

# **MAKING ART WORK**

## **A LABOUR ARTS MANUAL**

COORDINATED BY INGRID MAYRHOFER

CONTRIBUTIONS BY  
KARL BEVERIDGE  
LORNA BOSCHMAN  
KLYDE BROOX  
CAROLE CONDÉ  
MARIA DUNN  
AIDA JORDÃO  
INGRID MAYRHOFER  
ROCHELLE RUBINSTEIN  
CHECOVALDÉZ



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Coordination and Design: Ingrid Mayrhofer

Cover: Andrew Lochhead

Image Credits:

Colina Maxwell - 3

Dámarys Sepúlveda - 4, 30

Rafael Goldchain - 5

Aida Jordão - 11, 68, 82

The Print Studio - 14, 16, 37, 86

Anne Gillespie - 17

Carole Condé/Karl Beveridge - 20, 58,  
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Chris Tanner - 26

Ian Walker - 32

Ingrid Mayrhofer - 34, 76, 104, 147

Sady Ducros - 36

Jeff Bush - 74, 94, 95

Janice Bennik - 101

Sally Frater - 110, 131

Sean Mapp - 115, 117

Shelley Niro - 135

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WORKERS' ART AND HERITAGE CENTRE  
51 STUART STREET  
HAMILTON, ONTARIO,  
L8L 1B5, CANADA

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## FORWARD

Over the course of the production of *Making Art Work: A Labour Arts Manual*, I have been struck time and again by the remarkable history of the labour arts movement and the range of practitioners currently at work today in Canada and internationally.

As we enter a new decade and another economic downturn, labour art remains relevant and is perhaps even more urgently needed than ever before. By its nature, labour art constitutes an inherent critique of the status quo. Labour art practice imparts a sense of empowerment in each undertaking. Such empowerment through community action could never be more timely. When the global stakes are so high, inaction/silence is not a responsible option. *Making Art Work* explores ways to get involved through diverse approaches – and provides an interdisciplinary context for practitioners and for the general public.

*Making Art Work* has provided me with the opportunity to get to know the manual's Co-ordinator Ingrid Mayrhofer – and to be reminded of the commitment and quality of labour artists at work today. WAHC salutes those nine participating artists, Karl Beveridge, Lorna Boschman, Klyde Broox, Carol Condé, Maria Dunn, Ingrid Mayrhofer, Rochelle Rubinstein, and Checovaldéz and the three workshop artists Adrian Rumbaut, Peter Karuna and Brian Kelly.

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Dr. Elizabeth McLuhan  
Executive Director,  
Workers Arts and Heritage Centre

# INTRODUCTION

## EDITOR'S NOTES

Ingrid Mayrhofer

This manual is intended as a practical tool for artists who work in collaboration with labour/community members. The examples of projects, strategies, work plans and exercises represent a wide range of disciplines, issues and methodologies. Labour arts is a practice of activism. Whether we work on a call to action and protest, an affirmation of workers' dignity, identity and achievements, or simply a celebration of our lives, labour arts is constantly evolving. At the centre of arts and labour collaboration are shared struggles, common goals and a spirit of solidarity. The compilation of examples in this 'kit' is not intended to function as a list of 'models' or 'best practices.' The projects simply offer a few ideas and tools, and confirm that creative collaboration is mutually educational, rewarding and empowering.

**... THE CREATIVE  
PROCESS IS CONSIDERED  
EQUALLY IMPORTANT  
AS THE OUTCOME,  
AND COLLABORATION  
IS INHERENT TO BOTH  
PROCESS AND RESULT...**

Each project featured as a 'case study' involved one or more professional artists working with participants who brought many different skills, insights, experiences, issues and interests to the partnership. The work plans and illustrations are informed by principles of community art practice, where the creative process is considered equally important as the outcome, and collaboration is inherent to both process and result. Also inherent to the collaborative process is the confluence of diverse cultures, different skills, interests and experiences, goals and (at times unknown) agendas. Sharing with and learning from each other enriches the experience of all participants. The lines between artist and audience blur and the barriers to appreciation and understanding of art and artist fade away as participants gain access to the tools and methods of making images, writing, performing, and presenting their own contribution to

a group project. Taking pride in our creativity is an inevitable part of the process. The affirmation of our experience, and the recognition of our concerns, lie in our joint voices and in the marks we make together. The artist's 'signature' is not erased in this collaborative process; it is underlined by the names of all participants. The artist has as much to gain as the non-artist. The more we understand how something works, how it came to be, the better we appreciate the professionals in the field.

Although the manual's primary purpose is to serve as a tool for labour-arts projects, artists and participants will identify with other communities, be they based in ethno/cultural origin, geographic location, trade or professional affiliation, or communities of shared experience or interest. As the 2009 UFCW Mayworks dedication states, identification of artist or worker is not mutually exclusive. "Decent jobs provide security and freedom for creativity. Solidarity amongst workers and artists fosters social justice."<sup>1</sup> Labour arts practitioners are cultural workers whether their primary source of income comes directly from their artistic work or from other labour.

Karl Beveridge and Carole Condé challenged the perceived gap between artists and workers when

<sup>1</sup> Wayne Hanley, National President, UFCW, Mayworks Festival Programme, 2009

they were part of the Community Arts Group at A Space in 1987. "Because we are artists, working on our own initiative, with all that aura of personal creativity and freedom, we don't experience 'alienated labour,' critics and especially peers in the arts community say. It is true that as artists we

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have some control over what we do, that we get a lot of satisfaction out of the 'creative' aspect of our work, and that arts management keeps a polite distance: arm's length, so to speak. Our work isn't supervised; we don't have

someone looking over our shoulders. But that does not mean that art is something special. For one thing, our product—artwork—is more often than not considered socially frivolous and useless, a 'frill' in society's scheme of things, traditionally a hobby of the rich. From this point of view, it is intensely alienated."<sup>2</sup>

As a 'labour arts manual,' this handbook places labour issues at its centre. Beyond the values of

<sup>2</sup> Art and Community, 1987, Community Arts Group, A Space, Toronto, p 10/11

community building that are inherent to community art practice, the goals, struggles and achievements of labour—a community of workers<sup>3</sup>—contribute the creative spirit of solidarity to the artistic process.



My personal motivation for compiling a community/collaboration tool kit can be summarized in a dialectical anecdote that evolved over the course of more than thirty years. I first began working in community arts in the late seventies. In the context of the solidarity movement at the time, the concept of 'cultural workshops' arose from activism and popular education in the grassroots political movements under post-colonial military dictatorships, especially those in Latin America. Exiles and refugees brought with them facilitation skills, arts training, an interdisciplinary and inclusive approach to cultural activities, and the broad framework of political 'praxis'. The primary objective of their organizing efforts was to engage in participatory research on the conditions



requiring change in their home countries—human rights abuses; reprisals against unionists, students and political opponents; atrocities such as illegal detentions, disappearances and executions committed by oppressive forces propped up by the U.S.—in order to raise awareness and support among Canadians. Issues affecting exiles, refugees and immigrants here in Canada soon surfaced in workshop productions, as solidarity groups joined the larger movement for social justice.

Working in the solidarity groups, exiled artists and intellectuals would assume artistic and political direction of plays, concerts, readings, poster, t-shirt production and other events. Cross-cultural collaboration was inherent to the process as each member brought different skills, and contributed according to

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<sup>3</sup> As defined by Lindsay Hinshelwood, CAW local 707, Oakville, in conversation with the author.



her/his ability. Concerts and dance performances were part of every conference or speakers tour. Everyone had a role to play in planning and production, and I met many prominent musicians and writers simply by working on events with a solidarity committee. It became evident very soon that those cultural events had the power to bring together different political factions, albeit momentarily, as militants would set aside their parties' disagreements and form coalitions in order to host a musical group or writer touring from Europe or another Latin American country.

With the Nicaraguan revolution in 1979, a new era of social and political change brought new opportunities for popular education. The Sandinistas immediately recruited artists to work on campaigns for literacy and health education. In 1985, as a foreigner with a small grant from York University, I was delighted to be accepted into poet/priest/Minister of Culture Ernesto Cardenal's volunteer corps to teach drawing at the national art school in the capital, and to be on call for all sorts of tasks at the popular cultural centres throughout the country.

It was during my first year at the art school in Managua that I came across a dilemma that prevails

in the political activist and labour arts environment to this day. In May 1985 I met Dámarys Sepúlveda, a talented and energetic young Nicaraguan painter who had recently returned from a scholarship program in Spain, and I was eager to show off my achievements with the community to her.



However, she wasn't at all keen to get involved, suggesting that it was fine for foreigners to be romantic about teaching remote villagers to make posters and t-shirts. As a member of the Sandinista youth she had worked on the literacy campaign, but became disillusioned when "all they wanted from artists was that we paint their banners for them."

Eventually, we taught workshops together in such remote places as Ocotol where we spent two

weeks with young offenders. We even worked with children and youth who painted a mural in her home-town, Masatepe's popular cultural centre. The initial resistance from the centre's director confirmed my colleague's experience. The Ministry of Culture had been delighted to have us



teach, they would have approved immediately if we had proposed to paint a revolutionary mural<sup>4</sup>, but they did not believe that the children could create relevant imagery, nor could they imagine that the outcome would have artistic merit. In the process,

<sup>4</sup> Many murals painted by foreigners (or Sandalistas as the Nicaraguans sometimes referred to us) lacked artistic merit and failed to engage the community members in the process.

we all learned something about collaboration. The children drew and painted what they considered important in their lives. From farming to the ferris wheel, they put it all on the wall. As the lead artists, we guided the project, answered questions, mixed colours, taught techniques, and submitted sketches to the ministry for approval. The final proof of how relevant the mural had been to the community came with the end of Sandinista Nicaragua in 1990, when the U.S.-backed conservative government ordered all revolutionary murals destroyed. Our little mural was one of the first to be painted over in institutional grey, even though the only revolutionary symbol was a tiny red and black flag.

My second immersion in real tension between artists and the people who stood to benefit from our services involved a group of local artists/activists, two guest artists (master mural painters) and two union representatives who all came together to create a mural in Toronto in the early nineties. The concept was to paint an image of unity in struggle for First Nations and labour rights, and to respond to NAFTA negotiations. As the staff coordinator at the arts organization that hosted the project, I was called on to mediate when things did not go as planned. What had

gone wrong was not simply the result of bad planning and a lack of communication, but the fact that no real collaboration took place among the three factions. After the initial enthusiasm had worn off, by the fourth day into the project, the local group of four artists worked well together, but felt slighted by the star guest artists, and the union rep, who had not participated in previous discussions or brainstorming, came in to request changes to the imagery. Eventually, the problems worked themselves out. Looking at the mural now, we have the legacy of artistic and political tension—some bitter tears and many bitter words—all resolved in its pictorial unity.

An even heavier blow to my idealistic art/activism world was delivered by an anti-racism activist a few years later. During a discussion on art and activism, one of the panelists stated out front that he “simply did not trust artists.” Turns out, artists want to do things their own way, and don’t tow the party line! Had it not been for a final heuristic moment during the same event, we could have come full vicious circle back to the statement by the Nicaraguan artist who felt exploited by revolutionary politics ten years earlier. In his presentation on the panel, Brian Wright McLeod<sup>5</sup> tackled false consciousness

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<sup>5</sup> Native music producer and CKLN radio host of Renegade Radio.

head on when he observed that there were times when he felt compelled to act against the wishes of his community in order to effect change for the better.

For labour arts animators, these are the challenges we face: to bring together people who will initially resist our efforts; to visualize, act or sound out issues that some people don’t want to talk about; to get messages across to those who’d rather you just shut up about it. Artists and unionists, like the activist and artist in my own experience, may not identify with each other’s struggles, they may mistrust you, they may not trust their own peers, sisters or brothers. We are all too often overwhelmed by the conflicts that divide and rule us—race, gender and class foremost among them<sup>6</sup>. By joining the larger community of workers, artists benefit from being part of a collective experience that will enrich their practice. The divide between art and work is one of the myths that perpetuate class prejudice as demonstrated by the recent

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<sup>6</sup> Ontario’s human rights code states that “Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to services, goods and facilities, without discrimination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status or disability.” Class is mentioned only in regards to discrimination in access to housing based on “receipt of public assistance.”

announcement from our prime minister.<sup>7</sup> His comments illustrate how difficult it is for the superstructure to change. Not only has physical labour always been essential to the creation of the work of art, most artists hold down other jobs in order to survive. Survey after survey provide statistics about the lack of a living wage for artists across Canada—dancers being the lowest paid of all at an average 16K/annum.<sup>8</sup>



Just like the mythological birth of the Venus, the idea that art is not work persists independently from the rise of the “creative class.” And, there is a kernel of truth in the assumption that artists work for love, because we are driven by our vocation, an issue that The Print Studio explored in collaboration with Health Care Workers at the Juravinski Cancer Centre in Hamilton.<sup>9</sup>

While the rewards of collective culture building can only be measured in the long term, as artists and animators we find ourselves working long hours on insufficient funds. Grants rarely compensate artists for all the administrative chores, and non-arts partners may not pay participants for their time. Union members who worked a long shift may not feel like cutting out shapes for a collage, writing verses or even talking about the issues that affect their working lives. Race, gender, environmental issues challenge the mode of production that puts

<sup>7</sup> “I think when ordinary working people come home, turn on the TV and see a gala of a bunch of people at, you know, a rich gala all subsidized by taxpayers claiming their subsidies aren’t high enough, when they know those subsidies have actually gone up – I’m not sure that’s something that resonates with ordinary people,” Harper said in Saskatoon, where he was campaigning for the Oct. 14, 2008 election. (The Star, Globe and Mail, September 24, 2008)

<sup>8</sup> [www.artsresearchmonitor.com/](http://www.artsresearchmonitor.com/)

<sup>9</sup> see Project Summaries, II Visual Art

food on their tables. New problems arise during negotiations and layoffs. Workers' shifts could change, and the production might have to move from the studio to a picket line. Funders may have a hard time with bad press about your project inciting insurrection,<sup>10</sup> and a municipality may revoke the permit to use public space, or garbage trucks, as in the case of a collaboration between CUPE 416, Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA) and artist Grace Channer in 2001.<sup>11</sup>

If there is a key to success, it lies somewhere between focus, determination and flexibility. Labour artists by nature are activists, and as such we are driven by our commitment to make a difference. As an art student, I was greatly motivated by the words of my printmaking teacher, Eugenio Tellez, who said that "when you really have something to say, you will find a way." His studio critiques opened a space for political discourse and activism. Eugenio engaged students in solidarity activities and we organized many events to "raise consciousness,"

<sup>10</sup> A theatre project funded by the Ontario Arts Council's Artists in the Community/Workplace (AIC/W) program, was performed by union members at the Quebec Summit protest and drew the ire of a conservative MPP.

<sup>11</sup> [www.robinpacific.ca/publications/revolution.swf](http://www.robinpacific.ca/publications/revolution.swf)  
laidlaw foundation annual report 2000.

and collected art supplies for Nicaragua.

Beyond the goals of participatory research and cross-cultural interdisciplinary collaboration, labour arts projects empower workers to tell their own stories, to represent themselves, and to direct their creative energy. The comment by a brother from CAW Local 444 in Windsor challenges the essentialist notion that workers' art has to depict workers or the workplace: "After an eight hour shift I really don't want to look at another car part." His choice to have artworks in his home, he said, was intended to balance the lack of beauty in the plant. This notion resonates with advice attributed to 19th-century Arts and Crafts designer William Morris (1834–1896), "Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful." Morris, like other 19<sup>th</sup> century socialists, responded to the ugliness of industrial capitalism. He introduced the idea of an aesthetic that serves a purpose and would be accessible to all members of society.

Labour arts practice offers the tools for workers and artists to define the shape, form, sound, image and message of an aesthetic that works for us. Instead of the linear model applied in policy



development, or the vicious circle of artists living in the simulation of an ivory tower,<sup>12</sup> we can visualize labour arts as a multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary spiral, where experience and theory inform the evolution of our practice.

Che Guevara advised that, "it is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolution exist; the insurrection can create them."<sup>13</sup> In the song "Cantares" Joan Manuel Serrat adds the voice of the poet: "Caminante no hay camino, se hace camino al andar...golpe a golpe, verso a verso" (Traveller, there is no path, you make the path by walking... blow by blow, verse by verse). The ongoing development of a process that leads to a collective outcome is the walking 'theory' of community art practice. This manual contains a few bundles for along the road, but you have to lace up your own boots, and get going.



<sup>12</sup> Introvert artist only wants to make his own art in isolation, blames everyone else for not appreciating him, perpetuates the myth waiting for fame and fortune...

<sup>13</sup> 1961, Guerrilla Warfare.

## PROJECT SUMMARIES

**THE FOLLOWING SAMPLE PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS  
WERE CONTRIBUTED BY PRACTITIONERS:**

The seven examples in this section summarize projects in different disciplines and media—theatre, visual art, music, photo-montage, multi-arts and mural arts.

In some cases, the number of participants, location for production and presentation are specific to the nature of the discipline, or to the make-up of the group. Other projects could have worked equally well with more or fewer people, in a different discipline, or at an ad-hoc location such as a picket line or protest.

The participants' own skills and interests may determine which artform is the most suitable. The animator/facilitator may need to bring in other artists, as in Red Tree's Simcoe Project, which started as self-representation in photography and ended up multi-disciplinary. Checovaldéz has developed an amazingly flexible approach to integrate new or casual participants.

It will become evident in the step-by-step accounts following the summaries how your planning process takes care of those details.

## ***JOE, JOHN AND JACK: SAFETY AT WORK, 2000***



### **Artist/Facilitator:**

Aida Jordão

### **Community Group:**

Society of Portuguese Disabled Persons of Ontario

### **Coordinator:**

Isaura Carneiro

### **Participants:**

small group of injured/disabled workers and volunteers, including Maria Almeida, Luís Brasil, Néria Correia, Ana Furtado, António Oliveira, Evangelina Venâncio, Evelino Vieira, Leonilde Vieira



**Story:**

a play about the disastrous consequences of ignoring safety standards on the construction site

**Partners:**

supported by a grant from the Ontario Arts Council's Artists in the Community/Workplace program

**Materials:**

Sets, props, costumes

**Skills:**

creating dramatic script, acting

**Location (production/process):**

Community Centre, could be school or union hall

**Duration:**

eight months, from September 1999 to May 2000

**Presentation:**

the play was performed twice at community centres  
video documentation of the production was part of CAB 2000, a community arts festival organized by A Space Gallery in Toronto

From September 1999 to May 2000, I worked with the Society of Portuguese Disabled Persons of Ontario to create two short plays about independence and workplace safety.

The secretary of the Society (an old friend) contacted me and we discussed applying for an Ontario Arts Council “Artist in the Community/Workplace” grant to fund a popular theatre project. We were awarded \$6100 for artist fees and production costs. The Society would provide participants, space, and most of the transportation costs.

As part of the Society’s outreach and education programming, we performed the plays at community centres and participated in Mayworks and CAB 2000. The project outline tracks our process from initial group-building and getting-to-know-you sessions, through storytelling and improvisation, to rehearsals and performance. We met two to four times a month in the fall to generate material and write the script, took a break over Christmas, rehearsed once a week from January to April and performed “José, João e Joaquim: Segurança no Trabalho / Joe, John and Jack: Safety at Work” and “Ser Independente / Being Independent” in April and May. The language of the project was Portuguese. As much as possible, I have used plans and notes from my project logbook to outline our process.

Some of the ongoing challenges of working with this group were:

- attendance made difficult by accessibility (transportation) issues
- the internal problems of the organization impacted on the theatre group
- language and literacy
- project coordination

Some of the joys were:

- the resilience and flexibility of the participants
- the laughter
- women playing men and loving it
- shared stories of overcoming obstacles

# VISUAL ART

PRINTMAKING, PHOTOGRAPHY, MIXED MEDIA

## ***PARADOX OF THE VOCATION***

### **Artists/Facilitator:**

The Print Studio/  
Rochelle Rubinstein  
Ingrid Mayrhofer  
Amelia Jiménez

### **Group/Community/Local:**

Health workers at the Juravinsky  
Cancer Centre including nurses, a  
physician, a librarian, a receptionist,  
technicians, social workers,  
a therapeutic clown



### **Participants:**

small group of ten  
Dr. Michele Bertothy, Shirley Routliffe, Wendy Bursey, Elizabeth Obermeyer Kostash, Marilyn  
Evanic, Shirley Freeman, Nancy-Lynn Ross, Michelle Laurette, Donna Blake, Janet Poirier

### **Partners:**

The Juravinsky Cancer Centre/The Print Studio, supported by the Ontario Arts Council,  
Canada Council for the Arts

### **Materials/Equipment:**

print making: softoleum printing blocks, ink, carving tools, pencils, rollers, paper, fabric  
objects 'found' in the work place

photography: disposable cameras, matte board/foam core, glue sticks, magazines, papers  
mixed media: digital camera/computer/printer, stencil and tracing papers, dry pigment, magazines, found objects and textures

**Skills:**

-none required, but participants brought varying levels of skills and interest in visual art

**Location (production/process):**

-staff lounge at the cancer centre, access to a sink

**Duration:**

-production workshop format - each artist led five consecutive sessions of three hours

**Output:**

Greeting Cards, Accordion Books, Collages, Portraits, Panoramas and Photo-Montages

**Presentation:**

-collaborative curatorial workshop for selection of work, organizing display, defining text for promotion and description of works displayed in the Cancer Center's Hummingbird Café and at The Print Studio

**Story:**

***PARADOX OF THE VOCATION*** links concerns of health workers with concerns of artists. Both professions share the phenomenon of a calling. Artists, like healthcare staff, are intricately connected to their work. Images created by the cancer centre staff demonstrate that for health care workers—whether they are doctors, chemo suite nurses or clerical staff—the faces of patients are part of their own portraits. Sense of identity is wrapped up in the artist's studio practice, and for community arts practitioners, the studio is wherever they take it. It is difficult to separate the role of artist/nurse/doctor from the individual. While health care workers are legislated essential — Ontario nurses, for example, do not have the right to strike, and the federal Conservatives have declared artists as "frivolous." Both are seen as following a calling and working for the love of it. Paradox of the Vocation was

initiated and coordinated by THE PRINT STUDIO in Hamilton, and brought together three artists (Rochelle Rubinstein, Ingrid Mayrhofer and Amelia Jiménez)

Collaborative text in the accordion book:

Awaiting. Waiting.  
Waiting to take a breath when waiting for results of test.  
Feeling that you must hold your breath.  
The exhalation becomes a butterfly.  
Take everything away.  
Or start of new journey.  
The chair.  
Waiting for treatment.  
Or has treatment stopped?  
Sunrise. Sunset. Half moon.  
Chocolate or vanilla.  
Looking out the window.  
Waiting for morning. Nights can be long.  
Always better when sun comes up.  
One day at a time.  
Harmony of the firmament.  
Holistic. The hand.  
So nice to hold your hand for a minute.  
I miss that touch. Reaching out.  
Your hand feels warm.  
Big enough to help and to hold.  
All that hands do.  
The gentleness of practitioner's hands.  
Waiting. Faceless clock.  
Time feels endless. Losing track of time.  
Will I be the one?  
Make time. Make love. Make peace.



## ***KNOW YOUR RIGHTS***

### **Artists/Facilitators:**

Maria Dunn/Pedro Rodriguez/Kevin Flaherty

### **Community Partners:**

Alberta Workers' Health Centre  
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

### **Participants:**

- a diverse group of immigrant workers who are taking English classes
- participants could be any group of workers with a focus on the issue of health and safety in their workplace
- the actual story sharing / lyric writing is best done in small groups (4-5 people), so that all participants have the opportunity to share their stories and give input on the lyric writing; the results can be shared with a larger group (20 - 25 people); works best if there are several facilitators to help each group

### **Equipment/Materials:**

Flip charts, chalkboard, paper, markers; we also showed them a video piece that had inspired the initial song, so A/V equipment such as computer, projector and screen were used (but not necessary for the greater project)

### **Skills:**

Music (lyrics, melody, rhythm); language skills, ESOL, role-playing  
- building trust with the group (icebreakers: where are you from, what work do you do, etc.)



- small groups: story sharing of possible dangers / injuries in each person's work place
- participants rewriting English language lyrics (to reflect participants' stories) to a provided melody and rhythm

**Location (production/process):**

ESOL class room at community centre,  
could be adapted to picket line or at a union local to respond to a specific issue or strike

**Duration:**

2 sessions of approximately 2 hrs each

- continuity with the whole group would be ideal, but the nature of adult evening ESOL (ESL) classes is that there is a high turnover from one scheduled class to the next; we had about one third turnover between our two sessions (one week apart).  
If it had been an entirely new set of participants, the trust building and story sharing from the first session would have been lost and the second session would not have worked well.

**The main objectives:**

- allow immigrant workers to share their stories about the workplace
- give immigrant workers information about:
  - their rights in the workplace
  - how to contact AWHC for more information
  - how to report workplace rights violations

This work was part of a series of workshops for the Alberta Workers' Health Centre, a non-profit health and safety centre in Edmonton, Alberta. With funding from the Alberta Law Foundation, the Centre wanted to explore and evaluate different ways (theatre and music/songwriting) of reaching ESOL workers with information about their rights to a safe and healthy workplace. These two workshops followed another two workshops which explored the issues related to using popular theatre to reach the same goals. The specific workshop goals were quite narrow - conveying information about legal rights to know the hazards on any job and the legal right to refuse imminent danger on the job. Of course we sought to explore and document potential impediments faced by these workers.

**Collective Lyrics written by the participants:**

**I'm standing in the laundry line – go fast, go fast, go fast  
Can't move, can't talk to anyone – go fast, go fast, go fast  
Sometimes the dust gets in my face – go fast, go fast, go fast  
I can't sleep, I'm so in pain – go fast, go fast, go fast**

**What stops us from speaking out – speak out, speak out, speak out  
No knowledge of the safety rules – speak out, speak out, speak out  
False promises they gave to us– speak out, speak out, speak out  
I'm afraid of getting fired – shut up, shut up, shut up**

**Listen, we have things to say – us too, us too, us too  
Fix it, change it, make it safe – us too, us too, us too  
Protect ourselves, our future too – us too, us too, us too  
We're human, make it easier – we want to talk to you  
We want to talk to you  
We want to talk to you**



# PHOTO MONTAGE

*ILL WIND, 2001*



**Artists/Facilitators:**

Carole Condé/Karl Beveridge

**Local:**

Canadian Union of Public Employees

**Collaborating Artist:**

Aida Jordão

**Participants:**

small group of different skilled trades people in health sector, Ontario

**Materials:**

-sets, photographic supplies and equipment - 4x5 camera, lighting

**Skills:**

-storytelling, workshop participation, acting for still camera

Location (production/process):

-workshops: in several union halls

-sets, photo shoots and post-production: at artists' studio

**Duration:**

-each group of participants took part in a 3-hour workshop and 2-hour photographic session

**Presentation:**

-exhibition at workplace, art gallery, billboard could be temporary, permanent or mobile (i.e. at demonstration, on picket line, in parade), publication in book or periodical, as well as poster format

**Story:**

Given the relative security public sector workers enjoy, compared to their private sector counterparts, a project with health care workers in Canada offered an opportunity for Condé and Beveridge to involve the workers more fully. The artists conducted a series of

visual workshops in which health care workers acted out images based on the stories they told. In the series, *Ill Wind*, the members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) portray their own stories about the current crisis in the Canadian health care system.

*ILL WIND* was produced in two stages. The first stage involved a series of workshops with health care workers in Ontario that used techniques from Forum Theatre with the assistance of actor and director Aida Jordão. Workshops were held in Kingston (kitchen staff), Guelph (home care workers), Hamilton (maintenance and clerical staff) and two separate workshops in Oshawa (clerical staff and nursing assistants). Through a set of theatrical exercises, the workers dramatized both the work they do and their concerns about their jobs. From the image ideas gathered at the workshops a series of five photographic concepts - one for each workshop - was developed. These concepts were then discussed and finalized with the workers. The underlying theme, expressed in different ways, was their frustration and anger over not being able to provide the care their patients needed and the stress they experience by the rising demands of the job.

The second stage involved the photographing of the final images. Two members from each of the workshops were invited to act as themselves in the images, along with actors who played the patients and management. The set was a seamless backdrop, tinted 'institutional' green, with minimal props. This would allow a viewer to focus on the workers, as well as referencing a corporate hospital environment.

# MULTI DISCIPLINARY

## PROJECT SUMMARIES

### ***THE SIMCOE PROJECT*** ***(WORKING TITLE FOR ONGOING WORK)***

#### **Artists/Facilitators:**

Red Tree Artists' Collective members and guest artists  
Nery Espinoza, Sally Frater, Ingrid Mayrhofer, Klyde Broox, Amelia Jiménez, Beatriz Pizano

#### **Community:**

UFCW Support Centre in Simcoe

#### **Participants in 2008:**

core group and drop-in  
Participating Agricultural Workers from Mexico and Trinidad: Marcelo Pérez Saldívar, Nigel Espinosa, Felipe Díaz, Fernando Pichardo, Paola Gamoneda Huerta, Pedro Castro Vigeras, Juan Albornos Hernández, Juan Nelson Escalante Baas, Gaspar Ramírez, Ramírez, Mireya Alejandra López Paredes, Mayolo Hernández Mendoza, Daniel Pérez Quiróz, Gaspar Mejía Olvera, Esteban Sánchez N., Augustus Lewis, Adrián René Aguilar Ibáñez, Máximo Ortiz Hernández, Carlos García Pérez, Enrique Morales Morales, Delfino Provisor Pérez, Roberto Moreno Rincón, Eduardo Hilario Martínez Martínez, Hilario Soza Babadillo, Pablo Gonzalez Gonzalez, Isaac Hernández Sebastian, Jesús Cabrera, Pedro Cordero, Julio Villegas, Sixto Mungía, Vicente Altamirano

#### **Challenges to Participation:**

irregular and long hours of work on the farms, distance from centre with no access to transportation



**Partners:**

Funded by OAC-AIC/W, Canada Council for the Arts, and the United Food and Commercial Workers

**Materials/Equipment:**

- print making: styrofoam plates, water-based ink, pens, pencils, rollers, wooden spoon, paper
- photography: disposable cameras
- mixed media: magazines, photographs, glue sticks, colour pencils, paper or card
- poetry: computer/projector
- theatre: props - picture frames, pretend objects, chairs

**Skills:**

- cross-cultural communication, Spanish/English

**Location (production/process):**

- workers support centre
- housing on farms

**Duration:**

irregular schedule, weekly or by prior arrangement  
1 - 2 hrs on Thursday or Friday evenings, 2 - 3 hrs on Sunday afternoon

**Output:**

Phase I: Photographic Exhibition of images taken by the farm workers  
Phase II: Collaborative poem, skits and mixed media works

**Presentation:**

Phase I: Exhibitions at the Norfolk Arts Centre, Simcoe, Toronto Mayworks, Hamilton Labour Day  
Phase II: Publication

**Story:**

Migrant farm workers in the Simcoe area of Norfolk County spend an average of eight months every year away from their families in order to provide for them. Language, culture and racism add to long working days on isolated farms as factors that exclude the workers from the host community. Contracts are developed between the Canadian government

and participating countries, resulting in differences in living and working conditions, and contributing to divisions among workers along ethnicity. The minority of women workers experience further hardships and discrimination. Hoping to offer Canadians a better understanding of their culture, the workers shared images of their homes in Trinidad and Mexico as part of the touring exhibition of their photographs.  
see <http://www.redtreecollective.ca> for more information

### **BAJO UN SÓLO CIELO/UNDER A SINGLE SKY**

Amigos y hermanos/Friends and brothers  
la vida es pasajera/life goes by  
Que viene y se va/As it comes, so it goes  
Pero, amor eterno/But love is eternal  
Es como el mar y cielo/Like sea and sky  
Vive intensamente cada instante/Live each moment intensely  
Porque la vida va adelante/Because life moves ahead  
y por más que camines, la muerte va detrás/no matter where you go, death follows behind  
Sé feliz con lo que tienes y deja vivir/Be happy with what you have and let life be  
Lucha con todas tu fuerzas para conseguirlo/Fight with everything you have to get what you  
want  
Tienes alma, mente y corazón/You have soul, mind and heart  
No dejes nada a la deriva/Don't let them wander  
Porque el espíritu es la fuerza que guía/Because the spirit is the strength that guides  
Bajo un sólo cielo/Under a single sky

-written by Marcelo, Mireya, Paola, Adrián, Gaspar & Klyde

## FILM/VIDEO

### ***THIS ABILITY MEDIA CLUB, 2008***

#### **Artist/Facilitator:**

Lorna Boschman

-led workshops and was technical advisor to the learners  
Chris Tanner  
-worked as the liaison for BACI

#### **Partners:**

Burnaby Association for  
Community Inclusion (BACI) and  
the Pacific Region National Film  
Board of Canada



#### **Participants:**

Small group of adult “self-advocates” (a designation that many people with developmental disabilities prefer) and occasionally, visitors, trainers and caregivers

#### **Equipment:**

Digital video camera, tripod, microphone

#### **Skills:**

Learning to direct a video, learning public speaking

#### **Location (production/process):**

The project took place at the Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion (BACI) but the process of community engaged media production could be undertaken at any location, indoors or outdoors.

**Duration:**

The group met weekly for two years. Media creation can be time consuming. Some members of the group might film an activity, like picket line, meeting or event. Other members of the group might be active in the editing process.

**Output:**

Group members created six short videos which are available online through CitizenShift at <http://citizen.nfb.ca/ability>

A half hour documentary about the making of the project called This Ability (Tracy Friesen producer, Lorna Boschman director) is available at public libraries.

**Presentation:**

Has been used during orientation for new employees at BACI  
Audio/visual recording/playback

**Story:**

It was crucial to the group formation to have an organization like BACI which nurtured the group and was connected with the community of participants. The NFB contributed to the project by funding a part-time program director, by lending the video production equipment, and by providing guidance (especially from producer Tracey Friesen) in building strong stories. We began meeting once a week for 90 minutes. Many of the self-advocates had previously worked on a form of oral history project called "scrapbooking." We took photos in class and began to practice shooting with the video camera. The class photos were cut out and collaged in the scrapbook, sometimes accompanied by written comments by the members.

During the first six months, we worked on helping members of the group to begin to think of themselves as directors and writers, as people who had the opportunity to tell stories through the medium of video. Self-advocates began to shoot video during the week outside



the group; they brought the footage back for others to view and give comments. Media Club members wrote notes and made drawings during the weekly sessions; their notes were stored in folders at BACI and brought out weekly for the group. Realizing that part of becoming a director was being called a director, individual letterhead was designed for each member of the group, with their name and title as director. Group sessions and feedback from group members were vital to creating an open space where ideas could be discussed and work could be critiqued.

Although the group began with an open mandate to create their own stories in any medium, after six months the focus shifted to individual projects that told personal stories. The group was open to participants with any level of skills and abilities. Members who had already learned to use the camera equipment taught newer members how to set up the tripod and start the camera. Several self-advocates did not develop the skills to operate the equipment but participated through their presence. On several occasions, interpersonal conflicts between group members disrupted the unity of the group but we were able to accept those incidents as part of the creative process and move on.

When the videos were completed, group members began to show them at community living conferences as well as local events. We practiced public presentation skills within the group, each presenter developing a short introduction to their video. BACI asked several self-advocates from the group to show their films as part of the orientation process for new staff; another member of the group was asked to be part of panel discussions after the release of his video. Gerry Juzenas, a self-advocate member of the group and the vice-president of BACI, was asked to assist another group who were setting up a video program to help self-advocates to find their voice. Although the time commitment was considerable, for the participants and sponsoring organization, the project was considered a success. BACI honoured the directors with a "red carpet" event, handing out "Oscars" at a well-attended launch.

**THE PROCESS OF  
DISCUSSION, SHARING  
AND LEARNING  
REQUIRES AN  
ENVIRONMENT OF  
MUTUAL RESPECT  
THAT IN TZELTAL  
MAYAN CULTURE  
IS DESCRIBED AS  
'ELEVATING ONE'S  
HEART.'**

Checovaldéz: Life and Dreams in the Perla Valley, 1998, community mural in Taniperla, Chiapas, Mexico

Mexican mural painting, best known in North America through Diego Rivera's work for Ford and Rockefeller, has inspired many labour and community arts projects. While the Mexican master assumed total artistic control of imagery, form and content, community murals are a unique vehicle for participation by many people, and can capture a breadth of ideas.

Muralism is an excellent medium for small and large group collaboration because of its significant historical presence from cave art and frescos to urban graffiti galleries, and its political potential and great variety in format. The methodology of brainstorming and collective image-making brings together different levels of skills and knowledge.

Display in public space reaches large audience numbers and, if properly executed and credited, a mural can have a lasting legacy in bearing the message and pride of the people who created it.

The following pages offer a sampler of MURAL PROJECTS from Nicaragua, Mexico, and Canada. Portable murals painted and printed on different surfaces produced in Toronto and Hamilton, offer methods that can be transferred from muralism to other disciplines.

### ***EL PUEBLO, 1986***

Artists/Facilitators:

Dámarys Sepúlveda and Ingrid Mayrhofer

Producer:

Ministry of Culture, Centro Popular de Cultura (CPC) Masatepe, Nicaragua

Participants:

Neighbourhood children and youth

Story: Imagery of daily life in Sandinista Nicaragua as depicted by young people. The mural was painted over after the fall of the Sandinista government



### ***LIFE AND DREAMS IN THE PERLA VALLEY, 1998***

Artist/Facilitator: Checovaldéz

Producer: San Lorenzo de la Nada Human Rights Centre

Participants: Members of 10 Tzeltal Mayan communities in the autonomous municipality of Ricardo Flores Magón, Chiapas, Mexico

Story: The harmony of people, nature and celestial bodies in the Perla Valley

The mural was destroyed by private and state security forces upon its inauguration.

***GREETING TO TANIPERLA*** was part of an extensive international response to the destruction of the mural in Chiapas. The imagery on three walls of the handball court at Scarboro Missions includes the reproduction of the mural painted in 1998 by members of 10 communities in the Perla Valley, Chiapas. In April/May of 2000 Red Tree worked with guest artists, community members and students from Toronto schools. Images by professional artists and community members respond to the message of the original mural: a message of peace, harmony and unity based on traditional Mayan community values.

## ***GREETING TO TANIPERLA, 2000***

Artists:

Hannah Claus, Claire Carew, Sady Ducros, Lynn Hutchinson, Raffael Iglesias, Shelley Niro

Producer: Red Tree Artists' Collective Community Partners: A Space, Scarboro Missions

Guest participants:

Mayan community activist Nicolás Pérez Gómez, Chiapas; Checovaldéz (Sergio Valdéz Ruvalcaba), Professor, Popular Communications, Autonomous Metropolitan University, (Xochimilco), Mexico; students from two Toronto high schools, school children, and community members: Yasmin Mewa, Valentina Churlova, Sun Mee Kim, Stefan Carew-Samuel, Siham Hameed, Shamita Parhoo, Nery Espinoza, Nancy Niklas, Martí Mayrhofer-Lima, Maria Silva, Lindsey Richmond, Kei Acedera, Kathleen McCarthy, Julia Jagielowicz,

Joy Hansri, Joshua Barndt, Jesse Blight, Janice Young, Ingrid Mayrhofer, Graham Knopp, Gillian Thorton, Francisco Marroquin, Evan Carew, Emmanuel Antwi, Eloisa Liquiran, Elizabeth Weigand, Elipda Moretas, Alejandra Umaña, Dennis Calnan, Debra Carew, Deb McGuigan, Milton Medeiros, Danielle Carew-Samuel, Chelsea Braam-Carew, Cathleen Carey, Carol Anne Robichaud, Andy Yau, Aymna Mandani.



### ***MURAL WORKS, 1994***

Artists: David Gallegos, Daniel Camacho, Joseph Sagutch, Lynn Hutchinson, Shawn Grey, Marco Figueroa, Liliana de Irisarri

Facilitators: Nazeer Khan and Scott Marsden

Producer: A Space, Toronto

Labour Partner: C.E.P

Story: The collective imagery created by participating artists reflects the different voices and histories of artists and working people from the Americas. Within the context of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and “global restructuring”, the artists intended to initiate a cross-cultural dialogue on issues affecting the diverse communities that make up Canada and Mexico. This mural project included artists from TORONAH SUPPORT GROUP, OJOS DE LUCHA, and members of the C.E.P.





## ISSUES/LEARNINGS ARISING FROM MURAL EXPERIENCES

The recognition of murals as a means of social communication, their typically large scale and public presence, also provides ample material for critical examination.

- Socialist realist images of Über-workers mimic the monumentalism previously glorifying church and empire, and are the preferred propaganda tool of autocratic states.
- Social realist murals set the stage for early workplace arts projects inspired by the WPA during the Great Depression in the U.S. The example of Sudbury, where Inco commissioned Canadian painter Charles Comfort to portray proud and heroic industrial workers, illustrates how workers and artists can be used to further the corporate agenda through imagery that suggests a common goal, as if bosses and workers shared the same values. (see Rosemary Donegan, *Sudbury the Industrial Landscape*, for an in-depth discussion of workplace art in the Ontario mining town.)
- The mural can be abused by BIAs, turning streets and neighbourhoods, such as the town of Nanaimo, Kingston Road in Scarborough, or Dundas Street West in Toronto, into commercial billboards.
- Badly executed or sappy post-card imagery, typically of picturesque heritage moments, presents a serious challenge to artistic merit, further diminishing the acceptance of muralism as a contemporary art form.
- where the creation of graffiti murals is criminalized, young artists learn to work fast, and buildings are defaced by simple tags and bombs.
- In the context of collaborative creative process, the issues arising in the murals illustrated here are transferable to other projects in visual media or other disciplines. The same applies to preventive planning, problem solving and conflict resolution.
- Disputes over content typically arise when parts of the collective planning process are overlooked or missed, when one artist or participant assumes a dominant position ignoring other voices or simply not working in collaboration.

## EXAMPLES OF PROBLEMS/SOLUTIONS

-an internationally renowned political muralist, who had previously worked with other professional artists, learned to collaborate and respect the contribution of a diverse group of artists who invited him into their project

-a labour leader whose union financially contributed to the production of a collective mural, and who had not participated in the brainstorming sessions, came in later to request that imagery be changed

-a non-artist painted over another participant's work because she didn't like what the other person had done, taking advantage of the fact that she had time to work on a day when none of the others could come in

-international star artists 'intervened' with the imagery of community participants, and were publicly reprimanded by a social worker for upsetting and exploiting the developmentally disabled participants. This particular experience took place in a university art gallery setting, in collaboration with a school for severely disabled adults, and was exposed during a panel discussion with visiting artists, social workers and faculty.



**A SERIES OF FACILITATED DISCUSSIONS IN THESE CASES RESULTED IN IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS AND A LEARNING PROCESS FOR ALL INVOLVED. KEY TO THE RESOLUTIONS IN EACH SITUATION WAS CLARIFICATION OF EACH PARTICIPANT'S EXPECTATIONS, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MUTUAL RESPECT, AND RECOGNITION OF EACH CONTRIBUTION.**

**EXAMPLE OF GOOD PRACTICE:  
BETTY BROUWER OF  
RE-CREATE AND TOM  
MONTGOMERY OF NOTRE  
DAME HOUSE PARTICIPATED  
WITH YOUTH AND ARTISTS IN  
THE PRINT STUDIO'S YOUTH-  
AT-RISK PROJECT  
*TEXTURES IN MY CRIB***

-The danger of **romanticizing people's social disadvantages**, be they mental health, poverty or other issues under the pretext of 'sympathetic political/activist art,' is that it easily leads to exploitation, whereas collaboration in process and outcome will empower voices who do not have access to other media.

-Well-intentioned efforts in dealing with injustice through art have failed because of **appropriation of voices and cultures**, or the repetition of offensive imagery or language in the attempt to condemn their historical or continued use. Cross-cultural collaboration is only successful when it is respectful and inclusive of diverse voices, experiences and knowledge.

-Differences in class and education may not be immediately identifiable as underlying a clash among participants, but when an artist expresses frustration over the fact that a group of "immigrant women on welfare didn't want to follow her instructions," it becomes quite clear which side needs to re-think her approach.

- group facilitators, whether their expertise lies in labour, mental health, social work or other fields, are valuable and at times essential. However, they too need to participate in the creative process as equal contributors

-Participants drop out because of other commitments

- see Checovaldéz' 'relay' approach to ongoing evaluation and continued development of imagery with rotating groups of participants
- breaking up parts of the mural's picture plane into facets or smaller 'frames' can successfully accommodate the need for individuals to express their specific idea, or for a group that has issues of trust.\*

**When community/artists/partners' expectations are unspoken ...**

- it is understandable that at times everyone gets excited over an idea and we jump into production without having planned all the details

\* see youth murals patched together from individual images by participants - p 8 and 11



- the need to be flexible is as important as having a good plan, in order to allow the 'larger picture' to evolve. In the case of **GREETING TO TANIPERLA**, the mural on the grounds of a faith-based organization, the retired clergy initially hesitated to even allow artists and youth on the grounds without supervision. We checked in and out with them every day, and Father Charlie set an example when he brought us food and helped with the painting. Having agreed to only guarantee maintenance of the mural for 2 years, the mission paid for 25-year varnish when the mural was finished. It has remained there since May 2000, and was featured prominently in the mission's newsletter.
- Acts of God or the Queen's enemies by nature are exempt from insurance. It is difficult to say, even with a decade's hindsight, what might have saved a mural that was considered 'too political' by the City of Toronto. Even though the imagery developed in collaboration between artists, members of CUPE local 416 and the Toronto Environmental Alliance had been approved by city staff, some politicians objected to the narrative of a train carrying garbage into the wilderness. The funder, a private foundation, was overwhelmed by the fallout and soon after cancelled their "Initiatives in Cultural Democracy."\*\*



\*\* <http://www.robinpacific.ca/publications/revolution.swf>  
laidlaw foundation annual report 2000



Areas that may require contractual negotiations for a mural project include:

- location, size, duration/care of permanent mural
- 'ownership' and care of moving mural
- reproduction rights/honoraria
- stipends for participants and/or compensation for their transportation, food, child-care, etc
- artist fees

-it is best to deal with legal issues before the work begins, by negotiating and signing contracts

-consult professional artists' associations for guidelines specific to the discipline, i.e. CARFAC for visual art

## STEP-BY-STEP

### NOTES TO THE BREAKDOWN OF THE ANIMATION PROCESS AND SAMPLE PROJECTS:

The examples listed in each of the following seven parts—initiation, beginning, telling the story, producing, presenting and evaluating—are given in the same sequence as in the project summaries in order to simplify cross referencing.

Breaking up the different projects into these chapters is not intended as a model or prescribed schedule, nor is it to suggest that they had taken place in the same timeframe. Some of the examples in the different sections may be from the same workshop, on the same afternoon or morning; others may have stretched out over several sessions, or contain repeat activities.

A few contributors gave very detailed step-by-step accounts of their project outlines and workshops, and those are presented in their entirety. Session evaluations are included where contributors conducted them as part of their step-by-step work plan, and may be repeated in Parts 6 and 7, EVALUATING and LESSONS LEARNED.

## PART 1 - INITIATING

All projects begin with an idea. Where that idea goes depends on the people who make it happen – artists, union members, community organizations, and a number of other partners including participants, co-workers, peers, presenters and funding agencies.

When the idea comes from an artist or a group of artists, the discipline, medium and output may be determined by their practice, or they may invite other artists to complement their own skills.

When the idea comes from a union member or community group, the issues and desired outcome may determine which art form is most suitable, and who will be invited to take the artistic lead.

An animator or facilitator may lead the mapping process, or conduct the ‘research and development’ phase, and that person or group of persons may be artists, social workers, union reps, or other activists. Small groups or projects may allow the artist to perform all the different roles (see sample projects 1. Aida Jordão-Theatre, 4. Carole/Karl-Photo montage) Larger groups, multi-partner and multi-disciplinary projects will require different people to assume different roles and may invite artists to enter at different stages (sample projects 2. The Print Studio-Visual Art, 5. Red Tree-Multi disciplinary). A labour organization may want to educate workers through the arts, and look for arts partners and a community partner or social service provider whose clients will benefit from the experience (sample project 3. Maria Dunn Know Your Rights workshop).

### QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

The following list draws on the experiences of the artists who contributed to this manual. Your project may pose a number of additional or different questions, and it may require more research and development. Write down all the questions, and answers, that arise in meetings and discussions with everyone involved in getting the project off the ground. Always keep minutes, take notes, and add contact information to your attendance list.

notes

Some questions:

1. What is/are the goal/s of the project and who is involved?

-different partners may have a range of goals, and organizational criteria they need to meet

-identify where everyone's objectives intersect and how they benefit all involved

2. Who are the participants and why would they want to collaborate?

-describe the local or group within the local:

-are they a standing committee coming together around a particular issue?

-is there a 'drop-in' opportunity for others, partners, family, friends?

-identify barriers that might exist for members of this community to access arts and culture, or prevent them from expressing themselves ...

3. Who are the artists, and what are their disciplines/media?

-discuss the artistic merit of the process and outcome

-what does the project contribute to the art form?

-is there potential for public presentation beyond the group of participants?

4. What are the roles each partner and participant plays, and at what point do they enter?

-discussion among project partners to develop direction, process, concept

-participants, local and artists together define content, narrative, image, form

-who will coordinate and manage each stage of the process?

5. What has to be done—where and when?

-establish time-lines and/or schedules for each step, including set-up, clean-up, problem solving

-where (meetings, workshops, production, performance may all take place at the same site or at different locations)

-scout locations that suit the size of group and the kind of activity

-what skills, materials, equipment technical help, other 'stuff' do we need/have?

-list all supplies and sources for donations, purchase or rental

-how much will it cost?

    estimate production costs

    sample budgets are attached to arts grant applications, and are useful even if you are not requesting a grant

-find out what the fee schedules are for artists and other professionals

-with whom?



-do participants need permission (if they are under-age) or release-time (if the activity is considered union work)

-permission from participants is required to take photographs of them or film them as part of the project, or for documentation (consent forms grant permission, to whom permission is granted, and any issues that the artist or facilitator needs to know, medial or otherwise, assure personal safety and protect the rights of the participant – see appendix # 1)

## 6. What happens if?

You can prevent many problems from happening through ongoing evaluation and self-evaluation, open and transparent communication, and good planning (see appendix # 2 for problem solving process from Common Weal's Toolbox for Community Projects)

- have a conflict resolution strategy
- use the union's code of ethics, or adapt it to the project's needs
- discuss values with all involved in the project, and request agreement
- sign contracts with artists, technicians, and any other party who either receives payment or provides funds



## EXAMPLES: MAKING CONTACT

### EXAMPLE I — AIDA JORDÃO JOE, JOHN AND JACK: SAFETY AT WORK TORONTO, 1999 – 2000

From September 1999 to May 2000, I worked with the Society of Portuguese Disabled Persons of Ontario to create two short plays about independence and workplace safety. The Secretary of the Society (an old friend) contacted me and we discussed applying for an Ontario Arts Council “Artist in the Community/Workplace” grant to fund a popular theatre project. We were awarded \$6100 for artist fees and production costs. The Society agreed to provide participants, space, and most of the transportation costs.

### EXAMPLE II — THE PRINT STUDIO/ROCHELLE RUBINSTEIN PARADOX OF THE VOCATION, HAMILTON 2009

In light of cuts to arts funding federally, and the municipality’s lack of creative solutions to artists’ need for a living wage, The Print Studio wanted to challenge the prevailing image of the arts as frivolous and somehow diametrically opposed to the essential services of health care. Taking the idea of vocation, a calling, as common ground for artists and health care providers, we approached the Juravinski Cancer Centre and offered free printmaking, photography and mixed media workshops to a group of participants who would commit to explore issues arising from their profession, and together with professional artists demystify the ‘paradox of vocation.’

- Method to reach participants: flyer sent out through the Cancer Centre's internal e-mail, asking staff to sign up directly with the project coordinator
- Method to hire artists: previous connection with The Print Studio or community arts in the region
- Expected outcome: body of visual art for exhibition at the Cancer Centre and at The Print Studio gallery.

**EXAMPLE III — MARIA DUNN  
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS WORKSHOP  
EDMONTON, NOVEMBER 2009**

This workshop was initiated by the Alberta Workers Health Centre (AWHC).

Kevin Flaherty approached the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers to do the workshop for their adult English language students. <http://www.workershealthcentre.ca>

**Facilitators:**

Don Bouzek – Film and Theatre, Ground Zero Productions (Don was present for the first session of the workshop only)

Maria Dunn – Songwriter

Pedro Rodriguez – Visual Artist

Kevin Flaherty – Sociologist/Director, Alberta Workers' Health Centre

Q: How did the project start?

A (Maria): I was approached by Kevin Flaherty of AWHC and Don Bouzek of Ground Zero Productions. Don and I have collaborated for 8 years on 2 different labour history multimedia shows involving my songwriting and Don's video footage.

Q: How did Kevin or the Mennonite Centre approach you? What did they say their objectives were?

A (Maria): AWHC conducted previous "Know Your Rights" Workshops with workers who speak English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL) using a popular education / popular

theatre model. AWHC wanted to try a workshop using another artistic discipline, i.e., music or songwriting.

The main objectives:

- allow immigrant workers to share their stories about the workplace
- give immigrant workers information about: their rights in the workplace; how to contact AWHC for more information; how to report workplace rights violations

Q: What was it that interested you in the idea?

Answer:

1) The group: The Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers does excellent work in the community and Maria enjoyed working

with the newcomers and staff during an artist residency in 2006/2007, including a songwriting workshop (5 sessions over 2 weeks) with adult ESOL students.

2) The subject: workers, specifically newcomers to Canada, helping them know their rights regarding health and safety in the workplace

3) The format:

- the emphasis on workers telling their stories
- the challenge of facilitating a condensed songwriting workshop (2 sessions instead of the 5 that Maria had done in the past) that would involve all participants

#### **EXAMPLE IV — CAROLE CONDÉ/KARL BEVERIDGE ILL WIND, KINGSTON, OSHAWA, HAMILTON, GUELPH, 2001**

The artists hold initial meetings with a union to determine which union local or group is interested and active around a mutually agreed upon topic or issue.

The aim of the workshop process is to produce a series of photographic images based on the worker/participant stories and concerns around their workplace.

**THE UFCW WAS  
CONCERNED ABOUT  
THE EXCLUSION OF THE  
MIGRANT WORKERS  
FROM LOCAL CIVIC  
LIFE, BUT FOUND THE  
DIVISIONS EXISTING  
AMONG THE WORKERS  
ALONG NATIONALITIES  
AND RACE EQUALLY  
DISTURBING.**

**EXAMPLE V — RED TREE ARTISTS' COLLECTIVE  
THE SIMCOE PROJECT, 2007/08**

Andrea Carvalho was the education officer at the Norfolk Arts Centre at the time, and during an opening at Hamilton Artists INC, she mentioned the effort of a local police officer to educate migrant farm workers on bicycle safety. She talked about the attitudes of the local population and how there was a support centre set up by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) in Simcoe to help the Mexicans with translation, forms and other issues.

Ingrid contacted the UFCW, spoke with Fany at the Support Centre, who introduced a group of workers and her volunteers. They were interested in

a photography project. The Ontario Arts Council funded a research and development stage through their AIC/W program. The director of the Arts Centre facilitated our (Ingrid Mayrhofer, Sally Frater, Nery Espinoza) first consultation meeting during the R & D phase at the Legion Hall, by the Giant Tiger store, where the buses drop off the workers once a week to do their shopping. We had brought a few disposable cameras, and the group of workers who attended the information session were immediately interested.

The UFCW was concerned about the exclusion of the migrant workers from local civic life, but found the divisions existing among the workers along nationalities and race equally disturbing. The divide and conquer design of their contracts, the disproportionate numbers of one ethnic group, and gender, over the other on most farms, racial prejudice and fear, all posed serious challenges. The divisions undermined the building of solidarity, which is a prerequisite for organizing workers.

We set out to engage Mexican and Caribbean workers in the project. A local music man, Bob, knew a group of Jamaicans who had formed a choir. Getting an existing group to participate in the project seemed like a great advantage. We waited, and waited, and waited. Eventually, our friend found out that their boss, his neighbour, had forbidden ‘his’ workers from getting involved in the project because he was afraid that we would unionize them.

However, some of the Mexican workers lived next door to a group of Trinidadians who also worked with them on the Ghesquiere Strawberry Farm. They introduced us, and that is how The Simcoe Project started.

**EXAMPLE VI — LORNA BOSCHMAN**  
**BECOMING A DIRECTOR: THE STORY OF THIS ABILITY MEDIA CLUB,**  
**BURNABY, 2005 – 2007**

From February 2005 to March 2007, I worked with a group of adults with developmental disabilities so that they could learn to direct a short video that reflected their own experiences. This Ability Media Club provided weekly media training and was hosted by the Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion (BACI) in partnership with the Pacific office of the National Film Board of Canada (NFB).

Based on my background as a video director and instructor, I was hired by the NFB to run the technical and training aspects of the group, while Chris Tanner worked with the group as the liaison person for BACI. The group members came to the club through BACI, either directly through the organization’s membership or as a result of BACI’s announcements and promotion of the group. Participants in the group included from six to nine “self-advocates” (a designation that many people with developmental disabilities prefer), and occasionally, visitors, trainers and caregivers.

**EXAMPLE VII — CHECOVALDÉZ**  
**THE COMMUNITY MURAL AS A MEDIUM OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**  
**TANIPERLA, CHIAPAS, 1998**

**First contact:**

Three professors from a university in the capital (Mexico City) are invited by a human rights organization in a remote conflict zone, to give a workshop on how to design posters, brochures and other educational materials. The workshop is intended for indigenous educators to help them create their own promotional materials, and to educate sympathetic outsiders about their culture. The visitors observe that the mode of production in the area is one based on self-sufficiency. The people produce what they consume.

Watching the three visitors as they sketch, one of the village elders suggests that they should return and paint “something big” on the wall of the town hall. The professors immediately identify a research opportunity, to visually record the people’s creativity, their values, their interests, culture, community collaboration, etc. They set a goal: facilitate a community mural as a medium of social communication. Of the three, only one returns a month later, invited to lead the project. During the long trip, he ponders different strategies to involve the community in all aspects of the big painting. “How am I going to present them with the idea that I would not paint the mural, that it would be they who would create and produce it themselves?”

The mural in the remote Mayan village of Taniperla came about spontaneously in April 1998, as part of an outreach initiative by the Fray Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada Human Rights Centre in Ocosingo, Chiapas. Participants included Tzeltal villagers who came together under their commitment to do ‘community work,’ as well as educational workers from different institutions and human rights activists from Mexico and abroad.

The Human Rights Centre intended to educate outsiders about Tzeltal culture, and to engage community members in the production of their own educational materials.

Sergio Valdéz Ruvalcaba (Checo), who teaches 'social communication' at the UAM Xochimilco in Mexico City, was invited to lead the project. Checo in turn wanted to involve the community in building the content and images together. Murals had been painted by activists in other areas, but never by the communities themselves. The answer to Checo's dilemma came unexpectedly when his unsuspecting translator (Tzeltal/Spanish) suggested that he would not have to do all the work himself, that they would assign the project as communal work.

When the men from different Tzeltal villages arrived to carry out their communal work, they were be ready to work on whatever needed fixing or building. In that sense, collective work on the mural was no different than building a communal kitchen or dorm.





## PART 2 - BEGINNINGS

### START OFF ON THE BEST TRACK

The value of labour arts practice lies in creation, production and dissemination of working people's culture. Access to the means of cultural production may be hindered by a number of social, economic, political, geographic and other factors. Artists as facilitators of a collaborative creative process need to understand and share the values and concerns of working people in order to earn the trust of their collaborators. Respect for artists and their professional expertise is integral to the artistic merit of the shared outcome.

In return for the sweat and tears, artists gain new experiences and the knowledge that they have contributed to cultural development and may have gained support for their own work. The unique opportunity to change relationships between people through engaged aesthetic leads to new understanding of and appreciation for artistic practice.

*"The effort that is required in building a relationship with a community organization and a group of people to develop a project can be daunting, and must be approached with sensitivity and patience.... An artist working in community needs to have the tenacity, perseverance and conviction that this work is important."*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ACCF review, Lata Pada of Sampradaya Dance Creations p 8,

**ARTISTS NEED TO BE AWARE  
OF THE TREMENDOUS  
AMOUNT OF EXTRA  
RESPONSIBILITY THEY ARE  
TAKING ON IN COMMUNITY  
ARTS WORK WHICH IS  
NOT NORMAL FOR THEM  
IN THEIR STUDIOS. THEY  
ARE ASKED TO BE SOCIAL  
WORKERS, PSYCHIATRISTS,  
POLITICIANS, CARETAKERS,  
HUMANITARIANS, AS WELL  
AS GREAT ARTISTS! NO  
AMOUNT OF TRAINING  
COULD ACCOMPLISH  
THAT UNLESS THEY HAVE  
THE TEMPERAMENT,  
WILLINGNESS AND FULL  
UNDERSTANDING OF THE  
TASK."**

Kai Chan *Vital Links*

## FIRST SESSION QUESTIONS:

## PROVIDE REFRESHMENTS

1. Does everyone know each other?
  - introduce artists, facilitators, participants
  - warm up and introductory exercises
    - see appendix # 3
  - trust building games
  - do we need to introduce new terminology?
2. Does everyone know what we're doing?
  - introduce the work plan
    - see appendix # 4
  - discuss and revise work plan and time frame
3. Where do we want to go and how do we know when we get there?
  - discuss and confirm goals, vision, values – spell solidarity!
  - assess skills base, resources and needs
  - distribute roles and tasks
4. Evaluation/Notes:
  - What was exciting about this step/session?
  - What was expected/unexpected?

notes

Did anything go wrong?

What did we learn?

What to look out for in the next step:

General Notes:

- introduce the situation with words, images, gestures, movement

- explore topics of difficult moments on job

- high points, achievements at work, in union

- multi-artist project The Print Studio, Hamilton:  
artists participate in each other's workshops with  
hospital workers

– collages, words, photographs, objects, sounds to  
represent ideas: create an image/story from what's  
in your pocket, purse, knapsack, lunch box...

## PROJECT START-UP EXAMPLES

**EXAMPLE I — AIDA JORDÃO**  
**JOE, JOHN AND JACK: SAFETY AT WORK**  
**TORONTO, 1999 – 2000**

The project plan was for ten two-hour sessions in a large, empty room with six to ten participants

**Materials:** flipchart paper and markers

**Session One:** basic introduction to popular theatre games

1. Name Game in a circle:
  - a) each participant says his/her name accompanied by an action; everyone repeats
  - b) each participant says his/her name in a low, medium and high voice
2. A-E-I-O-U as a voice warm-up for stretching and squeezing mouth; also to massage jaws and made silly sounds
3. Feel the Space:
  - a) move around the space conscious of everyone else
  - b) move slowly, move fast
  - c) move through fog, water, mud, on the moon
  - d) greet whomever you meet
4. Soundscape:

in a circle facing out and eyes closed, participants

  - a) listen to sounds of their bodies, sounds in the room, sounds outside
  - b) together create the sounds of a midway, Dundas and Ossington, a church

5. Chat: I explain the objectives of a popular theatre workshop. Isaura explains the entire project, we ask for feedback on exercises so far and answer questions

6. I hope, I fear, I want: Facilitator asks for participants' hopes, fears and wants and writes these on the flipchart paper

**Observations:**

There were seven participants to start (two caregivers participated, one did not). The group had a very little knowledge of drama exercises so each exercise took longer than expected. There was lots of self-conscious giggling and fooling around so I knew I'd have to work hard on focus and concentration. I didn't need to adapt the exercises as much as I had expected in order to accommodate disability issues. These ranged widely -- developmental, motor, vocal -- and each person did what they could within their ability. The process became about ability, not disability, from the very start.

**EXAMPLE II — THE PRINT STUDIO/ROCHELLE RUBINSTEIN  
PARADOX OF THE VOCATION,  
HAMILTON 2009**

**First Session:**

**Participants:** health workers at Juravinski Cancer Centre, Hamilton, Ontario

**Facilitator:** Rochelle Rubinstein – based in Toronto, Ontario, printmaker, painter, fabric and book artist, with a special interest in facilitating community art projects

Duration: Six Sessions, each two hours long, with about twenty minutes to set up and twenty minutes to clean up

**Materials:** pencils, paper (both inexpensive and good quality paper for printing), linocut carving tools, block printing ink, two rollers, glass or acrylic plate, blank accordion-folded and hard-covered book, hospital screen, blank greeting cards

**I HAD PLANNED TO  
SUGGEST THE LOADED  
AND EMOTIONALLY  
CHARGED WORD CANCER  
AS THE THEME FOR OUR  
WORK, BUT IN OUR FIRST  
DISCUSSION THE WORD  
“WAIT” KEPT REPEATING  
AND THIS LED ME TO  
SUGGEST WAIT/WEIGHT  
AS A MORE APT AND  
PRODUCTIVE THEME WITH  
WHICH TO DESCRIBE  
THEIR WORK AND WORK  
CONCERNS.**

After an introduction to my work, showing some community art projects which I facilitated, and to printmaking techniques, we plunged into a discussion of interests and ideas for this project.

The eight participants included a librarian, a clown who worked with cancer patients, a physician, a technician. Ingrid Mayrhofer and Colina Maxwell, of the Print Studio, participated as well. We talked about the project’s working title: PARADOX OF THE VOCATION and the paradoxes which involve health workers dealing with cancer; for example, to hurt a patient in order to make him or her better, or the fact that this type of work does get easier with time but they don’t want it to be too easy or slip into a routine that might lead to being insensitive.

We also drew parallels between health workers and artists; for example, both involve ‘active waiting’.

I had planned to suggest the loaded and emotionally charged word CANCER as the theme for our work, but in our first discussion the word WAIT kept repeating and this led me to suggest WAIT/WEIGHT as a more apt and productive theme with which to describe their work and work concerns.

**EXAMPLE III — MARIA DUNN  
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS WORKSHOP  
EDMONTON, NOVEMBER 2009**

Also see Production Outline appendix # 4

**Overall Objectives:**

- Create a situation where participants can share their personal stories as immigrants and workers
- Explore rhythm and song as vehicles to demonstrate aspects of working life
- Introduce the concept of rights in general
- Introduce the concept of workers' rights in particular
- Ensure that participants have equal opportunity for participation
- Create a dynamic and playful learning situation

**Warm-up**

- introduction / icebreakers
- performance of song about workplace stresses with video showing factory
- teaching the class to sing / clap / stomp along

Chairs set in a circle for all participants: approx. 16 ESOL students, 4 facilitators, 2 ESOL teachers.

**Session 1**, approximately 1 hour

Introduce facilitators:

- Kevin: explains AWHC (<http://www.workershealthcentre.ca/>) emphasizing that it is not the government.
- Pedro, Maria, Don: explain who we are, what we do and the main purpose of workshop: to talk about workplace safety.

Activity 1 - Personal Presentation

Pedro invites each participant to say their name and where they are from.

Activity 2 - Icebreaker

Pedro introduces the "name-game":

- take the person's name to your left, make any rhythm with it, improvise / play with the syllables and then gradually transition to the syllables of your own name.
- The game proceeds around the circle to the right such that everyone's name gets repeated several times – an effective ice-breaker and way to remember everyone's names.
- e.g., Maria to the left of Anab: Maria-ria-ria, ree-an, ree-an, an-an-an, anab-anab-anab, Anab



**Evaluation:** One ESOL instructor suggested that this activity might be more effective in two smaller groups. A few examples of morphing from one name to another might help participants understand the game more quickly.

Pedro's comments: The goal is to get people ready to play with their own story. The first part of anyone's identity is his or her name.

**(Activity 3 – see part 3)**

#### **Activity 4 - Introducing Song/Video**

Maria's song, "Speed Up" is the basis for the lyric writing exercise

- Maria explains: the song is inspired by immigrant women who worked at the GWG clothing factory in Edmonton during its 93-year history
- She sings the song interspersed with video clips (interviews with the women and factory footage) filmed and edited by Don
- Lyrics sheets are handed out so participants may follow along

Pedro and Kevin: We went from encouraging active participation to a process where the ESOL participants became 'passive watchers' of a video, breaking their engagement. We should consider other ways to show and tell the story of the GWG workers (and the song) that would not present a potential barrier in the transition from 'watcher' to 'singer'.

#### **Activity 5 - Learning the song**

- teach class to sing the refrain
- invite class to clap/tap/stomp in rhythm
- sing song together
- demonstrate different possible clapping rhythms
- sing again with more varied rhythms (main beat, back beat, etc.)

Evaluation: In future, start the rhythm slowly and then speed up the rhythm of the song as it progresses. This could be a playful demonstration of how relentless sped-up tasks, (assembly lines) can be.

**EXAMPLE IV — CAROLE CONDÉ/KARL BEVERIDGE  
ILL WIND, KINGSTON, OSHAWA, HAMILTON, GUELPH, 2001**

The aim of the workshop process is to produce a series of photographic images based on the worker/participants stories and concerns around their workplace. The final images usually involve the workers who play themselves and actors who play secondary characters (such as managers, patients or students).

The workshop develops in three stages:

- 1) stories and descriptions of work and the workplace.
- 2) visualizing the core or essential stories
- 3) concepts and storyboards for the final images

These form the basis for the construction of sets and the staging of the final photographs.

The optimum number of participants is 10, but can include additional participants should there be interest.

The process described below (see part 3, Telling the Story) will draw on two projects completed with healthcare (Ill Wind) and custodial (Class Maintenance) workers.



**EXAMPLE V — RED TREE ARTISTS' COLLECTIVE  
THE SIMCOE PROJECT, 2007/08**

**Visual art:** Participants learned to design their own name tag, license plate, logo  
- the making of personalized name tags suited the drop-in format of the workshop.  
Participants arrived at different times as they got off work. Sometimes they would be working all night, and on Sundays. We set up the printmaking table during all workshops in different disciplines. As participants arrived they could engage in a visual 'warm up' activity while they waited to join another session in theatre or poetry.

**Poetry:** what would you say as your famous last words

**Theatre:** name games, call out another person's name, that person repeats her/his name and call someone else  
Breathing, stretching, moving exercises

**EXAMPLE VI — LORNA BOSCHMAN  
BECOMING A DIRECTOR: THE STORY OF THIS ABILITY MEDIA CLUB,  
BURNABY, 2005 – 2007**

During the first month, Chris and I got to know the self-advocates better by attending Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion (BACI).  
Workshops including decorating with mosaic tiles, drumming and social events like a weekly dinner. Because of the legendary hospitality of the BACI membership, we were welcomed into the community. In the second month, we were able to bring the camera equipment along with us. Two self-advocates who had just finished eating lunch joined us and asked how to use the camera equipment, becoming the first members of This Ability Media Club in the process.

### Our working process:

It was crucial to the group formation to have an organization like BACI who nurtured the group and who were connected with the community of participants. The NFB contributed to the project by funding my part-time salary as program director, by lending the video production equipment, and by providing guidance (especially from producer Tracey Friesen) in building strong stories. We began meeting once a week for 90 minutes.

Many of the self-advocates had previously worked on a form of oral history project called “scrap-booking.”

We took photos in class and began to practice shooting with the video camera. The class photos were cut out and collaged in the scrapbook, sometimes accompanied by written comments by the members.

### Video speak-out workshop session (2 hours):

Although the directors of This Ability Media Club developed their projects over a much longer period of time, the origin of this short workshop is a session that group

members held at a conference. A facilitator leads the group, and a technician sets up equipment and helps participants to operate the camera.

Technical set-up (30-60 minutes set-up time prior to workshop)

1. DVD deck or computer connected to monitor or projector. Speakers connected to the system.
2. Camera set up on a tripod to record participants. Output from camera connected to monitor or projector.

Introduction (10-15 minutes)

Facilitator provides short introduction to community based media production and shows a short work particularly relevant to the audience. Group participants are encouraged to use video to speak out and record their ideas.

Brainstorming & Idea Development (15 minutes)

Prior to the workshop, the facilitator develops questions so the workshop attendees can quickly move to the issues at hand. A list of 3-4 questions is sufficient for this length of workshop.

Facilitator asks participants to break into small groups in order to develop ideas for the speak-out based on the list of questions. Attendees use the page with questions to jot down ideas that come out of the group discussion at their table.

Technician asks for volunteers who want to practice using the camera. A short orientation on basic camera functions and movements (pan, tilt, zoom) provided for those who are interested in participating technically.

**EXAMPLE VII — CHECOVALDÉZ**  
**THE COMMUNITY MURAL AS A MEDIUM OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**  
**TANIPERLA, CHIAPAS, 1998**

**Introduction Session**

Explanation of project

**Introductions:** I came because ..., I like it when they call me .....,  
see appendix # 3

**Expectations:**

What do I like?

What don't I like?

What can I do, what will I do?

**The commitment:**

Workshop participants commit to arrive on time to all sessions, to participate in all activities of the workshop and to carry out all the responsibilities that arise

Seven sessions of three hours a day, including some weekends

### **Research:**

- each participant asks other members of the community what they would like to see in the mural
- core group members present the findings that they collected in their consultation, and expand on the findings
- facilitator asks participants to visualize physical objects known to them, draw a quick sketch, or use colours, shapes to represent the image (this can also be done with sounds, or movements, etc)
- then he/she asks participants to do the same for the issues they raised: What does justice/peace/freedom/happiness etc. look like
- record all issues raised, set a number limit for ideas/points, and prioritize by asking participants to vote for their top 3, 4, 5, depending on how many the workshop can accommodate

### **Coordination:**

- artist/facilitator/animator identifies and notes the matters that the community intends to take on
- the animator/artist enters in contact with

the group through someone he already knows, or with whom she has met in order to establish contact

- a 'core group' forms with the people who are most enthusiastic, keen, and convinced that the project is important; the 'core group' may carry out preliminary 'door to door' consultations with other participants, artists, community members, partners, to define the project's intent
- the consultation should have a set of simple and clear 'open' questions, presented in a friendly and inviting manner to encourage everyone to respond with confidence, establish trust and respect
- include all members of a household in the discussion to get as many different opinions as possible
- a number of information sessions may be necessary if the project is intended to bring together different sectors, i.e. different locals of the same union, or different unions in the same workplace, cross-sectoral projects, inter-generational, cross-cultural, different working groups or sub-committees
- an introductory workshop may be

necessary to attract participants who are less active in their local

- the invitation to participate has to be inclusive, without discrimination or preferential treatment
- whether the project is organized by one person or a core team, all roles and responsibilities need to be clearly defined and explained to the larger group
- participants need to know the objectives, goals, parameters, length of sessions, expectations and opportunities for their contribution to the project
- workshops for group-building and getting-to-know-you; storytelling and improvisation sessions to generate material; script development





## PART 3 - THE STORY

### BUILDING A NARRATIVE

Collaborative art practices challenge the canon of individual genius. Labour arts puts the struggles and victories of workers at the centre of the aesthetic discourse. Of course, labour artists have the same pride of vocation as the one that values the artistic ego. However, the sense of belonging to a community of workers affirms the part played in shaping our society. Contemporary cultural workers, must have overcome many myths and limitations. Facilitating self-representation by a group of migrant farm workers contributes more to Canadian working people's culture and identity than the most sympathetic painting created by a famous artist.

In the process of collaborative art production, each participant expresses her ideas visually, verbally, and/or physically. It is the artist's own creative skill that brings out the highest potential in a group.

Sharing stories informs the artistic outcome. By validating experiences and empowering voices, the resulting images, songs, words, acts, or other art products contribute to the ongoing development of an inclusive culture.

The obvious advantages of working with a union local are that the group will have shared values, that they will agree on common goals and concerns, and that they are familiar with rules of conduct. Participants will be likely to know each other and identify as a community of workers with many shared experiences. Working with a group that is close knit also may mean that the facilitator/artist needs to pay closer attention to possible 'baggage' or distractions that could get off-topic. The impact of the 'solidarity story' is in how we got there, where we are going, and whose voice tells it.

**FACILITATING SELF-  
REPRESENTATION BY A  
GROUP OF MIGRANT  
FARM WORKERS  
CONTRIBUTES MORE TO  
CANADIAN WORKING  
PEOPLE'S CULTURE AND  
IDENTITY THAN THE MOST  
SYMPATHETIC PAINTING  
CREATED BY A FAMOUS  
ARTIST.**

**WORKSHOP CHECK LIST:**

1. What do we need for each workshop?
    - attendance/contact list
    - check list of materials, tools, props, refreshments
    - do we need to introduce new words, tools, materials?
    - are there any safety instructions that need to be introduced?
    - do people need to dress for messy work, physical activity?
  2. Does everyone know where, when, what to bring?
    - check list communication with participants
  3. Does everyone know what we are doing?
    - present plan and expectations of the session
    - assign tasks if applicable
  4. Is everyone's story/experience/voice represented?
    - brainstorming
    - large circle or sub-groups
    - collected ideas
    - list sorted themes
  5. Evaluation/Minutes
    - notes of matters arising
    - changes, developments
    - feedback
    - reminder for next session
    - problems/concerns: were they resolved? How?
- Need follow-up?


 notes

## SAMPLES OF STORY COLLECTION

EXAMPLE I — AIDA JORDÃO  
JOE, JOHN AND JACK: SAFETY AT WORK  
TORONTO, 1999 – 2000

**Session Two:** more introductory games and topic-specific exercises

1. Rhythm game:
  - a) participant's name and clapping hands or snapping
  - b) from individual rhythms to a group rhythm
2. Voice warm-up: vowels and consonants, ma-na-la-tha-va-sa, ta-da-ca-ga-ra-wa, bdt, ptk
3. Upper torso warm-up

### SAMPLE QUADRA:

**SOU PESSOA INDEPENDENTE  
FAÇO A VIDA SEM TEMOR  
E TAMBÉM SOU COMPETENTE  
P'RA RECEBER E DAR AMOR**

**I AM VERY INDEPENDENT  
WITHOUT FEAR IS HOW I LIVE  
I AM ALSO VERY COMPETENT  
TO RECEIVE LOVE, AND TO GIVE**

4. Write "quadras" on same theme together:
  - four line verses based on popular folk form
  - facilitator writes them out on flipchart paper

### Observations:

I typed up "I hope, I fear, I want" and the "quadras" to give to the group the next time.

**Session Three:** warm-up, theatre games, storytelling

1. Circle games a) how you feel in one word with action, everyone repeats b) individual sounds, everyone repeats
2. Change the Object: Each person pretends they have a piece of putty and molds it into something, pretends to use it, then passes it on (e.g. comb, hat, necklace)

3. Create a Place: one participant starts an imaginary action in a place (e.g. supermarket, church, classroom) and others join in
4. Storytelling: Participants tell brief personal stories about obstacles having a disability.
5. Images: Group chooses one story and creates four still tableaux to illustrate it.

### **Observations:**

Maria's story about being without a wheel-chair for many years and not able to leave the house unless carried by a family member resonated with everyone and became the basis for one of our short plays, "Being Independent". Issues of over-protective family members, pride and shame came up, as did finding a support system and allies.

**Session Four:** warm-up, theatre games, storytelling

1. Circle game: how many A's in A e.g. ahhh, aha, hah
  - a. participants in a circle
  - b. one participant jumps into the centre and uses the letter A to make a sound eg ah
  - c. everyone repeats
  - d. another participant jumps in and says aha!
  - e. everyone repeats sound and gesture
  - f. continue until letter A is exhausted and move on to E

g. when sounds made with E are exhausted, move on to I, O and U

2. Voice warm-up:
  - a. individual sounds
  - b. A-E-I-O-U
  - c. consonant blends
  - d. choral work with verses

3. More images for Maria's story
4. Improvise scenes from images
5. More storytelling

### **Observations:**

I took notes during the improvisations of Maria's story and this became the skeleton for the first script. Oliveira told a story about the accident on a construction site that left him a paraplegic; this became the basis for our second short play, "Joe, John and Jack: Safety at Work".

**Session Five:** warm-up, theatre games, storytelling

1. Circle: check-in, voice warm-ups, tell story one word at a time
2. Surprising Things: in pairs, participants tell surprising things to each other and then share with group
3. Review group verses created last month

4. Discussion about work so far. Two themes that emerged: independence and safety; we talked about ideas for set and props, and use of music
5. Images for Oliveira's story
6. Improvise scenes from images

### Observations:

Having created images and improvised scenes for Maria and Oliveira's stories, I encouraged the participants to write up any dialogue they had heard, remembered or that inspired them, and bring it to the next session so we can start compiling a script

**Sessions Six to Ten:** warm-up, theatre games, script development

### Observations:

Two or three warm-up games and exercises opened each session before we worked directly on the scenes that had been developed in the previous two sessions. As it turned out, I was the only one with access to a computer and with the theatre skills to put together a scene from improvisation notes so I took on the role of playwright, albeit reluctantly. I stressed throughout that, even though I was writing the script, the group had ownership of the plays. (This was also important because the woman who had

inspired our first play, "Being Independent," had been expelled from the Society and was threatening us with legal action if we used her story. Finally, the Arts Council officer had to write to her to explain the "collective ownership" statute of the grant.)

A major challenge throughout these sessions was the introduction of written script to a group where several members were unable to read or vocalize. This shifted the power dynamics substantially for a couple of sessions but the group found a way to work through it and, by the Christmas break, we had created first drafts of two short plays.



**EXAMPLE II — THE PRINT STUDIO/ROCHELLE RUBINSTEIN  
PARADOX OF THE VOCATION,  
HAMILTON 2009**

We talked about the project's working title: *PARADOX OF THE VOCATION* and the paradoxes which involve health workers dealing with cancer. We also drew parallels between health workers and artists; for example, both involve 'active waiting'.

Then each participants drew a series of eight pencil sketches on one piece of 11 by 17 inch paper that had been folded into eight sections. I encouraged designs that were simple and graphic.

Somebody thought of attaching the drawings to a light box (for reading x-rays) on the wall. Each participant was able to describe and explain the intended meanings of her drawings to the group.

We examined each set of drawings and I identified the sketches that I thought were most suited to relief printing, explaining my choices of simple shapes, strong lines, and use of positive and negative space.

**EXAMPLE III — MARIA DUNN  
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS WORKSHOP  
EDMONTON, NOVEMBER 2009**

**Production steps**

Session 1: Gathering / sharing stories

Session 1: Introducing song structure

Session 2: Breaking into small groups to write one new verse based on the shared stories

Session 2: Reconvene as full group to edit verses, tidy up the song, sing it together

### **Group evaluation methods**

Informal feedback sought from ESOL instructors

Post-workshop discussion with facilitators

Positive comments from two participants on the Linc4 Class Blog ([http://emcnlinc4.blogspot.com/2008\\_11\\_01\\_archive.html](http://emcnlinc4.blogspot.com/2008_11_01_archive.html))

### **Any other relevant exercises**

Role-playing how to phone AWHC and report a problem in the workplace.

### **Activity 3 - Personal Stories** (30 minutes)

Pedro asks participants to tell a story about themselves and their work, using a personal item they have with them. For example, Pedro shows us the bag he has with him that holds his sketchpad and tells us that he is a visual artist.

Many participants explained that the job they were doing now (cleaning, window manufacturing, delivery driver) was to further their dream of getting back into their former profession (engineer or nurse, for e.g.) once their English skills improved, or of training in a new profession (electrician, for e.g.).

**Evaluation:** Some of the people in the circle confused the noun 'object' with 'objective', reinforcing the difficulties of

explaining exercises in another language! We would suggest using the term 'item' or 'thing' instead of 'object.' Not everyone understood that they should choose an object that they had with them to represent their work or something about themselves; however, we still achieved the objective of participants sharing their stories about work.

There is a temptation to try to 'fix' the problem or the misunderstanding part way through the exercise. Intervening to correct the misunderstanding could undermine confidence of participants and discourage them from being involved.

Given the time restrictions, Activities 1 (see part 2, beginning) and 3 might be combined. However, one advantage of keeping these activities separate may be that participants are more willing to share stories in Activity 3 after they've had more time to get comfortable with each other (two classes were combined for this workshop) and the facilitators.

### **Activity 6 - Small Group Stories**

- In small groups (3 or 4), participants share a problem related to their work.



- Participants create an action to demonstrate this situation.

We didn't group participants by occupation, but we did divide them by gender. We felt the women might share their stories more freely within an all-women group.

### **Evaluation:**

In some of the small groups, we didn't have enough time to really hear everyone's story. Some of the stories were very emotional, or the workplace situation took some time for the participant to explain to others not familiar with their kind of work or workplace. Thus, we didn't have the time to progress to representing each story with a role play. Participants were very open about problems, including: pressure to work more overtime, safety issues with broken equipment, hard physical work—cleaning, repetitive work resulting in shoulder, back and neck pain, harassment from supervisors (racial or religious discrimination).

The role plays were acted out for the large group. We feel that this was useful for several reasons. The individual stories were made public to a positive response

by the whole group. This helped to create confidence and solidarity for participants sharing their stories. The physicality of the role playing also reinforced the story. Using role playing with ESOL workers also allows them to give much more elaborate 'descriptions'. The body language and mime work was exquisite, and a good stress release.

### **Activity 7 - Full Group, Action with Sped Up Song**

- Volunteers from each small group show the full group an action that represents a workplace story discussed within their small group
- Full group plays with this action, starting slowly and then speeding up, in the context of singing the Speed Up song

### **Evaluation:**

We didn't have time to tie the experiences to an action in all cases, or to use that action and play with it in the context of the rhythm of the Speed Up song. However, the more important objectives were met:

- The participants shared their stories

- Kevin introduced possible solutions and information that could help them change their work situation. Several students spoke with Kevin afterwards about their workplace issues.

For Kevin, there was a key moment near the end of the first session, when he was challenged by one of the participants: “We know we have problems at work, but what are YOU going to do about it?” The nature of the challenge felt like a kick in the guts and led to some soul searching at the post-session facilitators’ evaluation: Are we experimenting on these folks, using their issues to ‘test’ the utility of our methodology (using theatre and musical

arts to work with people) OR are we allies in their struggle for economic justice/fairness?

We decided we should offer the songwriting session (Session 2) as a vehicle to take the participants’ message (the song) to those in power. At the start of Session 2, we approached participants with the promise to record their collective concerns (in song) and send it to the Minister of Employment and Immigration on their behalf. Thus, we hoped to move from ‘taking their story for our use’ to ‘sharing their story’ to make positive change. We feel this is the most important outcome of the process and a reminder that we are partners in the activity, for a common goal.

#### EXAMPLE IV — CAROLE CONDÉ/KARL BEVERIDGE ILL WIND, KINGSTON, OSHAWA, HAMILTON, GUELPH, 2001

##### 1st workshop: Storytelling

The workshop process is preceded by informal discussions with the union (local officers) in which general issues and concerns are identified. (eg: privatization, work stress, layoffs, restructuring etc.). These identified issues can help guide the workshop discussions.

**Materials:** a flip board and markers are used to write down topics and story outlines, a tape/digital recorder (optional - depending on the size of the group - to be used

by the artist(s) to consolidate the storylines after the workshop)

- The workshop starts with each participant describing the work they do on the job.
- A general discussion follows in which the topics identified by the union are raised.
- Through this discussion the participants are encouraged to tell stories relating to how the issues are experienced

healthcare workers: stories about their relationship with patients and how they cope with job stress;

custodial workers: their relationship with students and how their work affects the students' well being.

- Through this process a number of key stories are identified (depending on the scope of the project and number of images to be completed).

**EXAMPLE V — RED TREE ARTISTS' COLLECTIVE  
THE SIMCOE PROJECT, 2007/08**

**Story Skits - workshop with Beatriz Pizano**

Pair situations – two people discuss a given issue, present it to the group, give it a title after the group discussion

**Scenario I: phone call home (transcribed and translated from Spanish)**

**"LA MADRE PREOCUPONA"**

(The worrying mother)

Mireya/Gaspar

Mireya is mother in Canada

Gaspar is 16 year-old son in Mexico, looking after his siblings

Presentation:

- mother asks about school, how are the kids, is he taking care of little brother or bothering him
- son asks about mother's health

**"PADRE RESPONSIBLE"**

(The responsible father)

Paola/Pedro

Young couple, two kids

Paola is stay-home mom in Mexico

Pedro is father working in Canada

Presentation:

Paola asks about money, is looking after his kids (sarcastic)

Pedro says they haven't had much work, asks about the kids

-they are in school, they can't come to the phone, where does he think they are?

Paola asks what he is doing, how he is eating, is he behaving himself

Pedro says his card is out of time, will call again.

**Scenario II: talk about work**

-problems, concerns, gossip at work,

-discussions after work, during break

**"COSAS DE LA VIDA"**

Paola and Mireya

-talking during their break

Presentation:

-problems with accommodations, last year there were 7 women to a house, this year they are 10

-not enough time to cook, only one shower stall, one toilet

-on shopping night they wash up in the sink, not enough time to get ready



-problems with harassment from Jamaican men, complaints to foreman solve nothing, they don't believe the women, Mexican men also stick with the Jamaicans, do not defend the women  
-now that it's getting cold, they want to get a heater, the warehouse where they sort plants is kept very cold  
never enough time - BREAK IS OVER!

The group discussion following the presentation brought additional concerns to the table:

-only 2 burners are working, stove is bad, had gas leak. Foreman did nothing, and other workers fixed it for them  
—'transferidos' – Jamaican workers moving from farm to farm are disrespectful, pinch the Mexican women, touch them, talk and make obscene gestures,

—Trinidadians who work with them full time are friends, not offensive

NOTE: this situation illustrates the divisive strategy enabled by the differences in the off-shore workers contracts that each country negotiates with the Canadian government, and the farmers' tactics to divide and control the workers by nationality and/or race.

In the Simcoe area there are no Jamaican or Trinidadian women workers on the farms, only Mexican and Portuguese (who live in the area). Jamaican workers are most often sent from one farm to the next for short-term assignments; as so-called 'transfers'. They do not form the same relationships with their co-workers, as do others who work together longer.

### **"FALSEDADES"**

(Falsehoods)

Pedro/Gaspar

-discussion after work

Presentation:

-they pressure us to work more, no break, haven't eaten all day

-at least they could give us a slice of pizza

-let's cook something now, what do you want to cook

Gaspar makes a call while Pedro cooks...

-called the wife, but she is annoyed

-let's eat and have a drink of tequila

-Gaspar worries about what's going on with his wife

-Pedro consoles him, must be something with the kids,  
have another drink, call her again tomorrow

Discussion: -the men like tequila, have lots of work, go for long periods without food, wife  
hung up on him, she must have problems of her own

### **Visual Play Acting - collage workshop with Amelia Jiménez**

-The artist asks participants to write a  
'letter' in images only  
-all work in silence, do not tell anyone  
what they are 'writing'

Participants use found images from  
magazines, advertisements, newspapers,  
and their own drawings to 'write' a letter  
(could be personal letter, letter to the  
editor, invitation to event, letter of  
complaint, grievance, recommendation,  
pink slip)

-partner 'reads' letter

-writer fills in, completes, explains intent

-group discusses the process and the  
story

-lots of laughter as participants recognize  
messages and joke about their problems



**EXAMPLE VI — LORNA BOSCHMAN**  
**BECOMING A DIRECTOR: THE STORY OF THIS ABILITY MEDIA CLUB,**  
**BURNABY, 2005 – 2007**

During the first six months, we worked on helping members of the group to begin to think of themselves as directors and writers, as people who had the opportunity to tell stories through the medium of video. Self-advocates began to shoot video during the week outside the group; they brought the footage back for others to view and give comments. Media Club members wrote notes and made drawings during the weekly sessions; their notes were stored in folders at BACI (Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion) and brought out weekly for the group. Realizing that part of becoming a director was being called a director, I made individual letterhead for each member of the group with their name and title as director. Group sessions and feedback from group members were vital to creating an open space where ideas could be discussed and work could be critiqued. video to speak out and record their ideas.

**Brainstorming & Idea Development** (15 minutes)

Prior to the workshop, the facilitator develops questions so the workshop attendees can quickly move to the issues at hand. A list of 3-4 questions is sufficient for this length of workshop.

Facilitator asks participants to break into small groups in order to develop ideas for the speak-out based on the list of questions. Attendees use the page with questions to jot down ideas that come out of the group discussion at their table.

Technician asks for volunteers who want to practice using the camera. A short orientation on basic camera functions and movements (pan, tilt, zoom) provided for those who are interested in participating technically.



**EXAMPLE VII — CHECOVALDÉZ**  
**THE COMMUNITY MURAL AS A MEDIUM OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**  
**TANIPERLA, CHIAPAS, 1998**

**First exploration:**

Participants are asked to draw anything that they would like to see in the mural, and then show the drawings to the group. Others 'read' the sketches and each person explains their image. Group discussion follows.

- all ideas and comments collected by the core group, in the workshops, information sessions and at the first meeting, including those of the core group, form an "ideas basket"
- without excluding any opinion, the ideas are sorted, grouping similar concepts, and then elaborating and defining them in consideration of other criteria that the group has set
- a 'synthesizer' exercise converts the sub groups into topics, or themes
- if there are too many themes, the group selects those that are considered priorities (using dots or stars to vote)
- oral history and secondary research can be introduced at this point, using data from archives, library, museum or other sources, in order to confirm findings or to find visual references
- the facilitator/animator/coordinator/artist initiates a series of pair and group exercises to convert the themes into images (ideas bucket/pairing)
- after each round the resulting drawings are exhibited and discussed in the group, corrections and affirmations are incorporated into the next round
- the collaborative process continues in teams of two, three, four or more people bringing together their ideas as elements evolve.
- Collective sketches are exhibited and discussed
- Discussions are not intended as 'election' but rather to integrate and refine the proposals
- Some topics may require mini-seminars to clarify them, others may evolve into structured debates and consensus building
- Working with the images that evolve, the teams grow in numbers, forming fewer sub-groups, which begin to sketch out the

composition of the larger mural

- The compositions are discussed in each final sub-group, and the imagery is brought together into two or three sketches for public presentation to the community (if this applies to the framework of the project, as in works that will be installed in public space)

- At a public hearing, the community selects the image that will be painted, or otherwise executed for the designated site

- This is laid out in a plan of action that is presented to participants in the beginning, and the details may change in the process depending on discipline, site or nature of the community.

### **Participation**

When asked why only men came to participate in the mural, the answer was 'our customs.' Even so, women did join the group. Continuity was provided by overlap in the rotating groups, and their ability to pick up where the previous group had left off. This was consistent with their other collective work. Some, whose homes were two or three hours away, would return for a day at a time. Children, who learn through play, came in asking questions and leaving their ideas. Human rights 'observers' stationed in the area were drawn in, and contributed to the process.

Laughter was an important part of every activity.

At the same time as we were painting the mural, the community was building a church, and finishing a community auditorium/ dormitory, and other projects. They did everything with a smile. If things went well, they laughed, if they made a mistake, they laughed. Laughter was considered a raw material for the community, even though there was a military camp in the hills, and military planes and helicopters circled above the village frequently.

### **Incubation**

The imagery evolved progressively as the group produced more and more drawings. At first, each drawing represented isolated elements

At the end of each round, all drawings were shown and the ideas discussed

Themes began emerging, and people began to draw in groups of three or four, exchanging opinions

Three major themes emerged from the drawings and discussions: the everyday life of the people in the valley, their cultural values, and their dreams for the future.

## PART 4 - PRODUCTION

### MAKING ART WORK TOGETHER

Each discipline will have its own way of integrating or separating creation and production phases. Managing people's expectations may require creative shifting from the full production to "workshopping" a play, from a coherent mural to a patchwork of images, or a series of skits, stanzas, rhymes, vignettes or multiples. At the production stage, it will become clear if expectations can be realized in the one project at hand, or whether the collaboration requires a second phase.

All the previous project steps in research, development, animation lead to some form of production phase, whether it is a poem written and performed in one afternoon, or a play that takes months of rehearsals, costumes, set design, lighting and directing. The preparation requirements will differ according to discipline, media, size of group, location, and any number of factors.

Production may take place in a different location, public site, there may be post-production in an editing suite, parts of the production may have to be contracted out, or require new partnerships and assistants.

What is important is that everyone agrees to the content and format before the process becomes irreversible.

**"WORKING TOGETHER TAKES A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SKILL, A BIT OF PROCESS AND A WHOLE LOT OF WILLINGNESS TO BE IN IT TOGETHER."**

Common Weal Community Arts

### PRODUCTION QUESTIONS:

1. What do we need ?
  - check list of attendance/contacts, materials, tools, props, refreshments
  - do we need to introduce new techniques, demonstrate new tools, test materials, review safety instruction?
  - do we have permission/access to a production site/space?



notes

2. Does everyone know where we are going, when, what to bring?

- check list communication with participants
- make sure everyone has transportation

3. Does everyone know what we are doing?

- clarify plan, roles and expectations of each session

4. How much can we achieve in a given time?

- set reasonable goals
- allow sufficient time for set-up, clean-up, transportation
- do we need additional help, contract out parts of the production?

5. Evaluation/Notes:

What was good about this step/session?

What was different and how did it affect the overall plan/direction?

What went wrong?

Was it a mistake/preventable/fixable?

How did we deal with unforeseen changes/problems?

What did we learn?

How can this help us next time?

## EXAMPLES OF PRODUCTION PHASES

EXAMPLE I — AIDA JORDÃO  
JOE, JOHN AND JACK: SAFETY AT WORK  
TORONTO, 1999 – 2000

### Phase II

**Script Development and Rehearsals:** Fourteen sessions of two to three hours.

### Directing:

After the initial phase of training the group in popular theatre techniques, generating material for the plays and writing a first draft, we developed the script and rehearsed the plays over three months. We made few changes after March 2. I took on the role of director, blocked the scenes, helped to shape characters, paced the show, etc.

### Working with script:

Script development continued as we rehearsed and scenes were re-written to accommodate new ideas. Some of the challenges we encountered because of the group's low literacy skills and limited vocal expression required ingenious ways of repeating scenes and memorizing lines. Some of the participants relied solely on oral transference of dialogue (i.e. repeating what others read out for them). Some of them rehearsed lines over the phone!

### Evaluation:

I felt the group took a giant step backwards, and moved more slowly with the introduction of the script. I dispensed with written text in my second project with the Society in 2001.



### **Working with beginners and changes in the group:**

The short plays we had developed were each about ten minutes in length. Because the group members had been complete beginners when I started working with them in the fall, I continued to do theatre games in each rehearsal and to prepare them to appear on stage. Only three people who had begun the process were still part of the group at this time. Members of the creation team couldn't continue for different reasons: travel, memory problems, expulsion from the Society.

Casting the plays involved bringing in new people; Isaura worked hard to recruit "actors." Effectively, the performance team was different from the creation team. In the end we had nine participants: five people with disabilities and four caregivers/volunteers.

### **Production work:**

During the rehearsal period the coordination of sets and props and booking the performances was also happening. Isaura and I were stretched pretty thin near the end!

We contracted visual artist Phil Maurais to design and build a backdrop that could be transported in a car and could be mounted

quickly. He met with the group to discuss the design, brought back some sketches, and changed them based on group feedback. Phil painted the scene on canvas and built a self-supporting structure of metal tubing that could be put together to hang the backdrop.

Props and costumes were designed and put together by group members from found material and store-bought articles.

Isaura and I booked performances with the help of social workers at community centres.

## **EXAMPLE II — THE PRINT STUDIO/ ROCHELLE RUBINSTEIN PARADOX OF THE VOCATION, HAMILTON 2009**

### **Second Session**

The second session took place in a larger room, the staff cafeteria.

This allowed us to make use of three tables, for drawing, inking and drying the prints.

Matt McInness, a technician from the Print Studio assisted us.

This session was spent translating the drawings into prints.

This involved:

- choosing one sketch out of the eight drawn the previous week
- re-drawing the chosen design on tracing paper, modifying it to suit the medium of relief printing
- rubbing the tracing paper drawing onto a 6 by 4 inch softoleum rubber block
- using a variety of sizes of linocut tools, carving away from the softoleum the areas that will be white (in other words, the areas that will not pick up the ink)
- spreading black block printing ink on a glass plate, then rolling this ink onto a rubber roller and rolling the inked roller on an 8 by 6 inch piece of inexpensive paper; rolling back and forth in different directions, re-inking each time.

The trickiest concept to absorb was that relief printing involves the inversion of traditional drawing; in other words, a carved line, beneath the surface of the block, would not pick up rolled ink and would thus remain white.

We focused on technique more than on subject but there were still many comments and observations made about the images as they emerged. (There is often a 'wow' moment when the first print is pulled.)

### Third Session

The printmaking continued. We examined

the images together, both as individual prints and as groupings of prints which formed a narrative and held together in thematic groupings.

Images included:

- a pair of lungs (waiting to take a breath);
- a figure in a wheelchair (waiting for morning);
- a chair (waiting for treatment);
- black and white stripes (lines of people, prison stripes, etc.; this was the most abstract of the designs);
- a dove inside a heart (make time, make love, make peace).

One participant created a series of prints from two softoleum blocks which became a sophisticated assemblage of repeated images: groupings of images of women's bodies, the breasts resembling clocks, with every ninth being the one with cancer; the negative spaces between the bodies formed hearts.

The participants worked at different speeds. Everyone completed the first block, and those who worked more quickly completed a second block as well.

### Fourth Session

As the printing continued, new images were added to the repertoire: several images of



hands (an important and recurring symbol of healing, comforting, individuality, and communication); sunrise; sunset; hourglass; backward clock; bald head surrounded by wigs and hats; scattered pills; the x-ray room; The Big 'C'.

We began to discuss the exhibition of this work, planned to take place several months later on the main floor of the Juravinski Cancer Centre. I suggested printing these images on hospital gowns and/or lab coats. There was an objection to this idea on the grounds that the participants did not identify with uniforms, that uniforms separated people from one another and this was contrary to what they wished to communicate.

There happened to be a hospital screen near us, set up temporarily for flu shots. When it was suggested that this would be an interesting surface to print on and a powerful method of displaying the prints in an exhibition, we agreed unanimously.

### **Fifth Session**

We removed the fabric from the two frames of the hospital screen. I provided white fabric, which would be better to print on and we measured it to fit the screen.

We printed extra prints, using most of the soft-lead blocks, in order to design a series of prints on both pieces of fabric (which were different sizes) that would hold together both graphically and as a narrative. This involved interesting discussions about design. We tried a number of different formations, with many adjustments, and eventually agreed on two designs for the two screen sections. The result was both harmonious and powerful. We hoped that the piece would have an immediate and surprising impact on viewers, and that it would also invite viewers to spend time studying the images and contemplating the themes.

### **Sixth Session**

One of the participants had sewn hems on the two fabric panels. We fitted them on the frame of the hospital screen.

We all were pleased with the professional look of the piece and moved by its 'presence'. We then worked quickly to assemble and glue a sample of each print in an accordion-folded book. The book was laid out on the length of two tables. We worked collectively to add text around the images, which became part explanation, part poetic riff. We agreed that this book could stand on its own as a

sculptural piece which would complement the hospital screen in an exhibition. It could rest on a table or on a shelf built into the wall.

Our last activity was to print more images for the purposes of making cards to sell or to use for publicity for causes related to cancer and to the JCC. We trimmed the prints and adhered them to the fronts of the cards with double sided, acid free tape.

We improvised a production line that was swift and energetic. The cards with envelopes were ready to be used individually or in groups, in acid-free bags. This last session was very satisfying, in bringing the project to a close and tying up loose ends.



**EXAMPLE III — MARIA DUNN  
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS WORKSHOP  
EDMONTON, NOVEMBER 2009**

**Session 2** (one week later)

Re-introduction of facilitators and participants; brief restatement of the purpose of the workshop for the benefit of those absent for Session 1

**Evaluation**

For a two-session workshop with busy working adults, not everyone from Session 1 returned for Session 2; Also, there were many new faces in Session 2. Approximately 1/3 of participants were “new” for Session 2.

**Activity 1 - Kevin, AWHC Information:**

- gives more detail about AWHC, including handouts, phone #s
- acknowledges that there is often no easy solution, that employers can sometimes send home employees who protest working conditions (claiming that there is no work for them that day, for example)
- promises the participants that we will record their collective concerns in a song and send it to the Minister of Employment and Immigration on their behalf.

### Activity 2 - Role Play:

- Pedro calls to report a problem; Kevin receives the call as the answering machine and then as a real person.
- Kevin discusses the following:
  - “Imminent Danger”
  - anonymity of anyone reporting unsafe work conditions to Health and Safety; Kevin acknowledges that maintaining anonymity may be tricky in a workplace with few employees.
  - negative connotation of the word “complain” in our society
  - the importance of documenting problems in the workplace as they occur, so that the worker can clearly remember what happened, if and when they are asked about it later.

### Evaluation

The role play was effective and fun. A future workshop should coach participants in more positive language that they could use when expressing a problem in the workplace and how to focus on the health/safety issue (rather than anything that could be interpreted as interpersonal relations) when contacting the Work Safe hotline.

**A future workshop, again with more time, might include:**

1) participants pairing off to role play amongst themselves, after Kevin and Pedro had given an example.

2) participants telling us the word for “bringing forward a problem” (aka complaining) in their own language and discussing the connotations that the word has in their language

### Activity 3 – Song Refresher

- Maria sings “Speed Up” to remind participants of the rhythm and structure of the song from the previous week.
- Give lyrics to participants so they can read along and join in on the refrain.
- Encourage participants to clap/stomp/tap along on the rhythm.

### Activity 4 – Lyric Writing (Small Groups)

- Participants divide into 3 groups of 5 by “counting off.”
- Each facilitator leads a group.
- Each group brainstorms the general idea of one verse (these were decided in the workshop planning stage):

-Group 1: What is the problem in the workplace?

-Group 2: What is stopping you from speaking up?

-Group 3: What would be a better situation?

- Participants write new lyrics for their group's verse; they keep the rhythmic structure and melody the same, but change the refrain to reflect the new lyrics

### **Evaluation:**

5 people is a good size for the small group. Any more makes it difficult to incorporate everyone's ideas, which is critical to the process.

### **For each small group, the general lyric writing process is:**

1) brainstorm ideas/content of the lyric based on stories shared in Session 1 or given in this Session 2; e.g., Maria's small group chose the hospital laundry worker's experience of standing at the sorting line for hours, exposed to dust or other particles from the clothes and unable to move his legs, but constantly sorting and throwing laundry with his arms—an action that he had demonstrated to us in Session 1.

2) ask participants to volunteer phrases that would express the ideas they've just

brainstormed; encourage participants who don't immediately give ideas to offer phrases/lines

3) ask for (and offer, if needed) suggestions about how to fit those phrases into a singable line; then sing the lines and see how they sound; rephrase/reword as necessary. In some cases, given that the participants are studying ESOL (English as a Second/Other Language), offer a few choices of how to phrase the same idea and ask for the small group's feedback on which phrase they think sounds best. Another good question after making certain word choices is to ask the group "does this change the meaning?"

### **Evaluation:**

In some ways, this activity captures the essence of the overall workshop goal. Everything before is part of the set up to make people more comfortable and willing to participate. The process of talking about the words that would be needed in the song gave the students the space to get to know each other in the small groups. They had to discuss the specifics of work. They don't have many opportunities to learn language through their own stories. The discussion about specific issues that each participant raised was rich. Participants were genuinely

interested in hearing and supporting each other, talking about solutions within the small groups.

If you want people to talk about their rights at work, they need to have a context for the discussion. In this case it is work. They need to know each other's story and each other's work.

Because we come into the classroom as the outsiders, it is easy to forget that participants are strangers to each other, with barriers of class, race, gender, nationality etc. between them.

This session could have been expanded so that each group wrote all three verses of the new song, giving them more time to discuss.

### **Activity 5 – Edit Lyrics, Full Group:**

- reassemble full group with the 3 new verses displayed on flipcharts
- group sings one verse at a time to see whether new lyrics fit the music
- if lyrics don't fit the music, Maria leads full group in editing one verse at a time; checks with the group that the edit doesn't change

the original meaning intended by the small group

- if needed, Maria asks for/offers a few choices of how to phrase the same idea and the group discusses which lyric choices sound best

### **Note:**

Maria explains “poetic license” and how, in songwriting and poetry, when we play with words to fit them into certain rhythmic structures, we are allowed to bend or break some of the normal rules of grammar.

### **Evaluation (Maria):**

re: Objective “Explore rhythm and song as vehicles to demonstrate aspects of working life”:

For this workshop, we used lyrics, more than rhythm, to explore work health and safety issues. This reflects Maria's bias as a lyric-based songwriter, but also keeps the structure of the song well-defined so as to speed up (pardon the pun) the process of writing new lyrics to reflect the ideas of the participants. A future workshop, with more time, might invite the participants to break into groups and create new rhythms (or melodies) based on their work experiences.

As a songwriter working with a diverse group of people in a short span of time, Maria tried to find the right balance between gathering lyric suggestions from the participants and offering suggestions that help to move the process along so that, by the end of the session, we had a reasonably complete song that we could feel good about singing together.

**Activity 6** – Song completion, Full Group (10 min)

- stand to sing the revised lyrics 2-3 times
- record the group singing, with their permission and the stated goal of Kevin sending this song, expressing their collective concerns, to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

**Wrap Up: Thank participants and ESOL teachers.**

**Evaluation**

Session 2 flowed well and was the right amount of activity to accomplish in the given time frame without having to rush. The ESOL teachers were willing and excellent contributors and facilitators.

**Result:** Kevin recorded the collective workplace concerns (in song) of the group and sent them to the Minister of Employment and Immigration.

The recording and distribution of the song gives purpose to the work. It provides a clear message to the Minister but more importantly, it gives the participants a talking point. They can take the recording home, play it for friends and family, and begin the conversation around their work and rights on the job.

-see page 18 for collective lyrics of **The Laundry Song**

**EXAMPLE IV — CAROLE CONDÉ/KARL BEVERIDGE**  
**ILL WIND, KINGSTON, OSHAWA, HAMILTON, GUELPH, 2001**

## **2nd workshop: Visualization**

The artist(s) consolidate the key stories and write out the storylines on the flip chart for the 2nd workshop. A theatre animator can be brought in to coordinate acting exercises to loosen participants up. These include basic exercises leading to people acting out their work/jobs. (Alternatively, having people perform their job either with props or in pantomime can serve as the 'loosening up' exercise in itself - we used both approaches.) From these, the participants begin to perform the stories from the previous workshop.

### **Materials:**

basic props (needed for the stories, if available)

healthcare workers: clipboards, computer monitor, basic medical supplies bandages, pill containers etc.;

custodial: cleaning equipment - mops and pails, cloths, etc.

A digital camera to document the visualization.

### **Process:**

- A review and consensus on the key stories and additions/elaborations to them if needed.
- Each story is then enacted by the group under the direction of the main storytellers. (The artist photographically documents the enactment.)
- The group evaluates each of the stories, in some cases selecting the most expressive (if there are more stories than needed for the final images).
- The final stories are re-enacted to determine the key 'image.'

As each story is re-enacted a discussion by the group determines the key moment/image. This 'moment' then forms the basis for the final image. The number of 'moments' selected depends on the number of images in the final project (in both the healthcare and custodial workers projects there were five 'moment'/images).



### 3rd workshop: Storyboards

The artist(s) make sketches and select the documentary images that form the draft storyboard for the project. These are presented at the 3rd workshop.

**Materials:** digital camera, paper and pencils (for the storyboards/sketches).

**Process:**

- The Artist(s) present the proposed storyboards for discussion. Adjustments are made to the final sketches and the image concepts are posed by the participants and photographically documented. A consensus is then reached over the composition and content of the final images.
- A discussion led by the artist(s) takes place about the final production - the sets, props and acting. In the case of *Ill Wind* and *Class Maintenance*, the artists took responsibility for the construction of the sets and soliciting the secondary actors that were agreed upon in the workshop (this involved sketches of the final sets).

**Evaluation:**

We noted that in both projects distance between the studio and workplace was an issue - the workshops were held outside Toronto. In both projects the workers were photographed at their locations and were digitally cut into the final image sets that were made in Toronto. The participants decided among themselves who would play the workers in each image with an emphasis on diversity of representation.

NOTE: It would be possible, if there were interest, that the participants could be involved in the making of the sets if distances and travel were feasible. It would also be possible to use workplace locations as the sets (this would require access to the workplace - which is not always possible, especially given photography) or to have simple sets made on location. In that case the materials would need to be supplied depending on the sets chosen.

**EXAMPLE V — RED TREE ARTISTS' COLLECTIVE  
THE SIMCOE PROJECT, 2007/08**

**KLYDE BROOX—MULTI PURPOSE WORD GRID—POETRY WORKSHOP**

The **Multi-Purpose Word Grid** (MPWG) provides easily applicable and adaptable templates that can achieve remarkable effectiveness even in contexts constrained by language and/or literacy barriers. The process stems from a practice that I have used since my days as a certified, but unorthodox, teacher of English and a minor literacy-through-poetry activist in 1980s Jamaica. Much of the philosophical and ideological foundations of the MPWG were somewhat informed by Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed," and Michel Foucault's notions of discourse formation.

The procedures are derived from blending the techniques of drama-based language arts instruction with Dubpoetry and Corrido narrative traditions. Adaptation of this fundamental original 'dubtheatre' based approach, was additionally inspired by online modules related to the popular

traditional Mexican poetry and song ballad form known as the corrido: from <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org>

The dominant artistic vision is grounded in the historical background of Dubpoetry and Corrido traditions. Both have established histories of community mobilization. The overall aim is to employ art as an active instrument and resist its relegation to the role of aesthetic ornament.

The Multi-Purpose Word Grid can be used at any level for any context, to explore any theme, interrogate any issue, initiate a writing task, etc. It can be used in any language and also with as many languages as can be brought into operation simultaneously.

The MPWG can be used to generate discussion, to teach formal language topics, as well as to gather and distill specific facts, or focus analysis on any subject.

The MPWG is an extremely useful tool to use to hone in on the top 36 words involved in any issue, idea, or situation. After the words are collected they can be sifted, sorted, ordered, and used as stems for further development in any possible decisions. The process is flexible and is quite open to improvisations. One can allow the first set of 36 words to be challenged, defended, debated, traded and so on. An approach that employs timed phases adds momentum and keeps groups of individuals consistently focused.

The flowing procedural outline is biased towards poetry and in this context, MPWG related activities involve the use of combinations of words per line on a word-count scale ranging from 12, 16, 24 through 36, 48, 64, 80, and 96 to 112 words generated individually or communally through oral and/or scribal spontaneous construction directed by a workshop leader. (At the 112 word end of the scale there is the possible adventure of introducing the

idea of the sonnet by going for 8 words per line times 14).



Generally, the process requires a workshop leader to guide a discussion or initiate a warm-up, and/or stimulation activity to generate the words. The leader highlights diction (selection of words) syntax (order of the words), and involves rhythm/beat, or pattern where feasible. Devices such as rhyme, repetition, and figures of speech,

such as simile, metaphor, personification, and alliteration, can be carefully introduced once

even multilingual situations. There are also possibilities for excursions into drawing, painting, sculpture, theatre, music, song, dance, even film-making.



Further exploration can be pursued in terms of narrative versioning, translocation of image/idea/feeling/spirit between languages, discourse formation, and meaning construction. Here also the matter of information processing is pertinent- of propaganda technique- 'dubbing in' or 'dubbing out' specified stuff.

engagement has occurred and momentum has been developed. As a result of the process, the impact of format on configuration of words should be made evident as well as the influence of configuration on meaning. This approach can incorporate the resources of any language and will facilitate peer to peer language skill strengthening in a bilingual,

Gateways are provided to discourse on the nature of knowledge. The notion that information has to be directly experienced by the senses and processed by memory to become knowledge can be debated where participants are so inclined. Audio and selected video documentation can be used as integral aspects of the process.

## WORD GRID STEP-BY-STEP:

**STEP 1:** Meet and greet (exchange of names, and a few voluntary words about self by the workshop presenter and each participant).

**STEP 2:** Related warm-up activity

**STEP 3:** Word Search

The workshop leader uses strategies, devices and triggers to elicit and evoke words that speak particularly to a targeted topic, issue, situation, condition context, reality, idea, emotion, thought, belief, event, person, trait, habit, etc. For example; start a survey type discussion about a given working environment, i.e. working on a farm as a migrant worker from another country.

**STEP 4:** Ask for 12, 16, 24, 36, etc, single words from participants that they use to convey their feelings about, or relationship to the subject/issue/reality etc.

**STEP 5:** Draw, or display; circulate copies of the word grid, representing the expected number of words per line and the number of lines. Designate a scribe to record the words. If, due to literacy levels, that is not possible, the workshop facilitator does the recording in a format that affords maximum access to all participants. Use a

chalkboard, flip-chart etc. Ideally, a laptop and a projector would be the general access platform.

**STEP 6:** Record the words on the grid (in strictly oral situations establish and maintain the grid orally. In such a case use 12 words. The 12, 16, 24, 36 seems most feasible for one-shot workshops and short-term projects. Longer-term projects could involve 48 to 112 and above type grids.

**STEP 7:** Extraction:

A: Record the first words as the raw draft  
B: Take the words out of the frame and invite participants to make suggestions on how to expand on the recorded words to extend the narrative of their shared reality. Document any additions or alterations to the text resulting from the extraction.

**STEP 8:** Expansion – Extend stems rooted in the first words and use daily-image -connected questions to open windows in the imaginations of participants to different angles of extension of the text within a loose rhythmic pattern. Expand the piece. Document the expanded draft

**STEP 9:** Utterance: (Voice the expanded

draft. Participants practice giving emotional energy, rhythmic pacing, and dramatic value to each word. Naturally related gestures can be noted incorporated and emphasized.

**STEP 10:** Voice Editing

Replace words that hitch on the tongue or lack conviction within a tightened rhythmic pattern. Repetition can be used as well as rhyme to maintain a pattern. Record voice-

edited version.

**STEP 11:** Final Drafting (as edited by voice). Write and document final draft.

**STEP 12:** Orchestration/Dramatization – Experiment vocally with the piece as a speaking choir. Here it can be dubbed – simultaneously presented – in more than one language.

**MULTI PURPOSE WORD GRID - 36**

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36

Sample Completed Twelve Word Template (2X6) (suggested couplet)

1 punch	2 your	3 timecard	4 work	5 fast	6 hard
7 bills	8 reduce	9 reward	10 onward	11 toward	12 graveyard

COMPLETED SAMPLE TEMPLATES

Sample Completed Twelve Word Template (4X3)

1 punch	2 your	3 timecard
4 work	5 fast	6 hard
7 bills	8 reduce	9 reward
10 retire	11 to	12 graveyard

Sample Completed Twelve Word Template (3X4)

1 punch	2 your	3 timecard	4 work
5 working	6 hard	7 toward	8 graveyard
9 life	10 bills	11 reduce	12 reward

or

1 Punch	4 work	7 toward	10 bills.
2 Your	5 working?	8 Graveyard	11 Reduce
3 cardtime	6 hard/better	9 life	12 reward

or (6X2)

1 punch	2 timecard
3 work	4 fast
5 working	6 hard
7 bills	8 taxes
9 costs	10 increase
11 rewards	12 decrease

### NOTES:

Begin with 12-word template for oral only context. Where prompting is needed there can be approaches such as the following: Participants are numbered and utter words when their numbers are called (mixing it up spontaneously can be fun, and is a good memory capacity building exercise for all involved). Random word shifting by the number can also be encouraged to open syntactic windows in the imagination. The impact of diction and syntax on the meaning of content should be highlighted.

In a situation where participants are not yet ready to write for themselves, the words should be generated orally and recorded by the workshop leader. If there is no means of recording them straight repetition, expansion, and memorization can be used.

If there is no chalkboard, flipchart, or projector, the facilitator could use cardboard strips, or cardstock paper to write the words on. In such a context, the participants can be asked to draw the words and see the shape of words of which they know the sounds.

Finally, in bi/multi- lingual situations, natural speakers of each language should be cast as experts in the process of the translation/translocation of ideas and imagery across and between languages. In performance, there is also the opportunity to experiment with live vocal 'dubbing' by having the text uttered in more than one language simultaneously as a dramatized choral delivery. There are numerous other ESL benefits. The MPWG is a magical starting point for literary encounters with the word that can lead to very fruitful excursions in easily relatable areas of other artistic disciplines.



**EXAMPLE VI — LORNA BOSCHMAN BECOMING A DIRECTOR:  
THE STORY OF THIS ABILITY MEDIA CLUB, BURNABY, 2005 – 2007**

In the end, six members of the group were able to direct their own videos. The training team worked with participants to formulate a concept that eventually became a video production. In order to explore the concepts of citizenship, contribution and community, two members of the group created works concerned with their workplace, one in a video store and the other at a coffee shop.

While one director scanned photos and interviewed his father, telling a story about their fishing trips together, another hoped to follow his parents' lead and start his own family. Another video followed a strict interview format: the director questioned his friend about growing up within a large institution and how he became a self-advocate when he was released into the community.

The sixth video is an original work with an ecological message, encouraging the audience to be kind to spiders through drawing an analogy to the near-extinction of the buffalo on the Western Canadian frontier.

The completed videos are on the NFB website CitizenShift at

[http://citizen.nfb.ca/node/745&dossier\\_nid=1129](http://citizen.nfb.ca/node/745&dossier_nid=1129)

The six shorts are also included in a half hour documentary about the project called this ability available at many Canadian public libraries and through the NFB at

[www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/eng/collection/film/?id=53912](http://www.onf-nfb.gc.ca/eng/collection/film/?id=53912)

**Speak-out on camera** (30-45 minutes)

While the technician assists a few participants who take turns operating the camera, attendees are filmed while discussing the ideas that arose during brainstorming. Facilitator ensures that everyone who wants to speak out is given time to do so.

**Review & discuss footage** (45-60 minutes)

When participants have completed their statements, the camera can be used to play back comments to the group, allowing for a feedback loop. Facilitator directs the

discussion and might ask the technician to stop the footage after key statements to allow the group to develop those ideas further.

**Next steps** (5 minutes)

Check to see if participants are interested in meeting on an ongoing basis to create well-developed video/new media productions that reflect the perspectives of their communities.

**EXAMPLE VII — CHECOVALDÉZ**  
**THE COMMUNITY MURAL AS A MEDIUM OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**  
**TANIPERLA, CHIAPAS, 1998**

**Production:**

**materials:** Participants are introduced to all supplies and materials, to safety rules, clean up, security, and other codes as appropriate to the community and site



- Participants experiment with mixing colour, and explore visual elements and principles of design for the purpose of social communication (defined in Mexico in contrast to commercial art)
- dimension, proportion, distance, background, foreground, etc
- techniques for preparation and application of paint
- inspecting and repairing the wall or other surface

Participants may select particular areas on which they want to work, and may work in shifts. Names of participants can be incorporated into the design, or listed separately.

Newcomers may want to join at this stage.

The facilitator or core group needs to organize every aspect in order to assure that the maximum creative potential of the entire community is reached (see your check list and work plan).

### **Painting**

In order to maintain the integrity and style of the original sketches, we transferred the imagery through a grid. This was a novelty for most of the participants, and the number of curious spectators increased daily as we painted.

Working up to 10 hours a day, the actual painting took 7 days. New participants, especially among the women, came out to help paint, using ladders, tables and chairs to reach the top of the wall.

- All along the army took photographs and made video recordings from cars or helicopter.

## PART 5 - PRESENTING

### GOING PUBLIC WITH YOUR COLLABORATION

**PROCESSES SUCH AS  
PLANNING, PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT AND  
CAPACITY BUILDING, WHILE  
VERY IMPORTANT, HAVE  
TO LEAD SOMEWHERE  
– TO AN END RESULT  
FROM WHICH PEOPLE  
GAIN A SENSE OF PRIDE  
AND ACCOMPLISHMENT  
– SOMETHING THAT IS  
REMEMBERED OVER TIME.**

Common Weal Community Arts

Community art and labour art projects are primarily 'about' the people who are actively involved in creating the artwork, rather than about speaking to a passive viewer. As such, practices involving artists and non-artists in collaboration break down the barriers between artist and audience, and blend process into presentation. When there is a public presentation of a community art project, it often involves an extended community in the celebration. A mural unveiling might include blessing ceremonies, a musical performance, poetry readings, and food. Some community theatre groups, i.e. Clay and Paper Theatre in Toronto, Everybody's Theatre Co., in Eden Mills, Ontario, involve everyone in attendance in the act, led by a core group of performers. However, there is a clear line between one-off audience engagement, and a process that demonstrates collaboration throughout.

An unveiling or other public celebration, where appropriate and in keeping with local customs and community resources, should include food and refreshments for participants and guests. This is an opportunity to share their experience of the project with each other, with the facilitator(s) and guests.

Representatives of funding agencies and partner organizations may appreciate the enthusiasm and energy generated at a public event, and your endeavour may garner more support from elected officials who are sympathetic to the cause. The opening of the farm workers photographic exhibition at the Norfolk Arts Centre was attended by a few of the farmers, and one strawberry farm donated a deli spread.

No matter how well you are prepared, there is always a small chance that something will not go as planned, or that someone else had a different plan. Here is a list of some mishaps:

Caveat # 1) Beware of a successful activist event! It shall draw the wrath of the pope, empire and capitalism. At the protest against the Summit of the Americas in Québec City, an Ottawa Local presented skits that they had created with the support of an Ontario Arts Council grant. Conservative pressure came down hard on the funding agency.

Caveat # 2) Beware of politicians and their agents! Not only in third world conflict zones, but in any zone of contention, chances are that someone will not like what you did. The Mexican cultural attaché in Toronto insisted that activists were to blame for conditions on farms in Norfolk County, where ten women share one shower stall, and the heat is still off in late October.

Caveat # 3) Beware of chickens! A collaboration between CUPE local 416, the Toronto Environmental Alliance and artists Grace Channer,

Sadi Ducros and Barbara Klunder lost the support of the Laidlaw Foundation when a Toronto City Councillor objected to the activist content of images which the City had previously approved for display on garbage trucks. The mural depicted a train hauling trash through a pristine forest at a time when Toronto was in desperate search for a dumpsite.



## WHAT COULD GO WRONG?:

Think of Murphy's Law—"Anything that can go wrong, will."—and list potential problems that could pop up in the last minute

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

## SAMPLE PRESENTATIONS

EXAMPLE I — AIDA JORDÃO  
JOE, JOHN AND JACK: SAFETY AT WORK  
TORONTO, 1999 – 2000

### Phase III - Performances

-Six performances in 2000 at Wallace Emerson Community Centre, Terranova, St.Christopher House, First Portuguese-Canadian Cultural Centre, St. Clair Services for Seniors, Access Alliance; also participated in Mayworks (Workers' Day of Mourning) and Community Arts Biennale (CAB 2000).

The performances took place in different places, which involved getting the set, props and actors to each venue. (TTC Wheeltrans played a major part in getting the participants to the show on time!) We worked without a stage manager or production manager so I basically performed these functions and, as director, I continued to monitor the performance and give notes.

### Evaluation:

We had a Q&A following each performance and received feedback from audience members:

- the performers were comfortable/natural
- a great example to understand the situation of people with disabilities
- have been in this situation; cried
- gave information on inspection ruses on construction sites
- it was too short!
- the message is so important
- how people adapt after an accident is amazing
- saw injustice and abuse of "innocents"
- understood and sympathized

**EXAMPLE II — THE PRINT STUDIO/ROCHELLE RUBINSTEIN  
PARADOX OF THE VOCATION,  
HAMILTON 2009**

**Curatorial workshop and next steps:**

The Print Studio organized a final workshop with all the artists and participants to select and prepare works for exhibitions at the hospital and at The Print Studio's community gallery.

The second phase of the project proposes to bring artists and healthcare workers together to develop programs that involve the patients.

**EXAMPLE III — MARIA DUNN  
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS WORKSHOP, EDMONTON, NOVEMBER 2009**

Public performance was not part of the project.

**EXAMPLE IV — CAROLE CONDÉ/KARL BEVERIDGE  
ILL WIND, KINGSTON, OSHAWA, HAMILTON, GUELPH, 2001**

**Final production and post-production:**

The final images combined photographs of the poses taken by the participants and the collaboratively designed sets, as well as secondary actors who were photographed by the artists in the studio. The artists took care of set photographs and the post-production of combining and finishing the images without the workers' further participation.



A set of the final images are made available for exhibition at union halls and in educational spaces as well as being available for reproduction (newsletters, posters, campaigns etc.). As artists we also present the work in public art spaces (museums, galleries etc.).



**EXAMPLE V — RED TREE ARTISTS' COLLECTIVE  
THE SIMCOE PROJECT, 2007/08**

For the exhibition at the Norfolk Arts Centre in fall 2007, participants selected 50 images from more than 500 photographs. Two of the workers, Nigel and Sean, designed the exhibition, organizing photographs into groupings and sequences to depict a cohesive narrative of planting, weeding, harvesting, packing and shipping. Also included were photographs of places and activities the workers enjoyed during their limited time off work, and at home in Mexico and Trinidad—holidays and ceremonies with their families. What did not get selected for public viewing, were records of the dismal accommodations in sheds and warehouses on Norfolk area farms.

Sally Frater and Ingrid Mayrhofer, who had conducted the photography workshops, also took “studio” portraits of each participant in the setting that he chose to best represent his place in the Canadian landscape. Nery Espinoza and Klyde Brooks worked with the participants on texts to accompany their portraits. Exhibitions took place in Simcoe, St. Catharines, Toronto and Hamilton.

**Press Release:**

-For immediate release –

**(WHO)** Red Tree Artists' Collective and Mayworks Festival are proud to present the **(WHAT)** exhibition **From One Place to Another: Las dos realidades**

**(WHEN)** Opening reception: Friday, May 2, 4:30 pm – 6:30 pm  
Exhibition runs May 1 - 15, 2008

**(WHERE)** FoodShare, 90 Croatia Street, Toronto, Ontario

**(WHY/HOW)** Photographs by migrant farm workers from Mexico and Trinidad in the Simcoe area of Norfolk County portray aspects of tobacco, ginseng and strawberry planting and harvesting, as well as accommodations and spare time on the farms.

Hoping to offer Canadians a better understanding of a year in their lives, the workers share photographs of their homes in Trinidad and Mexico – scenes of urban and rural places, family and community. Selections of their photographs, together with texts and studio portraits by Red Tree artists, tell the stories of the men – sons, husbands, and fathers – who spend most of the year, every year, away from home, in order to provide for their families.

This exhibition celebrates the migrant workers' cultural contribution, and demonstrates their impact on Canada's economy.

**Participants**

from Norfolk County Farms:

Christino Pierre (Sangre Grande) Fulgencio Mejía Ibarra (Morelos)

Jesús Tinajero Rodriguez (Guanajuato) Marcelo Pérez Saldivar (Veracruz)

Martín Rodriguez Sierra (Guanajuato) Nigel Espinoza (Sangre Grande)

Rafael Lario Barbosa (Guanajuato) Ronald Audain (Enterprise Village, Chughanas)

Santiago Martínez Rodríguez (Guanajuato) Sean Mapp (Arima)

from Red Tree Artists Collective:

Klyde Broox (Hamilton) Nery Espinoza (Toronto)

Sally Frater (Toronto) Ingrid Mayrhofer (Hamilton)

Technical Assistance: Julio Ferrer, Tariq Sami

Red Tree gratefully acknowledges the support of the Ontario Arts Council's Community Arts Office, Mayworks Festival and UFCW Canada. For information contact <redtree@sympatico.ca>

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**MARTÍN: ME GUSTA SER LO QUE SOY**

Sus palabras son ante todo una enérgica afirmación de una manera de ser, de un derecho a ser lo que se es: una cultura específica, una comprensión del universo, una interacción con la tierra. Martín dice que la idea de vivir en Canadá con su familia, siempre ha cruzado su mente, siempre ha estado en su cabeza, pero le gustaría venir y trabajar duro por algún tiempo, para ahorrar lo suficiente, y regresar a México. "Nuestras culturas son muy diferentes, y a mi y a mi esposa no nos gustaría que nuestros hijos crecieran en una cultura que no es la nuestra. Nosotros los mexicanos tenemos una cultura milenaria."

**MARTÍN: I LIKE BEING WHO I AM**

Martín's words are an energetic affirmation of a way of life, the right to be oneself: to have one's own culture, to believe in one's understanding of the universe and one's connection to the land. He says that he has thought about bringing his family to live in Canada, but decided that it was better to come here to work, to save enough money, and to return to Mexico. "Our cultures are very different. My wife and I would not want to raise our children in a culture that is not ours. In Mexico, we have a culture that has existed for thousands of years."

**EXAMPLE VI — LORNA BOSCHMAN  
BECOMING A DIRECTOR: THE STORY OF THIS ABILITY MEDIA CLUB,  
BURNABY, 2005 – 2007**

When the videos were completed, group members began to show them at community living conferences as well as local events. We practiced public presentation skills within the group, each presenter developing a short introduction to their video.

BACI asked several self-advocates from the group to show their films as part of the orientation process for new staff; another member of the group was asked to be part of panel discussions after the release of his video.

Gerry Juzenas, a self-advocate member of the group and the vice-president of BACI, was asked to assist another group who were setting up a video program to help self-advocates to find their voice.

Although the time commitment was considerable, for the participants and sponsoring organization, the project was considered a success. BACI honoured the directors with a “red carpet” event, handing out “Oscars” at a well-attended launch.

**EXAMPLE VII — CHECOVALDÉZ  
THE COMMUNITY MURAL AS A MEDIUM OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION  
TANIPERLA, CHIAPAS, 1998**

**Celebration**

The unveiling of the mural was celebrated with food, coffee, non-alcoholic corn beverages, and dancing in the village commons on Thursday and continued on Friday.

It ended abruptly when the elders heard that the army was on the move toward the community, and people went back to their own villages.

Ten people, including the communications professor/lead artist from Mexico City were arrested and held at the notorious Cerro Hueco prison without trial for 18 months.

The mural has since been reproduced in more than 50 locations all over the world. In Toronto the Red Tree Artists' Collective worked with children, youth and professional artists on a "Greeting to Taniperla," on view at the Scarboro Mission handball court. Checo and Nico, a young Tzeltal activist, led the recreation of the original imagery, incorporated in the larger mural.



## PART 6 - EVALUATION

### WHAT WAS GOOD, WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN BETTER, AND WHAT'S NEXT

Continuity, or the lack thereof, is cited as the single most serious concern for community—artist relationships. As a tool to build community, collaborative art projects inevitably envision a “Next Time,” another level, or a new direction. Ongoing programs strengthen relationships, build skills, confidence, and allow for exploration of new areas. Because labour art projects take place within frameworks of popular and adult education, the lasting benefits for participants need to be front and centre. Some of

**AS WELL AS THE GLORY  
AND THE BLAME, PARTNERS  
SHARE POWER, RISKS AND  
REWARDS AND ARE A  
SOURCE OF COMFORT AND  
ENCOURAGEMENT TO EACH  
OTHER.**

Common Weal Community Arts

these benefits cannot be ‘scripted.’ For example, the Trinidadian migrant workers in Simcoe learned about their eligibility for family benefits from the Mexicans through their collaboration on the Red Tree photography project. Previously, they thought that the UFCW Support Centre only served the Mexicans who needed translation. The art project increased the reach of the support centre.

“The Simcoe Project” suffered a setback when the Ontario Trillium Foundation did not fund Red Tree’s application for an ESL-through-the-arts-project. The Mexican workers, some of whom have been coming for the 8-month contracts for more than 20 years, unanimously requested that we build English

classes into the next phase. Concentrating on an application to Trillium for a peer learning pilot project exhausted Red Tree’s human resources. Confident in the merit of the proposal, they did not pursue alternative sources, and as a result of the rejection, were unable to continue the following year.

Aida Jordão mentions that, “Isaura and I were stretched pretty thin near the end!” Being an artist has never been a 9 – 5 job, and, true to the nature of a vocation, artists cannot help but finish a project, even when the hourly compensation drops below minimum wage. We may never be able to stay



within the 'ideal' budget and manage to charge workshop fees that represent 'industry standards.' Tracking our time and reviewing budgets is good practice. That way, we also know how much volunteer labour to report.

Budget review: Projected versus Actual

Where could we have saved time/money/energy?

Was the work plan effective?

What changed, and how?

Did the trouble shooting-strategies work? Did we learn new ways of dealing with problems?

List all the questions that your funders (or other project partners) ask you to answer in your report. They will cover much ground in helping you evaluate successes, and identify areas for improvement.

The most important question is to ask participants how useful the project was for them, and what else needs to be done.

How did the project contribute to community cultural development? Did it help strengthen the group, give them a new tool to resolve concerns, lead to other goals?

How did it allow participants to apply their own skills to an artistic expression?

A vertical sheet of lined paper with the word "notes" written in blue cursive at the top. The paper has horizontal lines and is positioned to the right of the text blocks.

What new experiences, learning, connections did it bring to them?

How did it further the practice of the artists involved?

-Consider your time, energy, effort, compensation and professional development

How did it advance access to arts and culture, and how did it include the participant's voices in cultural development?

Where was the fun?





## SAMPLE EVALUATIONS

EXAMPLE I — AIDA JORDÃO  
JOE, JOHN AND JACK: SAFETY AT WORK  
TORONTO, 1999 – 2000

### Evaluation:

After the last performance we shared a meal together and chatted about future projects. Everyone wanted to do more plays! Because the Society had been in crisis resulting in the expulsion of some members, people felt the theatre project created solidarity. I gave the participants evaluation forms and the literate members helped the others to fill them out.

I asked:

- what did you like the most?
- what did you like the least?
- what would you have done differently?
- what was the major difficulty you encountered?
- what did you learn of most value?
- what did you feel with most intensity?
- where will you take this experience?
- how would you assess the facilitator/director's work?

This evaluation helped me immensely to shape the following project, Yes I Can!, that took place in 2001-02. The great difficulty most participants had reading and learning lines, convinced me to dispense with script. Because they wanted to reach out to a larger audience we worked with younger Society members in English. In order to provide more training I contracted Helder Ramos to co-direct, and Alex Bulmer and Jane Field, to conduct workshops on voice and singing respectively.

**Observations:**

Throughout the summer and fall of 2000, the group continued to perform “Joe, John and Jack: Safety at Work” and “Being Independent” on their own at community centres and at Harbourfront’s Festival of Portuguese Language Arts and Culture, Sabor Saudade. This was really what I had trained them for: to go out on their own and spread their message through theatre!

**EXAMPLE II — THE PRINT STUDIO  
PARADOX OF THE VOCATION,  
HAMILTON 2009**

**I LOOKED FORWARD TO MEETING MY CO-WORKERS AND ARTIST IN  
THE STAFF LOUNGE TO WORK ON OUR PRINTMAKING BLOCKS. IT WAS  
RELAXING TO CARVE THE BLOCKS PARTICULARLY ON DAYS WHEN I HAD  
ACUTELY ILL PATIENTS, OR WHEN A PATIENT HAD DIED. ROCHELLE’S  
DRAWINGS OF HER FATHER’S HOSPITAL JOURNEY WERE VERY MOVING.  
THIS PROJECT HELPED US CONNECT OUR STERILE SELVES WITH OUR  
CREATIVE SELVES.**

Dr. Michele Bertothy, M.D. General Practitioner Oncology

Each participant was asked for feedback and there was agreement to continue working on a second phase that would involve patients. Through research we found a number of

examples of artist residency programs in hospitals. The Print Studio and Juravinski Cancer Centre co-applied for funding to implement the next step. In the meantime, a selection of pieces from the workshops will be exhibited at other hospitals and events related to cancer care. Written comments were collected for the publication of a brochure to accompany the exhibitions.

**EXAMPLE III — MARIA DUNN  
KNOW YOUR RIGHTS WORKSHOP  
EDMONTON, NOVEMBER 2009**

Facilitators met and debriefed after each workshop. Maria wrote detailed notes on the workshop, whether each section achieved the stated goal and submitted these notes to the other facilitators for comments.



**EXAMPLE V — RED TREE  
ARTISTS' COLLECTIVE  
THE SIMCOE PROJECT, 2007/08**

During the evaluation of the photo project in fall 2007, the participants asked for other disciplines to be included in the following year's sessions. More than anything else, the Mexican workers wanted us to help them learn English. Klyde's bi-lingual poetry exercises started us thinking about teaching ESL through the arts.

**EXAMPLE VI — LORNA BOSCHMAN**  
**BECOMING A DIRECTOR: THE STORY OF THIS ABILITY MEDIA CLUB,**  
**BURNABY, 2005 – 2007**

Although the group began with an open mandate to create their own stories in any medium, after six months the focus shifted to individual projects that told personal stories. The group was open to participants with any level of skills and abilities. Members who had already learned to use the camera equipment taught newer members how to set up the tripod and start the camera. Several self-advocates did not develop the skills to operate the equipment but participated through their presence. On several occasions, interpersonal conflicts between group members disrupted the unity of the group but we were able to accept those incidents as part of the creative process and move on.

**EXAMPLE VII — CHECOVALDÉZ**  
**THE COMMUNITY MURAL AS A MEDIUM OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATION**  
**TANIPERLA, CHIAPAS, 1998**

**Observe/describe:**

One person assumes the role of observer, and does not talk or interact with anyone in the group during the entire session. The observer takes notes about the actions of the facilitator and the participants, and at the end of the session he/she shares the observations with the group. This role might be valuable to an understudy, student/intern, social worker or union rep. The 'observer' role can also be assigned to participants on a rotating basis, and form part of the ongoing evaluation process.

- The core group and facilitator(s) organize all written and graphic material, make notes of the discussions and observations, to compile for the evaluation process
- reflections on the process and outcome, conclusions, feedback, proposals for future consideration

- a final report is distributed publicly
- the end of the project may well be the beginning of another one. Continuity is important to keep the creative momentum.

The first basic rules are:

"Always consult the community!"

"Integrate creative groups/individuals who are part of the community"

"Create together what we may enjoy together!"

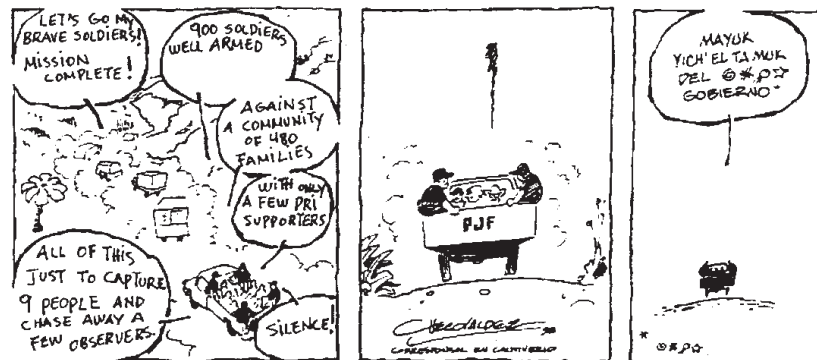
### Reflections:

Far from any pamphletarian or doctrinarian content, the images reflected the reality and hopes of the community. Participants had their photographs taken with the mural, to show to others and to document themselves. The participation of the indigenous people in the mural was unique: other murals in the region had been painted in consultation with villagers, but never by them. In that sense, the mural comprised a window and a mirror at the same time. Any cultural manifestation provides a human distance from the violence of war. In the case of the Taniperla

mural, the value added lies in the fact that the indigenous people wove their own conceptual and visual content.

### The end:

At 4 in the morning after the unveiling celebration, an army convoy of 50 military, police and civilian vehicles brought approximately 1000 troops, waking up the village with search lights. They came with warrants for the arrest of 12 people who were not present. In their stead, the police arrested a group of bystanders, including the professor from Mexico City and a human rights observer, while some soldiers painted over the mural, destroyed the new community hall and the bilingual welcome sign to the village.



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## PART 7 - LESSONS LEARNED

EXAMPLES OF GOOD + AND NOT SO GOOD - EXPERIENCES

### POSITIVE SURPRISES, GREAT EXAMPLES AND GOOD POINTS

- + group facilitators whose expertise lies in labour, mental health, social work or other fields, are valuable and at times essential. However, they too need to participate in the creative process as equal contributors – see Betty Brouwer of Re-create and Tom Montgomery of Notre Dame House in The Print Studio's Youth-at-risk project Textures in My Crib
- + breaking up parts of the mural's picture plane into facets or smaller 'frames' can successfully accommodate the need for individuals to express their specific idea, or for a group that has issues of trust – see "Violence is Beneath Us"
- + individual expression at the beginning of a longer working relationship may take the shape of a series of patchwork-style images, small skits, tableaux, vignettes, rhymes, and can be used in the development of the collaborative work – see Checovaldez's community mural methodology
- + a series of facilitated discussions in all above-mentioned cases resulted in improved communications and a learning process for all involved. Key to the resolutions in each situation was clarification of each participant's expectations, the establishment of mutual respect, and recognition of each contribution.
- + a community group that invited a community arts practitioner to paint a mural for them, and instead found themselves involved at every step of the process, as their 'guest' turned the invitation around
- + Checovaldez's 'relay' approach to ongoing evaluation and continued development of imagery with rotating groups of participants
- + The Simcoe Project had a beneficial side effect in that some of the seasonal farm

workers became aware of their eligibility for parental benefits for children born in their absence. The UFCW Simcoe Support Centre was set up for all migrant workers, but initially only the Mexicans came in for help with translation of forms, income tax, and other issues. Trinidadian and Jamaican workers did not need translation, but took advantage of the services when they found out about them through their participation in our 'camera club.' see: <http://www.redtreecollective.ca/simcoe07.htm>

✚ even though all projects need to be thoroughly planned, it is equally important to be flexible, and allow the 'larger picture' to evolve. In the case of a mural on the ball court of a faith-based organization, the full community's support was obtained slowly through their participation in the process. From initial hesitance to allow artists and youth on the grounds without supervision, the 'hosts' began to provide food and to contribute to the creative process. Having agreed to only guarantee maintenance of the mural for 2 years, they paid for 25-year varnish when the mural was finished. It has remained there since May 2000.

-see <http://www.redtreecollective.ca/tani.htm> (the project responded to the destruction of the Tzeltal community mural in Chiapas)

✚ Some of the joys were:

- the resilience and flexibility of the participants
- the laughter



- women playing men and loving it
- shared stories of overcoming obstacles

✚ After the last performance we shared a meal together and chatted about future projects. Everyone wanted to do more plays! Especially because the Society had been in crisis resulting in the expulsion of some members, people felt the theatre project created solidarity. I gave the participants evaluation forms and the literate members helped the others to fill them out.

✚ Participants were asked:

- what did you like the most?
- what did you like the least?
- what would you have done differently?
- what was the major difficulty you encountered?
- what did you learn of most value?
- what did you feel with most intensity?
- where will you take this experience?
- how would you assess the facilitator/director's work?

✚ The evaluation helped immensely to shape the following project, Yes I Can!, that took place in 2001-02. Because most participants had great difficulty reading and learning lines, I dispensed with script. Because they wanted to reach out to a larger audience we worked with younger Society members in English. Because they wanted more training I contracted Helder Ramos to co-direct, and guest artists with disabilities, Alex Bulmer and Jane Field, who did workshops on voice and singing respectively.

✚ the internationally renowned politically-engaged muralist who had previously worked with other professional artists, had to learn to collaborate and respect the contribution of a diverse group of artists who invited him into their project



## GAPS, HURDLES AND FAILED EFFORTS

— Acts of God or the Queen's enemies by nature are exempt from insurance policies. It is difficult to say, even with a decade's hindsight, what might have saved a mural that was considered 'too political' by the City of Toronto. Even though the imagery had been developed in collaboration between artists, members of CUPE local 416 and the Toronto Environmental Alliance, and had been approved by city staff, some politicians objected to the narrative of a train carrying garbage into the wilderness. The funder, a private foundation, was overwhelmed by the fallout and soon after cancelled their "Initiative in Cultural Democracy."

Footnote: <http://www.robinpacific.ca/publications/away.swf>

<http://www.robinpacific.ca/publications/revolution.swf>

see also the Laidlaw Foundation's Annual Report 2000

— Some of the ongoing challenges of working with this group were:

- attendance made difficult by accessibility (transportation) issues
- the internal problems of the organization impacted on the theatre group
- language and literacy
- project coordination

— community/artists' expectations are not clear: everyone gets excited over an idea and people jump into production without having planned all the details

— a group of artists who outnumbered the non-artists one day, because their workshop coincided with an added shift in a non-union environment with migrant workers

— participants dropping out because of other commitments, changing or added shifts

— a major challenge throughout these sessions was the introduction of written

script to a group where several members were unable to read or vocalize. This shifted the power dynamics substantially for a couple of sessions but the group found a way to work through it and by the Christmas break we had created first drafts of two short plays that were theirs.

- a non-artist who painted over another participant's work because she didn't like what the other person had done the day before, taking advantage of the fact that she had time to work on a day when none of the others could come in

- a labour leader whose union financially contributed to the production of a collective mural, and who had not participated in the brainstorming sessions, but came in later to request that imagery be changed

- more star artists who 'intervened' with the imagery of community participants, and who were publicly reprimanded by a social worker for upsetting and exploiting the developmentally disabled participants. This particular experience took place in a university art gallery setting, in collaboration with a school for severely disabled adults, and was exposed during a panel discussion with visiting artists, social workers and faculty.

- the danger of romanticizing people's social disadvantages, be they mental health, poverty or other issues under the pretext of 'political/activist art,' is that it inevitably leads to exploitation. True community art practice has the potential to empower voices who do not have access to other media.

- other pitfalls to well-intentioned efforts in dealing with injustice through art include appropriation of voices and cultures, or the repetition of offensive imagery or language in the failed attempt to condemn their historical or continued use.

**n.b.** Cross-cultural collaboration is only successful when it is respectful and inclusive of diverse voices, experiences and knowledge. Differences in class and education may not be immediately identifiable as underlying a clash among participants, but when an artist expresses frustration over the fact that a group of “immigrant women on welfare didn’t want to follow her instructions,” it becomes quite clear which side needs to evaluate her approach instead.

**n.b.**

essential points to include in contract negotiation are

- who gets paid/volunteers to do what
- who pays artist fees, stipends for participants and/or compensation for their transportation, food, child-care, etc
- who requests/gives permission for a location
- what is the size, length, format
- who cares for a permanent work of art
- ownership’ distribution, reproduction rights/honoraria

Contractual issues are best resolved by signing contracts before the work begins. Consult professional artists’ associations for guidelines specific to the discipline, i.e. CARFAC for visual art



# FORMS AND LISTS

## USEFUL DOCUMENTS FOR RECORD KEEPING AND PROPER PROCESS

Sign in sheets

- list name and contact
- emergency contact
- attendance/availability
- info on diet, medical/abilities, accommodations
- other relevant data specific to the project \_\_\_\_\_

Permission forms

- parental consent if working with children
- photography and video release forms for permission to use participant's image and/or voice for media and other promotional and educational material
- consent to exhibit, perform or publish artwork created by artists and participants
- other issues specific to the project \_\_\_\_\_

Letters of agreement with

- artists
  - participants
  - partner organizations
- Include a detailed list and description of services, responsibilities, compensation  
Duration and terms of conduct can be worked out by the group, but may require individual statement/  
commitment
- confidentiality (see example from Common Weal Community Arts next page)
  - anti-harassment policy
  - other items specific to the project \_\_\_\_\_

Chart of skills, services, expectations - see page 3 of appendix 1

Project chart - see appendix 4

## RELEASE FORM (PHOTO, VIDEO, AUDIO)

Name:

Address:

I hereby consent to the recording of photographs, videotapes or audio clips of me as part of the project (title) \_\_\_\_\_

by \_\_\_\_\_ (organization/artist/facilitator/project title) for the following use:

\_\_\_\_\_ (check all that apply: promotion, exhibition, media, reporting or other use of documentation, and specify final approval of image to be used if requested by the participant)

Copyright:

Where creation of a product is a group project, copyright will be jointly shared by the participants, artists and organization.

Where the creation of a product is by individuals as part of a group, the individuals creating distinct parts maintain copyright.

The organization/artist/facilitator, as the PRODUCER, will be granted a license to distribute, exhibit, perform and/or publish the work for promotional, educational and artistic objectives.

(add other potential uses)

Signed, dated

In case of a project where some participants allow their picture to be taken, and others do not, it is very useful to indicate permission or denial by using green or red dots on their name-tag, or using other stickers, and brief any camera people or recording artists about the restrictions.

Adjust to accommodate parental or care-giver's consent.

Anyone working with children is required to provide a police check, including volunteers and assistants.

Ask your partner or host organization representatives about any requirement, or certificates that you may need to obtain before you can start a project with vulnerable members of the community.

Confidentiality agreements may be requested by project partners or individual participants. Artists, volunteers, participants and anyone else involved should agree to respect private and confidential matters, including:

Private or personal information, medical or family history

Anything shared by participants in a group activity

Conflicts or disagreements, gossip or rumours among participants

Anything that the group or a member of the group asks others to keep in confidence.

Guidelines for artist fees, contracts and other professional service agreements may be obtained from service organizations and unions specific to the discipline or region.

Guidelines on copyright and intellectual property can be found on <http://www.chin.gc.ca>.



# PROBLEM SOLVING

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

Working out a code of conduct together, and posting the agreements—signed by all participants, including artists and facilitators—will serve as a reminder and reference for dealing with problems, and may actually prevent some from occurring and others from escalating.

You may even want to introduce a negotiation game with a fictitious disagreement as part of the warm-up for production.

### step 1

name the problem

identify underlying issues

who's involved?

if necessary consult the local or other partner

### step 2

analyze the conflict

address the concerns individually, with the parties involved or in the group depending on who all the affected parties are

ask each party for a solution. What is the desired outcome for each side? What are the options?

Can we reach a compromise? or is there a solution that allows all sides to win?

How will this affect the group/project?

### step 3

learn from it

develop daily activities that could prevent conflict by building a sense of solidarity and belonging in the group

Common Weal Community Arts, P 107 A Toolbox for Community Projects, offers a good step-by-step Problem Solving Process, including Self-Assessment (Are you the best person to work on conflict resolution?), Managing Anger, Dealing with Difficult Situations/People, Changing Behaviour/Attitudes.







# PRODUCTION CHART

## WORK PLAN/PRODUCTION OUTLINE

**"Don't forget the potato salad!"**

There is no single "best practices" formula, model or recipe for a successful labour arts undertaking. Working processes will vary from group to group, and each discipline has its own lists of tasks, materials, tools, skills, expectations, contractual issues and other factors.

What is standard good practice is the development of a work plan, transparency and ongoing communication. Everyone forgets something at some point, but when it comes to organizational effectiveness, I often see the picture of Ernie and Bert from Sesame Street, and the many tubs of potato salad that the neighbours brought to their picnic—to the exclusion of any other food. In a real world example, at a solidarity event that also included communal meals, the activist who had volunteered to bring cutlery and plates arrived late as well as empty handed. Che Guevara's handbook to guerrilla strategies suggests that you always carry your own spoon.

Che also said that "it is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolution exist; the insurrection can create them." (1961, *Guerrilla Warfare*) In the song "Cantares" Joan Manuel Serrat adds the voice of the poet: "Caminante no hay camino, se hace camino al andar..." (Traveller, there is no path, you make the path by walking... blow by blow, verse by verse) The ongoing development of a process that leads to a collective outcome is the walking 'theory' of community art practice.

**Make a list, check it, pass it around, and be prepared to change the ingredients!**

Developing the work plan involves the entire group, starting with a large circle where each participant contributes individually at first, and in working teams, to come back together as a group.

Listen to all ideas, gather up ideas, suggestions – save comments for later -Checovaldéz

-Being thoughtful and inclusive requires that we make best use of people's time and skills when they agree to work on a project. (p 13 Common Weal Community Arts, Artist and Community Collaboration: A Toolkit for Community Projects)

-One of my most difficult experiences as the host organization staff representative taught me a solid lesson about planning:

1. do not mistake a lack of coordination with autonomy
2. taking charge is not about control, but about responsibility
3. when roles and responsibilities are not defined, territorial disputes will arise
4. if no conflict resolution strategy is in place, we may not be able to deal with a problem
5. avoiding discussion does not resolve a confrontational situation

There will always be some unexpected development, and our lives will be richer for that. Planning ahead makes the experience more satisfying, and shows respect for everyone's time and contribution.



## I. SAMPLE PROJECT CHART

Name/Title of Project

\_\_\_\_\_

Name and contact information of Artist(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

Responsibilities

\_\_\_\_\_

Name/contact of the Arts Organization (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_

Role/Responsibilities

\_\_\_\_\_

Other Partner Organization(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

Roles/Responsibilities

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Facilitator/contact information (if separate from the artist)

\_\_\_\_\_

Responsibilities

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Coordinator/Project Manager (if separate from the artist)

\_\_\_\_\_

Responsibilities

\_\_\_\_\_

An experienced and effective project manager  
 -knows how to include everyone involved in the decision-making process  
 -knows how to create a plan and work with it, but can adapt to changes  
 -lets everyone know what the plan is, and what has changed  
 -keeps track of needs/expectations, progress/achievements, timelines and budgets  
 -knows what has to be done, when, where, with/by whom and how.

Name of the Local or Community Group:

\_\_\_\_\_

Names of Participants:

In order to remember everyone's names quickly:  
 use name games,  
 ask people to make their own name tag,  
 go over the list of names before each session

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Vision/Goals/Objectives

---

Resources

---

Limitations/Barriers/Obstacles

---

Projected Budget

---

Itemized list of expenses and income (see project grant applications for template)

---



---



---

Documentation

Who takes care of documenting meetings, workshops, presentations

---

What kind of documentation do we need

---

Who gets image credits

---

Who keeps/looks after/has access to the

documentation

---

Who uses it for what purpose?

---



## II. BRIEF LIST OF TASKS:

Choose those that apply to your project, add your own

What do you do yourself, where do you need help, what do the participants do?

### 1) BEFORE

- consultation
- partnership development
- project plan: time frame, who does what, when, and with whom?
- budget: who is responsible for grants, tracking budget? allow time for grant notification, have plan to revise budget, list/pursue alternative funding sources

### 2) AT START-UP

- communications plan: call/organize meetings, sessions, workshops, inform participants and partners
- review goals, vision, purpose, everyone's expectations
- review/revise project plan, build in strategies/process to allow for changes
- confirm time lines, availability
- identify skills, resources, needs, opportunities
- confirm commitment from participants, contract staff, partners
- assign roles and responsibilities
- feedback and evaluation plan
- documentation plan (photo, video, written, taped)
- take notes for reports and evaluations
- code of conduct implementation plan

### 3) PRODUCTION

- set workshop/meeting agenda
- communication
- time keeping
- feedback and evaluation
- encourage and recognize effort and achievements
- introduce basic artistic skills, function of materials, safe use of tools

- present ideas and concepts hands-on
- trouble shooting: there is a solution for all problems in art
- conflict resolution
- set up
- clean up
- leave the space a notch better than you found it... (Checovaldéz)

### **SAMPLE PRODUCTION PLAN OUTLINE:**

Maria Dunn

Know Your Rights Workshop

Edmonton, November 2009

Facilitators (in alphabetical order) / \*writers of this submission:

Don Bouzek – Filmmaker, Theatre (Ground Zero Productions) \* Don was present for the first session of the workshop only

\*Maria Dunn – Songwriter

\*Kevin Flaherty – Sociologist/Director, Alberta Workers' Health Centre (AWHC)

\*Pedro Rodriguez – Visual Artist

### **Context**

This work was part of a series of workshops for the Alberta Workers' Health Centre, a non-profit health and safety centre in Edmonton, Alberta. With funding from the Alberta Law Foundation, the Centre wanted to explore and evaluate different ways (theatre and music/songwriting) of reaching ESOL workers with information about their rights to a safe and healthy workplace. These two workshops followed two previous workshops which explored the issues related to using popular theatre to reach the same goals. The specific workshop goals were quite narrow - conveying information about legal rights to know the hazards on any job and the legal right to refuse imminent danger on the job. Of course we sought to explore and document potential impediments faced by these workers.

### **Structure:**

- Two evening sessions, one week apart, held at Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
- 16-20 participants from evening ESOL classes
- 2 ESOL teachers were present
- ESOL students:
  - o worked a variety of jobs
  - o ages ranged from approx 25 - 45 years

### **Warm-up**

Session 1: Activity 1, 2 – introduction / icebreakers  
Introduction specific to your discipline

Session 1: Activity 4 - performance of song about workplace stresses with video showing factory  
Session 1: Activity 5 - teaching the class to sing / clap / stomp along

### **Methods of gathering ideas / materials**

Session 1: Activity 3 – personal stories (full group)  
Session 1: Activity 6 – work stories (small group)  
Session 1: Activity 7 – work stories with action (full group)

### **Production steps**

Session 1: Gathering / sharing stories  
Session 1: Introducing song structure  
Session 2: Breaking into small groups to write one new verse based on the shared stories  
Session 2: Reconvene as full group to edit verses, tidy up the song, sing it together

### **Group evaluation methods**

Informal feedback sought from ESOL instructors  
Post-session discussions among facilitators

Positive comments from two participants on the Linc4 Class Blog ([http://emcnlinc4.blogspot.com/2008\\_11\\_01\\_archive.html](http://emcnlinc4.blogspot.com/2008_11_01_archive.html))

Any other relevant exercises

Role-playing how to phone AWHC and report a problem in the workplace.

Any documentation or illustration

Final group lyrics attached (see Chapter 03)

(end of Maria Dunn's outline)

### **III. PUBLIC PRESENTATION:**

-media release, posters, flyers, invitations, announcements - promotional materials to let others know what, where, who, when, why – they should attend and tell others about the event

-gallery exhibition requires space, installation/strike crew, labels with title/names of artist(s)/media/date, interpretive texts (brochures or extended labels), confirmation of dates/times that the exhibition is open, attendant

-performance of music, theatre, spoken word, dance, all need someone to find and confirm a space, production crew, props, lights, programme notes, ushers

-publication needs someone to write introduction; gather information about artists and participants; include images that document the process and outcome; include quotes/statements/opinions from all involved; credit all who contributed to and supported the project, be it in-kind, in solidarity or monetary.

-if an audience is involved, can they contribute, add or participate in some aspect of the work?



-sharing refreshments at presentations is as important as during workshops, for large audiences you may want to ask a restaurant to sponsor the reception

-educational materials – kits for teachers, activists, others who might further disseminate the project and engage their own groups

#### **IV. REPORTING:**

Ongoing evaluations, notes, minutes, observations will make the reporting process much easier (as well as contributing to the overall success)

List funding agencies who request reports

Other supporters who deserve a thank you letter

#### **BEWARE:**

-copyright

-artist's rights

-ownership of shared outcome

-responsibility/maintenance of public art work

-reproduction rights

-permission to photograph/videotape/record people and to use their image/words/music

-permission to quote people

-permission to print images and text

# ACTIVITIES

## GAMES AND EXERCISES

Warm-up activities introduce people to each other. Wordplays can lead to funny and nonsensical sounds that raise the comfort level in a tense group. Sharing likes and hopes can be serious and hilarious at the same time. In Simcoe, Klyde asked Mexican and Trinidadian farm workers what their last words might be. The poetry workshop was held around the time of preparations for the Mexican “Day of the Dead” and the requests for elaborate meals to be brought to the cemetery for the departed elicited lots of laughter across cultural differences.

While physical theatre exercises can be applied in every other discipline to re-energize a group, they may not always be appropriate in a mixed gender or culturally diverse context. It is important to explain the activity and make sure everyone is comfortable with games, especially those that involve holding hands or rubbing someone’s back.

Individual activities—such as drawing or collage—provide time to reflect, and to take a break from the group. Asking participants to present or interpret their image reconnects the group, and encourages shy people. Asking others to interpret someone’s drawing almost always results in laughter, and in sharing more information to clarify the intent. Group collaboration develops over time through a series of activities that increase in scope and numbers, from individual tasks, pair work and small group projects. Without establishing trust and confidence through fun activities, it is difficult if not impossible to build consensus on how to address the serious issues.

## 1. INTRODUCTIONS

### *getting to know you/me*

- Facilitator invites each participant to say their name and where they are from:

"Take the person's name to your left, make a rhythm with it, play with the syllables and then "morph" it into your own name. The game proceeds around the circle to the right such that everyone's name gets repeated several times – an effective ice-breaker and way to remember everyone's names."

Maria to the left of Anab: Maria-ria-ria, ree-an, ree-an, an-an-an, anab-anab-anab, Anab

- I came because ...,  
- I like it when they call me .....,

### *more about me/you*

What do I like?  
What don't I like?  
What can I do, what will I do?  
What I am afraid of in life ...  
What do I like about life ...  
An adventure (brief) ...  
What will be my last words ...

-what we know:  
artists and participants list one skill, describe in words, image, action, song

-I hope, I fear, I want:  
facilitator asks for participants' hopes, fears and wants and writes these on the flipchart paper

## 2. START-UP/WARM UP

### *getting the personal story/picture*

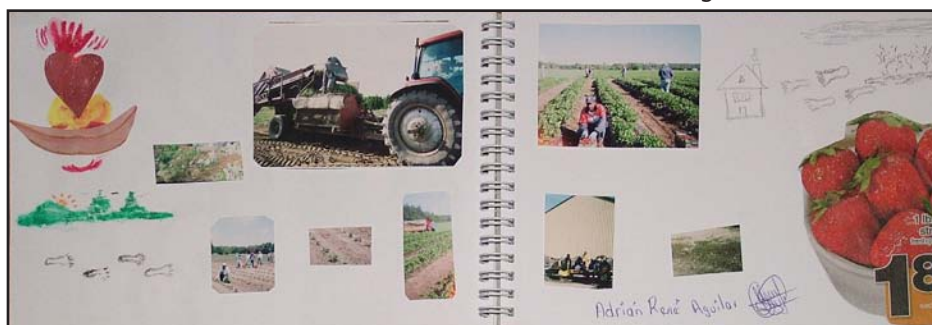
-facilitator introduces the moment  
-difficult moments on job  
-high points

"DRAW something that is in your purse/bag/pocket. Don't take it out, but draw it from memory or feel it if you need more references. Let the group guess what the drawing represents. Talk about what the object means to you

**Theatre role play:** Two people discuss an issue that is relevant to the project – 10 minutes to prepare, and then present it in talking head 'frame,' or as a telephone conversation between the two  
-group responds to the presentation, presenters respond to the group

-props: hats, picture frame, caps, cloaks, tools  
Some topics: "on break," "after work," "phone call home"

2. draw a quick sketch of a common image
3. then ask them to close their eyes and imagine what the issue looks like



4. and draw their vision of the community, the union, justice, etc.

### Feel the Space:

-move around the space conscious of everyone else

### Visual art role play:

Write a 'letter' in images only

-participants may use found images from magazines, old photographs and own drawings to 'write' a letter

-partner plays recipient and 'reads' the letter

-writer fills in details, explains meaning of images

Some topics: personal, invitation to event, letter of complaint, grievance, recommendation, letter to the editor

-move slowly, move fast

-move through fog, water, mud, on the moon

-greet whomever you meet

### Soundscape:

-in a circle facing out and eyes closed participants listen to sounds of their bodies, sounds in the room, sounds outside

-together create the sounds of a midway, Dundas and Ossington, a church  
(topic-specific exercises)

### Action Role-play:

How to phone support centre or union and report a problem in the workplace.

'Visualizing' the issues as described by Checovaldéz (mural workshop) begin with imaging a common, known object, animal, plant;

1. ask participants to close their eyes, imagine the object, animal, plant, etc.

### Rhythm game:

-participant's name and clapping hands or snapping

-from individual rhythms to a group rhythm

### Voice warm-up:

vowels and consonants, ma-na-la-tha-va-sa, ta-da-ca-ga-ra-wa, bdt, ptk

### Upper torso warm-up

- a) how you feel in one word with action, everyone repeats
- b) individual sounds, everyone repeats

### Change the Object:

everyone pretends they have a piece of putty and molds it into something, uses it, then passes it on  
e.g. comb, hat, necklace

### Create a Place:

one participant starts an action in a place and others join in e.g. supermarket, church, classroom

-

### Storytelling:

participants tell brief personal stories about obstacles of having a disability

-

### Images:

group chooses one story and creates four still tableaux to illustrate it using  
- collages, words, photographs, objects, sounds

## 3)

### GETTING THE BIGGER PICTURE

Write "quodras" on same theme together:  
-four line verses based on popular folk form  
-facilitator writes them out on flipchart paper

### Sketching (for printmaking)

- each participant draws a series of eight pencil sketches on one piece of 11 by 17 inch paper folded into eight sections, encourage designs that are simple and graphic.
- each participant describes and explains the intended meanings of her drawings to the group.
- the group examines each set of drawings and the artist identifies the sketches that are most suited to relief printing, because of their simple shapes, strong lines, and use of positive and negative.

### Idea bucket (or basket):

All the ideas are written on separate pieces of paper and put in a bucket. Each participant 'draws' an idea from the bucket and does not show it to anyone until they have a partner. Partners are then selected at random, and they work together on one image that represents both ideas. Depending on the number of participants, this can turn into group collaboration of two or more people. The entire exercise is carried out in silence.

### Idea bank:

All the ideas that arise from the group discussion or brainstorming sessions are deposited in the "bank." They are then sorted according to similar themes.

**ID/Portrait exquisite corpse drawing:**

Fold a large piece of paper into an accordion-like manner, wide enough to provide space for each body part. The paper is passed from person to person, each of them folding over – hiding - their drawing, and indicating only where the next person's drawing starts.

Who is the face/head of my local? – draw the  
 “portrait” of the local  
 On whose shoulders/back?  
 Strong arms  
 With our hands  
 Food in the belly  
 Legs to stand on  
 On your toes.....

**Accordion books:**

-organize the images/words into a sequence or narrative  
 Similar story-books can illustrate issues:  
 What does justice/peace/freedom/happiness etc.  
 look like?

**Balancing the bank of ideas:**

-Collection and organization of the group's ideas  
 After community consultation (or group brainstorming) is completed, all the ideas are grouped into similar themes. No idea is excluded. The group discusses all ideas and decides whether there is enough material, or if they need to conduct further research. When the group

feels that the thoughts and feelings adequately represent all involved, the results are ‘registered’ in an official document, listing each idea once.

**Organizing the ideas:**

Establish themes and sub-themes, identify priorities and thematic links, produce the start-up material/content for the production  
 -Each of the ideas listed in the ‘balancing the bank of ideas’ step is written in large capital letters on a separate piece of paper, using as few



words as possible. The papers can be taped onto a long wall, or clipped to a clothesline.

-The group studies the line in silence for a few minutes, thinking about possible themes arising in the list of ideas.

-One or two at a time participants get up and move papers to begin grouping the ideas. The process continues until everyone has finished moving the papers.

-Each grouping is read out loud and given a title that summarizes the ideas.

- consensus building exercise, this may require a few 'silent moments' in the process

#### 4)

### WORKING TOGETHER

#### Grouping exercise:

Have everyone draw a geometric shape – form groups according to the shapes they drew

If smaller groups are needed, choose colour for shape in subgroup

Assign concepts to shapes

Organize all shapes and colours into design

- To establish subgroups, form crews or teams with the number of participants suitable for a particular task or activity. Develops group interaction

-Selection of subgroup members can be arbitrary by asking the group to count off to the number of groups you need, then group all the twos,



threes, fours, etc

The arbitrary selection allows people to form working relationships with others in the group, and to interact with different people

- In small groups (3 or 4 people), participants share something about their work that is a problem

- participants create an action to demonstrate this situation

- participants were not grouped by occupation, but did form teams by gender. We felt the women might share their stories more freely within an all-women group.

- volunteers from each small group show the full group an action that represents a workplace story discussed within their small group

- full group plays with this action, starting slowly and then speeding up, in the context of singing the *Speed Up* song



**Human sculptures:**

Group development, spontaneous creative expression, overcoming inhibitions, group animation

-Form subgroups of five to eight people. Tell them that when you give the signal, the crews move, without words, to the places that they had selected earlier and each one joins the group in an imaginative pose, the poses are held by all for a few moments

-if there are two or more groups, they take turns with the observers applauding each image

-photograph or videotape the 'images' for future discussion

-group holds a round table discussion commenting on what they did, what they saw, what each group achieved and what some of the obstacles and personal achievements were in the exercise

(see The Worker of the Month photos by Mexican artist Miguel Calderón –www.)

**Conceptual evocation**

Serves to gather visual information of the conceptual imagery, group reflection on their own imagery in order to develop common concepts

Explain to the participants that we will conduct an activity that will allow us to understand the visual ideas we have about some terms.

Instructions: "I will say a few words to you.

Please listen to them with your eyes closed, and take note of the image that forms in your mind. Without words, keep the image in your mind for a few moments, and then draw an outline of it. An example: close your eyes, listen to the word 'fruit,' pay attention to the first image that enters your mind, intensify it, try to capture it in your memory, open your eyes and draw a simple sketch of the image. Other examples could be using an animal, or any other familiar term." Then, introduce the concepts that are key to the workshops and to achieving the objectives of the project: GROUP, UNION, COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT, COLLABORATION, WORK, ART -Collect all the sketches of each concept, exhibit them and ask the group to interpret or "read" them. Some will be similar, others completely different from person to person. Discuss the meaning of the term, and reference it with the sketch. Depending on the length and depth to which you want to go with a proposal for common ground in the results, you can explore the theoretic foundations and place the results in the framework.

**Three syntax blotches (or stains)**

Create a composition in different formats, square, portrait, landscape, different proportions, points to the influence of the format over the order of three blotches, helps reflect on the syntax (or order) of the image



-Ask each participant to cut out the silhouettes of three objects, the three being as different from each other as possible. Ask that they place the three shapes in a way that they represent a coherent, understandable visual arrangement. For each format the cut-outs can be smaller or larger. When everyone has finished, the compositions are exhibited grouped by format, and group members comment on the compositions, and identify the qualities that make one better than the other.

### **Chain Reaction**

Exercises small motor skills, attention and caution. Stimulates a group when the facilitator notes a drop in energy – mental or physical.

Prepares the group for the next activity.

-the group stands up and forms a circle.

-each person gets a double sheet of news print.

-the facilitator suggests that we hold it by one of its long sides, with one hand at each end of the side, holding the sheet at chest level, and carefully roll it into a 1 inch tube.

-holding the tube carefully in front of us, we wait until everyone has finished

-when all have finished the facilitator calmly observes that everyone is ready, and then shouts "Well then, let's do it!" – an accomplice (previously arranged) and the facilitator start

hitting those next to them with the newsprint tube, provoking a chain reaction in the group.

The game lasts a minute or two, and the facilitator calls a halt, asking everyone to sit down again and to share their observations of the activity. The group is charged and ready to move into an activity that requires that energy.

## **5. REENERGIZING ACTIVITIES**

### **Silent Gifts:**

The 'gift' of a silent moment helps establish focus and expands the mental waves of the group

-The facilitator may request the group give him a moment of silence to reflect on an idea or a situation. All remain silent during this time, at the end of which the facilitator thanks the group for the gift, and continues with the activity.

### **Stretching the mind:**

Imagination games, puzzles, riddles

Examples:

-form five triangles with nine sticks of equal length

-draw the negative spaces of an object or a plant  
-draw as long as you can without lifting the pencil

- Discuss analogies with life experience

## Robots and Ragdolls

Stretching mental motor skills, creativity and physical imagination, self esteem

-This evolves in silence. Participants are asked to distribute themselves throughout the room, each looking into a different direction. When each person is in her/his place, she closes her eyes, assumes a neutral position and takes three to five deep breaths, slowly and relaxing. The facilitator gives the following instructions:

"Open your eyes and start walking calmly but continuously without touching anyone.

-When you catch someone's eye, turn 90 degrees."

Let the participants continue for a few minutes and then say

"Keep walking, but now become mechanical, move like a ROBOT. When you meet someone greet them with a small signal, but don't touch anyone. Don't run into anyone."

Keep this up for another minute and then say

"Keep walking, move all over the room, but now you are RAGDOLLS, your bones are made of rubber, you have hardly any control over your movements, but keep walking without touching anyone, greet people with a doll smile.

-Keep walking, now with the slow movements of a cat, when you meet someone, greet them by scratching their arms and shoulders like a cat." (another minute)

"NOW, walk natural, but very slowly like a snail.

Greet people you meet with a soft touch on the nose with your index finger (another minute)

-Finally, just as slowly, place your chair in a circle and sit down."

Exchange thoughts about the experience, how each movement made them feel, attitudes, other topics depending on the needs of the workshop

## ***Exercises to identify preferences in using the left or the right side of the brain:***

### **1. "Crossing the river"**

-The group is seated in a circle

-inside the circle a few pieces of paper are taped firmly to floor

-facilitator asks the group to imagine that they are on one side of the river and have to cross it for the first time, the papers on the floor represent rocks that we can step on so that we don't get wet

-ask for a volunteer to cross the river step by step

-ask a second person to cross it differently but also step by step

-ask the third person to cross by jumping quickly over a few rocks

-ask the group to think about which way they would prefer

- The choice reflects which side of the brain a person uses. Crossing step by step is indicative of

the left side, quickly jumping is the right side of the brain

## 2. "Looking after the place" (a form of neighbourhood watch)

The place can resemble the geographic terrain in which we are located

–the group decides what the location contains, e.g. forest, fields, lake, swamp, mountain, caves, river, with one area that is more densely populated

–each participant assumes the role of watch person.

Explain plot:

At 4 in the afternoon, a neighbour comes with an emergency. "Three children should have been home for lunch at noon. At one o'clock, the parents went to look for them in their usual play areas, but didn't find any sign of them. It is getting late and they need to be found before it gets dark."

Instructions:

As the person in charge of the watch, you have the following two options to look for the children:

X. – sound the alarm to call all the neighbours together to form a search party and comb the area until they find the children

Y. – call the helicopter and ask them to do an aerial search.

Think about the search options and select one.

There is no good or bad answer. Ask for a show of hands for each option; take a count of each preference. Then ask some of the participants to talk about why they chose one way over the other, giving advantages and disadvantages of each option.

X indicates the left side of the brain: step by step, linear, detailed, analytical, logical

Y, the right side of the brain, is intuitive, looks for patterns, metaphors, analogue, holistic

- Of course, the best way would have been to use both options at the same time. If we learn to use both sides of the brain, simultaneously or alternating, we can think clearly and creatively at once.

## Tap Tap

Promotes group interaction through non-invasive physical contact, group relaxation exercise/back and shoulder rub. Divide the group in two.

–Form two circles made of members of the group, one standing inside the other

–Have everyone look into the centre

–Have one person from the outer circle stands behind one person in the inner circle

Instructions:

“Assume a neutral pose – feet lined up with shoulders, facing forward, arms loosely at the side.

Close your eyes, raise your head and breathe softly, deeply and easily. After about five breaths, the inner circle continues breathing in the same position, ask the outer circle to rub their hands together until they are warm, and begin to lightly and rhythmically tap with their finger tips on the spinal column of the person in front of them, beginning with the 4th vertebra all the way down the back, increasing the pace and strength of the tapping, then gently massage the neck muscles and the back.”

Without speaking, have pairs change places and repeat the exercise. When they are finished, they face each other, thank each other and return to their seats.

The group talks about how they feel about the experience.

## 6. SETTING THE STAGE/ GENERAL TASKS

Scenario

-The facilitator arrives at least 15 minutes early, closes the door to contemplate the room in

silence. The facilitator receives the group in a work space that is orderly, friendly and ready to start. She visually takes notice of the space, door, tables, the work plan and date. Gets the room organized for the first activity, and silently thinks about the session for a few minutes before opening the door.

Leaving the door open during this exercise allows participants to take part in the preparation.

### ***Performance review – at the end of each session:***

Choose a person to assume the role of observer, who does not talk or interact with anyone in the group during the entire session. The observer’s task is to take notes about the actions of the facilitator and the participants, and at the end of the session he/she shares the observations with the group. This role might be valuable to an understudy, student/intern, social worker or union rep. The ‘observer’ role can also be assigned to participants on a rotating basis, and form part of the ongoing evaluation process.

### ***Housekeeping Routines:***

Forming teams to organize the larger group work, establishes a level of comfort with the work through patterns, forming habits that encourage ‘serving the community.’

-At the end of the session, nobody leaves until

the room is restored to the condition in which it was found. Different teams take responsibility to clean up, organize materials and tools, move back any furniture, etc. The 'crews' can form around a coordinator and assistants, with rotating responsibilities.

Useful slogans:

"We take care of the space, or else it will run us over"

"Let's leave the space in a better state than we found it"

### ***Greetings***

Sharing greetings at the end of each session creates a friendly and polite ambience, gets everyone's attention, promotes group interaction. When the workspace is tidy, everyone shakes hands and says something nice to each person. This can be done in a circle or a line-up.

### ***Cross disciplinary exercises:***

Role play (Maria)

Tile decorating (Lorna)

Crossing the river (Checo)

Make your own logo/tattoo (TPS)



# RESOURCES

## IN PRINT AND ON LINE

### Links to more links

<http://www.xpdnc.com/links/lbrarts.html>

<http://www.communityarts.net/>

### Canadian arts groups working in community and labour arts

<http://www.union-art.com/>

<http://www.clayandpapertheatre.org/>

<http://www.workingimage.ca>

<http://www.jumbliestheatre.org>

<http://www.mayworks.ca>

<http://www.workerschoir.ca/>

<http://www.redtreecollective.ca>

<http://www.theprintstudio.ca>

<http://www.urbanartstoronto.com>

<http://www.wahc-museum.ca>

<http://www.labourarts.ca/>

<http://www.mayweek.ab.ca/>

<http://www.michaelzaharuk.com/>

<http://www.suzannemogensen.com/>

<http://www.muralroutes.com/memberdirectory.htm>

### Labour organizations with arts links

<http://www.ofl.ca>

Images of Labour in Canadian Art

<http://www.theconcentrator.ca/english/millArtExamples.asp>

[http://www.artgalleryofhamilton.com/view\\_entry.php?id=3080046&date=20090104](http://www.artgalleryofhamilton.com/view_entry.php?id=3080046&date=20090104)

### History/Legacies

<http://examiningushistory.tripod.com/id7.html>

<http://www.wpamurals.com/>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dorothea\\_Lange](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dorothea_Lange)

<http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/childlabor/>

<http://www.pbs.org/art21/artists/barney/index.html#>

Paterson Strike Pageant of 1913

The Harlem Renaissance (1919-1929)

El Teatro Campesino (1960s – Chicago)

Winnipeg General Strike (15 May-25 June 1919)

## Books

Making Our Mark: Labour Arts and Heritage in Ontario

Karl Beveridge and Jude Johnston  
Between The Lines, 1999

Thinking Union: Activism and Education in Canada's Labour Movement

D'Arcy Martin  
Between The Lines, 1995

Celebration of Resistance: Ontario's Days of Action

Photographs by Vincenzo Pietropaolo

Introduction by Catherine Macleod  
Between The Lines, 1999

Art and Labour

Morris, William

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/morris/works/1884/art-lab.htm>

Year Published: 1884

Says Morris: "Have nothing in your house that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful."

Ontario Arts Council.

Another Vital Link. Community Arts Workbook download from

<http://www.arts.on.ca/Page48.aspx>

Magazines

Our Times, FUSE,

## CONTRIBUTORS

**AIDA JORDÃO** is a Popular Theatre facilitator and director, an actor and a playwright, committed to feminist art and Portuguese-Canadian cultural projects. With over twenty years of experience in community and labour arts, Aida has worked with both professional theatre workers and community participants worldwide to devise original political theatre: in Toronto with Nightwood Theatre, Ground Zero Productions, and the Company of Sirens and abroad in Portugal, Nicaragua and Cuba. Her projects with labour include Mayworks programming and performing, Artists in the Workplace projects, and a variety of workshops, plays and conference presentations with the CAW, CUPE, OCHU, PSAC, the Steelworkers, the OFL, the CLC, and the Metro Labour Council. Aida specializes in Theatre of the Oppressed (Forum Theatre) and has studied with Augusto Boal and Lib Spry. Aida has also worked as an adult educator (ESL/Literacy), taught in York University's Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics and managed the Education Department of Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People. With an Acting Diploma from the Drama Studio, U.K., and an MA in Drama (U. of T.), Aida is now a Ph.D. candidate at the Graduate Drama Centre, University of Toronto.



photo: Roz Owen

**ROCHELLE RUBINSTEIN** is a Toronto printmaker, painter, fabric and book artist. She is represented by Loop Gallery and Fran Hill Gallery and curates her own window gallery, Mon Ton Window. Exhibitions include group and solo shows at museums, artist-run centres and public galleries in Canada and abroad. Rubinstein's print-based work can be found in private and public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York and the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin. Of special interest to her are community art projects and workshops, which she has facilitated with abused women, people with eating disorders, youth at risk and health care workers. <http://rochellerubinstein.com/>





Juno-nominated singer-songwriter **MARIA DUNN** is a storyteller through song. Melding North American folk music with her Scottish-Irish heritage, she draws inspiration from the resilience and hope of “ordinary” people, as on her 2004 CD *We Were Good People*, the result of a 2001 Artist Residency with the Edmonton & District Labour Council. Her fourth recording, *The Peddler* (2008), produced by Shannon Johnson (of 2007 Juno Award winning The McDades: [www.themcdades.com](http://www.themcdades.com)), features several compelling anti-war songs among its Celtic-influenced pieces. In the past five years, Maria has developed and toured two video ballads (songs interwoven with oral history interview clips) with videographer Don Bouzek of Ground Zero Productions. *Troublemakers: Working Albertans, 1900 – 1950*, explores the vibrant people’s history of Alberta, and *GWG: Piece by Piece* (with historian Catherine C. Cole), shares the experiences of urban immigrant women who worked at Edmonton’s GWG clothing factory. Maria performs at folk festivals, theatres and conferences across Canada, in Europe (2008 Celtic Connections, Glasgow) and the USA (2006 Smithsonian Folk Life Festival, Washington, DC). In her own community (Edmonton, Alberta), Maria sings at fundraisers, rallies, banquets and conferences for various social justice and labour organizations. Mike Ross, Edmonton Sun: “...remarkable singer-songwriter, think of her as a distaff Woody Guthrie.”



**CAROLE CONDÉ** and **KARL BEVERIDGE** live and work in Toronto. They have collaborated with various trade unions and community organizations in the production of their staged photographic and banner work over the past 30 years. Their work has been exhibited across Canada and internationally in both the trade union movement and art galleries and museums. Recently their work has been included in exhibitions at the Lewis Glucksman Gallery, Cork, Ireland, the Contemporaru Arts Centre, Cincinnati, Ohio, and a survey exhibition at the Agnes Etherington Art Centre in Kingston, Ontario. Carole and Karl have been active in several labour arts initiatives including the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre in Hamilton, Ontario.





**KLYDE BROOX**, a member of Toronto's Dub Poets Collective, is a veteran, well travelled, Caribbean born, dubpoet. Klyde possesses sixteen years language arts teaching experience from his native Jamaica, where he gained some national and international recognition for using dubpoetry to mobilise youth, workers and communities towards improving literacy and enabling self-representation. He migrated to Canada in 1993 and has lived in Hamilton with his family since 1996.

A former University of Miami James Michener Fellow, Broox won the 2005 City of Hamilton Arts Award for Literature. He has published two volumes of poetry, *Poemstorm* (Swansea, Wales, 1989) and *My Best Friend is White* (McGilligan Books, 2005). The latter won the 2006, Arts Hamilton/Seraphim Editions Award for

Best Poetry Book. Steeped in both old and new-world oral and scribal traditions, Klyde usually invites audiences and workshop participants to experience poetry as social communion.

**LORNA BOSCHMAN** is a veteran media artist who has recently been pursuing a research-based PhD at Simon Fraser University at the School of Interactive Arts + Technology. In 2006, she directed *this ability*, a National Film Board (NFB) documentary that grew out of a two year long community-based media program for adults with cognitive disabilities. In addition to the individual films by self-



advocates screening online at the NFB's CitizenShift site, *this ability* is also available at many Canadian public libraries. Boschman's videos form part of the collection at the National Gallery of Canada and have been shown at festivals internationally. As a scholar, her research interests include studying how novice directors use digital media to communicate, and how video games with an exertive interface contribute to long-term fitness strategies. She is also part of a creative team awarded a public art commission through the City of Surrey, BC, as a result of the city's designation as a Cultural Capital of Canada. Her team is creating *Talking Poles*, interactive audio sculptures that play back voices of the community members while marking their way through an urban greenway.



**SERGIO VALDÉZ RUVALCABA** (Checovaldéz) worked in print shops and publicity during high school, and participated in student publications in university. He studied visual art at La Esmeralda, and design at the Design and Craft School in Mexico City. He was expelled from the industrial design school for his attempt to organize a union, and began publishing his cartoons while working in communication for the Department of Social Services at the UNAM. In 1979, he was offered a research/teaching position at the UAM-Xochimilco, where he continues to teach. Under the umbrella of “social communication,” Prof. Valdez initiated practicum-based courses in “creative group

facilitation,” “creative community development” and “participatory community muralism.” He has taught summer courses at the ISA in Havana, and at York University in Toronto, and led numerous collaborative workshops in Mexico and abroad, including the recreation of the Taniperla mural at Scarboro Mission in Toronto in 2000.

**INGRID MAYRHOFER** is a visual artist, curator and community arts practitioner based in Hamilton, ON. Following her undergraduate studies (BFA at York University 1984) she taught drawing in Nicaragua as part of her MA fieldwork, spending much of the eighties in Central America or working with human rights groups in Toronto. Community art and collaboration evolved from her experience in popular education and participatory research. Curatorial interests include new practices and international exchanges. An active member of the Red Tree Artists’ Collective, Mayrhofer has coordinated collaborative and exchange projects in Canada, Mexico, Chile, Cuba and Serbia. She currently works with The Print Studio in Hamilton, and teaches Labour Arts in the CAW/McMaster Certificate Program.



## Descriptions of Images

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- 4 and 30 - Community mural, neighbourhood children in collaboration with Dámarys Sepúlveda and Ingrid Mayrhofer Masatepe, NIC, 1986
- 5 - Reisa Levine and Ingrid Mayrhofer, finishing a project started by a Canadian group at San Benito, NIC, 1986
- 7 - Collective print by members of Local 707, CAW McMaster Certificate Program
- 9 - Day of the Dead Portrait of Ingrid, relief print by Adrián René Aguilar: The Simcoe Project
- 11 - Evangelina Venâncio, Leonilde Vieira, Néria Correia from Joe, John and Jack: Safety at Work
- 14 - Elizabeth Obermeyer-Kostash working on a photo montage, Paradox of the Vocation, 2009
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- 20 - Mary-Ellen Van Lith and Peggy Hamer, Unit Clerks, Oshawa: Ill Wind, 2001
- 23 - Mayolo Hernández 'reading' the letter by Marcelo Pérez in the workshop by Amelia Jiménez: The Simcoe Project/08
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- 108 - Ill Wind, Kingston
- 110 - left: Studio Portrait of Ronald Audin, The Simcoe Project; right: Interview with Martín, panel accompanying his 'studio portrait' at the Norfolk Art Centre 2007
- 112 - Artists and students at the unveiling, Greeting to Taniperla, 2000
- 115 - Portrait of Nigel by Sean: The Simcoe Project, 2007
- 117 - Co-workers packing plants for export, The Simcoe Project, 2007
- 123 - Preparing Ginseng field, The Simcoe Project, 2007
- 126 - Connections to Ojistoh, Shelley Niro in collaboration with René Francisco and residents of Brantford Native Housing and Red Tree, 2009
- 129 - John Mullin Local 707 working on the collective print in class, CAW McMaster Certificate Program, note the reduction print name tag, 2009
- 131 - Migrant worker Vicente Altamirano presents concerns to a delegation from the Mexican government at the UFCW Migrant Workers' Support Centre 2007
- 135 - Kim Miller, Primary Counsellor, Ojistoh House, 2009
- 137 - Shelley Niro painting on site at Ojistoh House, 2009
- 145 - Adrián's 'letter' to his wife: Hola Corazón (Hi Sweet-heart), The Simcoe Project, workshop with Amelia Jiménez,
- 146 - Ill Wind, Guelph
- 147 - Winston Churchill student Joy Hansri painting her part in Greeting to Taniperla, Scarborough, 2000
- 154 - Cleaning brushes, Greeting to Taniperla, 2000