and drive funding priorities over time.” (pp. 115-116)

The call: Key leaders in the field of youth media have presented and published consistently about the need for youth media programs and projects to establish rigorous and systematic strategies for research

and evaluation. Reliable evidence about the characteristics and outcomes of youth media is the first step in field-building.

Distribution

Distribution has always been a part of youth media, insofar as we seek to give youth an opportunity not only to tell their stories, but to reach an audience and impact the world².

Up until recently, youth media often relied on cable access TV show or public screenings. Now, with the Internet, it's possible to take distribution to a level beyond geography—not just to a home city, but anywhere in the world. Audience numbers can reach the ten thousands or millions.

It's also increasingly possible for youth media organizations to partner with production and distribution outlets, and, in some cases, earn income from the students' work. (Income would go to students as well as to organizations that provide a context for the work.) These commercial and non-commercial partnerships also push content to larger audiences, provide new perspectives, and work as incentives for younger writers.

At the same time, media in general is in crisis. Newspapers and magazines are closing their doors, and media business models are in flux. Meanwhile, communities that have long been neglected or misrepresented by mainstream media—including youth and people of color—are taking advantage of new technology to tell their own stories.

Obstacles and opportunities:

Youth media has the potential to be at the vanguard of this changing distribution landscape. We can serve as an example of how people can be empowered by media when they are both producers and consumers—using media as a tool for civic engagement, social justice, and creative expression. At the moment, however, it is unclear how youth media can best take advantage of this opportunity.

Second, while media outlets are looking for younger, fresher perspectives to engage a faster-paced news and culture environment, the digital divide is further marking who has access to tell their stories and who does not. The stories of college-educated, politically engaged young people are plentiful, but

² In 2004, the Open Society Institute and the Surdna Foundation released a pioneering study on the field of youth media. Among its findings, the study concluded that one of the biggest challenges facing the field was *distribution*: strategically advancing youth-produced media to audiences outside youth development. Distribution is especially critical to meeting youth media's aims because young people feel a deep sense of purpose when they believe their creation can impact the world (Inouye, et. al, 2004).

the stories of young people in less advantaged places like the inner-city Chicago and Oakland are often relegated to the margins. And, as young people are increasingly able to find audiences without the development, awareness, and empowerment models of many youth media organizations, they are more likely to produce work that may be less critically thought-out.

Finally, while the potential gains in partnering with professional distribution outlets may be great, youth media needs to make sure all the relationships involved are healthy and avoid exploiting students and their work.

Discussion and suggestions: Youth media needs to consider how to make best use of the opportunities to develop and distribute content without losing sight of its other priorities, including social justice and youth development.

As a field, youth media must consider distribution in light of

- Negative stereotypes of young people in mainstream media.
- Social justice, change and media justice.
- Youth development—to reflect youth voice, expression, and leadership.
- Youth leadership—to include young people in distribution strategies.
- Learning of each other's work and gaining visibility within and outside of the field.

The call: Young people are highly motivated to reach an audience, and when they face the challenge of making work that will be seen, they respond with increased creativity and attention to detail. The youth media field has long recognized that the work should not exist in a vacuum, but be promoted and shared in order for young people to have access to technology creation and expression. We can play a critical role in bringing opportunities to both youth and distributors in a way that respects authentic youth voice, the goals of youth development, and the needs and challenges of society at large.

Curriculum

Youth media curricula reflect a range of approaches. While many organizations have responded to this need by creating or adapting their own curricula, as an emerging field we have yet to determine the characteristics of high-quality curricula and how best to deliver and share excellent lessons, programs, materials, and ideas locally and nationally.

Ideally, they are challenging and push people beyond their experiences to new levels of understanding. They are fun, engaging, and spirited; they include opportunities for hands-on work, experimentation, assessment and reflection. Youth media curricula have the opportunity to and frequently do create

space for creativity, both aesthetically and with regard to stories that are not seen or heard in mainstream media—including those of youth in rural settings, low-income youth, immigrant youth, LGBTQ youth, young people with disabilities, young people and young women of color.

Obstacles and opportunities:

In many ways, producing and delivering high-quality curriculum speaks to other elements of field-building. It requires ongoing, targeted professional development to one, help youth media educators generate and implement curricula to reach their intended goals; and two, provide train-the-trainer programming. Professional development that synthesizes craft and analysis with pedagogy and youth development enables educators to identify, experiment with, and reflect on what worked, what did not, and why.

It also requires professional networks. Practitioners and learners must share best practices, knowledge, techniques, and strategies, as well as identify and problem-solve challenges. It is through these conversations that people learn from and push back on each other, expand the possibilities of the field with innovations, and ideally, increase the quality of curricula that young people experience and deserve. Sustained collaborations allow educators to improve practice and develop benchmarks for the field across a diversity of approaches.

Finally, producing and developing high-quality curriculum requires rigorous research that can document and examine trends, practices, methods and outcomes, as well as make recommendations that push the value and impact of our work. Most immediately, research could provide something akin to a literature review of curricula, scanning existing and emerging curricula for common qualities and unique contributions, as well as assessing what is lacking and needs improvement.

Discussion and suggestions:

While youth media and curricula may include a broad range of approaches, we suggest a few key qualities that should always be present:

- A clear framework that makes values and outcomes clear. The purpose of the inquiry is explicit – be it pure expression or learning about the world through a power analysis of gender, race, class, history, etc.
- Activities designed to develop technical, analytical and creative skills that include review of media that exemplify those techniques;
- Activities designed to enhance young people’s comprehension and analysis of media;
- Activities that develop the ethics of story-telling, whereby youth learn to be accountable for the messages they create while discovering the power of their own voices.
- Opportunities for group work, discussion, reflection, research, experimentation and fun.

- Ensure lessons/workshops/activities of the curriculum address high-quality youth development standards of practice that support the emergence new knowledge, self-efficacy, and agency.

The call: The field must collaborate on sharing resources, innovative ideas and lessons learned to ensure the production of high quality curricula. To do that, it is essential that practitioners debate, engage and push-back about their practices and communicate about their methods, outcomes and challenges. By generating new means to dialogue and assess curricula together, curriculum will reflect current thinking and generate new practices for the field to grow stronger.

Professional Development and Networks

Youth media thrives on young people’s stories: their ideas, opinions, journeys and lives. Yet, youth media educators infrequently share stories, to say nothing of best practices and lessons learned. In most of our day-to-day work we remain isolated in our particular programs and organizations, to the determinant of the field at large and, ultimately, of our own work. To sustain and grow youth media, educators perspectives must be documented and share practice and perspectives with one another, with emerging practitioners, with critical friends in academia, and with funders and other stakeholders. Only then will we effectively replicate our work and bring it to scale.

Currently, promising local networks are brewing in Chicago, the Twin Cities, the Bay Area, and New York. In addition, educators sometimes attempt to connect and convene to share knowledge. Growing these networks is vital. We must likewise sustain and further develop resources that enable practitioners to document and share their work.

Obstacles and opportunities:

Many talented youth media educators are working across a range of age groups, media forms, and teaching settings. Despite differences in approach and setting they have critical similarities—e.g., emphasis on hands-on, experiential learning; cultivation of youth voice; presentation of work for public audiences. Youth media educators are eager to build on their connections and to further develop their teaching and learning practice(s). Moreover, educators grow stronger when they engage in a community of reflection, working with peers to examine practice over an extended period of time.

The need for professional networks in our work is especially acute because many youth media educators emerge from professional backgrounds as media producers rather than as formally trained teachers. To compound the issue, professional support for youth media educators within their home organizations or schools is generally limited, or of secondary concern.

Discussion and suggestions:

From the outset, networks can be framed as *communities of practice* in which youth media practitioners come together in person and online to explore critical inquiry, to identify teaching and learning practices, to document these practices, to reflect upon their work, and to share findings within and beyond the community.

In such communities of practice, the practitioners are themselves the experts. This notion is central to community of practice. Just as youth media educators support their young people in seeing themselves as experts in their communities and in their work, we acknowledge the expertise of network participants.

Networks that include skill sharing and professional development will support the youth media field insofar as they allow practitioners to:

- Identify what it is they do in their home practice and share it with one another.
- Reflect together on their work.
- Imagine connectivity that extends beyond a convening, workshop, institute, or other initial face-to-face experience.
- Think beyond the "usual suspects" and identify other community resources.
- Connect established youth media educators to emerging youth media educators—that is, expand the circle.
- Share skills and expertise at the local, regional, and international levels.
- Hold emerging leader retreats with a focus on professional development.
- Develop a framework for best practices based on proven tools and models.
- Create consistency in a national network that connects youth media professionals to real opportunities for networking and professional development, helping define the world of youth media as a sustainable field and career path.

One important note is that a consistent, slow and steady pace works best for building networks. Such a pace demonstrates a mindful sense of our own capacity and enables the greatest possible degree of face-to-face connections.

The call: Opportunities for professional development and networking will yield a set of common principles that highlight the unique strengths of the youth media field; influence future research in, of, and by the field; identify new strategic partners; and demonstrate to a broad audience that media-making is both a critical component of young people's lives and a critical mechanism for defining culture, identity, and representation in the 21st century.

Conclusion

Youth, adults, and young professionals have much to gain from one another and from youth media at large. In order to build upon our best practices and efforts, we must come together and agree on specific strategies that will sustain this important work for years to come. Together, we can grow and position the youth media field to its best advantage at a time when the political and social strength of people under 30 stands to be realized.

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