Social Justice & Cultural Competency Training Series

A proposal to the Center for Art and Community Partnerships at Massachusetts College of Art and Design

October 2013
**The Center for Art and Community Partnerships at MassArt cultivates innovative, sustainable relationships with the broader community to explore and expand the relevance of art and design in public life.**  www.MassArt.edu/CACP

**Introduction**

Health Resources in Action (HRiA) is pleased to present a proposal to design and deliver a training series on “Social Justice and Cultural Competency” for Massachusetts College of Art and Design’s Center for Art and Community Partnerships (CACP).

**Organizational Background**

Health Resources in Action is a non-profit organization with a mission to “help people live healthier lives and create healthy communities through prevention, health promotion and research.” Founded in 1957, HRiA has built a national reputation for high-quality, creative programs that support more than 75,000 individuals, organizations, communities, state agencies and funders annually.

HRiA offers a unique perspective and set of experiences in community organizing; qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis; program development, training, implementation and evaluation. HRiA has expertise in both youth development and cultural competence.

**Core Competencies**

There are specific competencies that we believe, when combined, make HRiA unique:

We have a **deep understanding of community organizing** – the process by which community groups identify common problems or goals, mobilize resources, and develop and implement strategies for reaching their goals.

We are a **diverse staff with staff expertise** to integrate both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis in a meaningful and culturally-appropriate way, and to support communities with analysis, report writing, presentations, program design, implementation and evaluation. We use a **team approach** working on projects.

We have expertise in the **youth development approach** through our development of the BEST Initiative (Building Exemplary Systems of Training), a professional development program for youth workers. HRiA has supported and trained thousands of youth leaders and youth-serving professionals.

**Key HRiA Staff: Yoojin Lee**, Senior Trainer & Manager

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Ms. Lee’s work has focused on expanding opportunities for youth and building equitable relationships between youth, adults, and institutions. She has 15 years experience in facilitating and training for youth groups and community coalitions. She was formerly Executive Director & Lead Organizer of the Boston-area Youth Organizing Project, where she worked in partnership with low-income youth from communities of color and immigrant communities to gain justice in their schools and neighborhoods. At HRiA, she trains, facilitates, consults and writes curriculum for groups seeking social justice, public health, youth and community leadership development, and policy change. For the past five years, she has also led intensive trainings on college campuses across the U.S. on leadership, racial identity, and social justice with a national civil rights organization.

Health Resources in Action proposal to the Center for Art and Community Partnerships, MassArt ‘13-14
SOCIAL JUSTICE & CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING SERIES
2013-2014

HRiA proposes a customized training program for the Center for Art and Community Partnerships’ (CACP) students:

TRAINING SERIES DETAILS

Purpose: To support students to increase their awareness of social justice issues and gain greater confidence and competency to meaningfully contribute to a more just world.

Objectives:
- Students will be able to define power and different types of oppression
- Students will gain a critical lens for examining the world, including identifying systemic forms of injustice (in addition to interpersonal and internalized forms)
- Students will be self-reflective and be more aware of assumptions and language
- Students will practice skills related to bridging across differences (listening, empathy, expressing/asking questions with respect and care)
- Students will gain inspiration and confidence to contribute to building more justice
- CACP students and staff will connect with one another, strengthen community and build a culture of respect and honesty

Flow of Sessions: 5 Sessions
All of the sessions are designed to be highly interactive and use varying learning modalities to engage and support students with different styles. A number of activities are hand-on and there will be at least one opportunity for significant art making included in the series.

Each session will be two hours long. In addition, trainers will debrief with CACP staff after each session to reflect, capture lessons and make necessary adjustments to the following session or series.

The descriptions below serve to provide a sense of what will happen in sessions.

SESSION I (October 2013): BRIDGING ACROSS DIFFERENCES – Part 1
This session will build a grounding of trust and a sense of community within the group. Trust-building activities include creating “group agreements” that create a safe space for all, and one-to-one conversations that allow them to connect with one another. Participants will name cultures they identify with and be exposed to cultures other than their own. The central activity will be one through which each student will reflect and share on experiences that have influenced their “lens” (or outlook) on the world, especially related to the topic of justice. Each session will wind-down with a time for feedback and a closing circle activity.

SESSION II (November 2013): BRIDGING ACROSS DIFFERENCES – Part 2 (Note – 3 hours)
This session will build upon the trust and sense of community begun in the last session. The group will do an activity where they will share their personal experiences and perspective based on different identities (e.g. race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, etc.). There will be a
spacious debrief of participants’ experience of the activity. Typically, this activity raises deep emotions and requires holding a safe space and ample, unrushed time.

**Feb. 7-8, 2014 / RETREAT**
The retreat will both build community and provide learning opportunities.

**SESSION III (February 2014): POWER & OPPRESSION**
After hearing briefly from participants about thoughts or feelings that have come up since the retreat, we will explore power, oppression and isms. We will define oppression and study different “-isms” (e.g. racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ablism, etc.), identifying those in power and those oppressed for each “-ism”. We will cover the framework of Internalized, Interpersonal, Institutional, Ideological and Systemic forms of oppression. Between this session and the next, students will be encouraged to collect facts and/or stories they encounter in life that interest them (e.g. from the news, people they know or personal experience) that pertain to power and oppression.

**SESSION IV (March 2014): CREATING CHANGE & BEING THE CHANGE – Part I**
This session will focus in on experiences students are having in their CACP work and how they might use the tools and frameworks that have been shared in these trainings in their work. Activities will include role-playing real or potential situations. We will celebrate ways tools/frameworks individuals are using, as well as practicing ways to stretch. Using Gandhi’s emphasis on being the change we want to see in the world, each of us will reflect on what we can do to contribute to justice in the world and commit to one action.

**SESSION V (April 2014): CREATING CHANGE & BEING THE CHANGE – Part II**
This session will focus on stories of hope, where greater social justice was successfully built. The practice of community organizing and people power will be shared (which reinforces concepts of power and oppression covered in previous sessions).