

Youth Media Learning Network (YMLN)

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Youth Media Fellowship-NYC

2007-2008

Application Deadline: May 25th, 2007

YMLN OVERVIEW

The Youth Media Learning Network (YMLN) is a pilot initiative intended to promote professional development and capacity building for the youth media field on a national scale. The central goals of YMLN are to: strengthen youth media teaching and learning practices; extend the reach of best practices from youth media work; foster communities of reflection for youth media educators; and support the development of sustainable peer learning networks across local regions.

Drawing upon the success of prior youth media field-building efforts and informed by established professional development models and strategies from related fields, YMLN seeks to grow a site-based networking model that links key activities including:

- *Youth Media Fellowships*, to support ongoing professional development for educators and educational leaders within the youth media field.
- *Youth Media Institutes & Workshops*, bringing together youth media educators, youth development professionals, and K-12 teachers to explore promising practices.
- *YMLN Online*, promoting the documentation and sharing of teaching and learning methods and professional development activities related to youth media.

YMLN plans in its pilot phase (through December 2008) to launch professional development activities for youth media educators, afterschool workers, and classroom teachers in multiple regions across the United States, beginning with New York City in July 2007. Additional sites for fellowships and institutes will be announced on a rolling basis throughout the pilot phase as YMLN seeks to build upon existing capacity, to support emerging efforts, and to reflect the rich diversity of the youth media field.

As a pilot initiative, YMLN is a joint project of the Educational Video Center (EVC) and the Education Development Center (EDC), with support from the Open Society Institute and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

YOUTH MEDIA FELLOWSHIP – NYC

YMLN currently seeks applicants from the greater New York City area to participate in the inaugural cohort of the Youth Media Fellowship, a 10-month-long professional development opportunity for youth media educators. In total, up to eight (8) youth media educators from the New York City area will be selected as participants.

The Youth Media Fellowship will offer youth media educators – school teachers, after-school workers, artists-in-residence, and staff of youth media organizations – a rich and unique opportunity to examine closely their work and the work of young people within a diverse and dynamic community of peer practitioners. Fellows will come together in a supported, sustained, and facilitated setting intended to engage them fully as experts from the field, to promote collaborative learning, and to inspire emerging leadership.

Fellows will be further engaged as youth media professionals – through networking activities and opportunities for publication – within the scope of YMLN’s work at the national level. As members of the inaugural cohort of the Youth Media Fellowship, participants will be actively involved in shaping future efforts to build the network and grow the field.

The Youth Media Fellowship is founded upon YMLN’s core belief that young people themselves have critical roles to play in strengthening the practice of youth media education and in building the field. Fellowship activities will honor and reflect this youth-centered approach, and will seek opportunities to engage young people to these ends.

The term of the fellowship will commence with a two-day workshop in July 2007; will continue in biweekly seminar sessions from September 2007 thru April 2008; and will culminate in a public presentation of learning in the spring of 2008. Fellows will be expected to participate in YMLN-sponsored field-building activities beyond the term of the fellowship and may be invited to serve as presenters or co-facilitators for future YMLN Institutes.

YMLN seeks applicants from across New York City. We likewise invite applications from youth media educators residing and working in the greater metropolitan region (e.g., Connecticut, Westchester County, Long Island, New Jersey) who are willing and able to commute for fellowship activities. All are encouraged to apply.

Please note: The New York City fellowship cohort marks the launch of the first phase for a national initiative. YMLN intends to launch up to two additional fellowship cohorts within its pilot phase (through the fall of 2008), in cities or regions yet to be named.

Fellowship Rationale

The Youth Media Fellowship is framed by these core assumptions:

- There are many talented youth media educators working across a range of age groups, media forms, and teaching settings.
- Youth media educators often work in isolation from one another, with limited access to opportunities for engagement beyond their home organizations or schools.
- Despite differences in approach and setting (e.g., serving different age groups; employing different media forms; working in different educational settings), youth media educators have critical similarities (e.g., emphasis on hands-on, experiential learning; cultivation of youth voice; presentation of work for public audiences).
- Many youth media educators emerge from professional backgrounds as media producers rather than as formally trained teachers.
- Professional development for youth media educators within their home organizations or schools is generally limited, or of secondary concern.
- Youth media educators are eager to build upon their strengths as practitioners and to further develop their teaching and learning practice(s).
- Teaching practice grows stronger when educators engage in a community of reflection, working with peers to examine practice over an extended period of time.

Fellowship Program of Study

The central goal of the Youth Media Fellowship is to support a community of reflection for youth media educators. To this end, core activities will promote the close examination – thru reflection, inquiry, and action research – of teaching and learning practices within the context of youth media.

Working together in a facilitated seminar setting, Fellows will look closely at youth-produced work and case studies collected from their home sites. As they process collectively this ‘evidence of teaching and learning’, Fellows will develop critical questions to explore through individual research projects. The fellowship will become a space for practitioners to share ideas, challenges, successes, and methods as they:

- Meet regularly in a facilitated seminar (15 sessions from September ‘07 thru April ‘08) to explore practices related to reflection, inquiry, and action research.
- Conduct research (i.e., gather evidence of learning; document case studies; examine methodologies) intended to inform teaching practice and to promote internal professional development activities at home sites.
- Strengthen their writing and presentation skills with support from facilitators, coaches, and YMLN Advisors, emphasizing the issue of intended audience(s).

- Produce an article or multimedia project for publication, documenting findings from the individual research projects.
- Present their findings in a public setting to a community of peer practitioners.

Each Fellow's individual research project will: focus on pedagogy, i.e. the practice of teaching and learning; draw directly upon one's teaching experience in her/his home site; and allow for deep and sustained study over time.

Examples of potential research projects:

- An afterschool worker who teaches radio production to her youth is concerned that her students need to develop a better understanding of what makes a 'good story'. She asks: How are my students crafting narratives?
- A high school English teacher is struggling to balance literacy development with hands-on media-making in his 9th grade class. He asks: Where do I see evidence of literacy development in my students' documentary production process?
- A media educator in a print-based youth media organization feels her organization has many great programs (on-site and off-site) but that they aren't clearly grounded in a common methodology. She asks: How can I document the core philosophy that informs my teaching, and the strategies that I use to teach?

Fellowship Timeline

2007

July – Fellows Summit

Occurring over 2 full days, to occur between July 9th and August 9th. (The specific dates for the summit will be determined once the cohort has been selected.)

Sept. - Dec. – Seminar Sessions

2008

Jan. - April – Seminar Sessions

Please Note: Each seminar session will be 3 hours in length and will occur on an approximately biweekly basis every other Friday from 9:30am-12:30pm.

April/May – Culminating Event

A public presentation of learning to a community of youth media peers and colleagues from related fields – specific date to be set.

Eligibility Requirements for Fellowship Applicants

- Minimum of 2 years experience teaching youth media in a school, an afterschool program, or a youth media organization.
- Interest in collaborating with other youth media educators in the context of an intensive professional development experience over 10 months of study.
- Support from one's home organization or school to participate in fellowship activities for approximately 6 hours per month, during standard work week hours.
- Commitment to bringing the work home to one's organization or school through reporting on fellowship activities and research progress.
- Commitment to building and supporting the youth media field thru ongoing local and national network activities during and beyond the term of the fellowship.
- Willingness to present one's learning to public audiences thru print publications, in-person presentations, and online activities.

Organizational Commitment & Fellowship Stipend

Each applicant's home organization or school is asked to support the individual's participation in the Youth Media Fellowship by releasing her/him on a paid basis during all scheduled fellowship activities, as outlined in the above timeline.

This total time commitment includes:

- 2 full days in July 2007 for the Fellows Summit
- 6 hours per month split between biweekly seminar sessions from September 2007 thru April 2008.
- 1 full day in April/May 2008 for the culminating event.

Additionally, home sites are asked to acknowledge that fellowship participants will be committing time above and beyond these scheduled meetings, and are asked to consider this in light of the fellow's regular work load. In recognition of this support, YMLN will grant to each fellow's home organization or school an **organizational honorarium** in the amount of **\$1,000**.

During the course of the fellowship, individual fellows will be expected to dedicate considerable time above and beyond both fellowship meeting time and regular work hours, in activities related to their research, study, and writing/production. In recognition of this commitment, YMLN will grant to each fellow an **individual stipend** in the amount of **\$1,500**.

Both the organizational honorarium and the individual stipend will be granted upon completion of the fellowship term.

Application Process

The **application deadline** for the Youth Media Fellowship is **May 25th, 2007**. Each applicant should submit the materials outlined below. All written materials may be submitted electronically by e-mail, and media submissions may be sent as website links.

Application Materials

- Completed Application Form (see attached)
- Responses to 'Short Answer Questions' (see Application Form)
- Personal Statement (see Application Form)
- Professional Resume
- Statement of Support – from the Director or Principal of the applicant's home site
- Letter of Recommendation – from a peer in the field of youth media or education
- Media Sample – of youth-produced work from a class taught by the applicant

YMLN will host a one-hour information session for interested applicants on Friday, May 11th, from 10-11am EDT. Participants may attend in person or join by conference call. For location/calling information and to RSVP, please contact Timothy Dorsey by phone at 212.807.4214.

The completed application (including all of the above materials) should be submitted in full by 5pm EDT on Friday, May 25th, by e-mail to tdorsey@edc.org (with the subject heading 'Youth Media Fellowship Application') OR by mail/delivery to:

Youth Media Learning Network
c/o Education Development Center
96 Morton Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10014
Attn: Timothy Dorsey

The YMLN Fellowship Review Committee (comprised of staff from EVC, EDC, and members of the YMLN Advisory Group) will select finalists, each of whom will be scheduled for an individual interview during the first two weeks of June. Additionally, the Executive Director or Principal of each finalist's home site will be asked to participate in a brief one-to-one phone interview with the YMLN Director, also during the first two weeks of June.

All applicants will be notified about selection decisions by June 15th, 2007.

For more information about the Youth Media Learning Network (YMLN) or the Youth Media Fellowship, please contact Timothy Dorsey at 212.807.4214 or tdorsey@edc.org.

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2007-2008

APPLICATION FORM

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Name:

Organization or School:

Number of Years at this Organization/School:

Professional Contact Information: (mailing address, phone number, e-mail address)

Personal Contact Information: (mailing address, phone number, e-mail address)

Executive Director/Principal's Contact Information: (phone number & e-mail address)

Short-Answer Questions

Please respond briefly to each of the following, in about one paragraph (typed, double-spaced) per prompt.

- 1) Describe your experience as a youth media educator (i.e., years of experience, age of students, organizations/schools worked for, programs/classes taught).
 - 2) Describe your experience as a media maker.
 - 3) Describe an experience you've had in a leadership role.
 - 4) Describe an experience you've had related to professional development that has enriched your work as a youth media educator.
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Personal Statement

Please respond to BOTH of the following prompts, in 1-2 pages (typed, double-spaced) per prompt, and in no more than 4 pages total.

- I. Propose a critical question or issue related to your teaching practice that you would like to study over the course of the fellowship. Explain why this question or issue is important to you and how you might go about exploring it. *Please Note:* The critical question you propose here is not necessarily meant to be *the* question

you'll explore in the fellowship, through your individual research project. Rather this prompt is meant to encourage you to reflect critically on your current teaching practice and to suggest a potential question that is relevant to your work.

- II. Describe the teaching experience that produced the sample of youth-produced work you've submitted with your application. Specifically describe your role throughout the various phases of production and your corresponding approach to teaching youth media.

Submitting Your Application

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