

The Art of Community at Western Kentucky University

FINAL REPORT

Prepared by

Amy Skillman and Laura Marcus Green

Building Cultural Bridges

A national, interdisciplinary project merging the arts and social services in support of refugee and immigrant heritage in the U.S.

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Summary

Laura Marcus Green and Amy Skillman were invited as visiting scholars to Western Kentucky University in September 2012 to share their experiences working with refugee and immigrant artists and communities, and to facilitate a public workshop entitled, *Art of Community*. We created the *Art of Community* workshop as part of our national Building Cultural Bridges initiative. We have offered the workshop across the country in communities interested in finding ways for arts and cultural organizations to collaborate with social service providers. Our experience shows that such collaboration helps communities to better address the needs of refugee and immigrant artists and tradition bearers, while drawing on heritage-based arts' unique capacity to foster cultural integration for refugees and immigrants, as well as overall community building.

Over our three-day visit to Bowling Green in late September, we met with staff from local organizations who work with refugees and immigrants, led a seminar with graduate students in the Folk Studies program, facilitated the *Art of Community* workshop to create action steps towards collaborative work between the university and the community, and attended Bowling Green's annual International Festival. This final report focuses on the all-day public workshop, offering a summary of the activities and recommendations for implementing the ideas developed during the day. We have also appended copies of the worksheets created during a small-group exercise, outlining strategies for moving forward with four specific project ideas.

Our primary on-the-ground team in Bowling Green included Dr. Tim Evans from the Department of Folk Studies at WKU and Nadia De Leon, a WKU Folk Studies graduate who is currently the community engagement coordinator for WKU's ALIVE Center for Community Partnerships. The ALIVE Center supports engaged scholarship through service-learning and community-based research as part of the WKU curriculum, and provides opportunities for volunteerism and ongoing community service in the Bowling Green area. The Center has a special focus on refugee issues and is connected to all the local resettlement and service organizations.

Issues and Goals

Prior to our visit, we held several phone calls with the team to discuss activities during our stay, establish a format for our time in Bowling Green, customize the workshop for local application, and develop a set of goals. The following issues and related goals helped to frame the visit.

☞ Currently, there are a number of partnerships taking place in the community, but they are not arts-focused. Community Threads, a Burmese weaving project developed through a collaboration between the ALIVE Center and CEDARS (the Center for Development Acculturation and Resolution Services) was designed and developed by business students, so it is more business-focused, and does not have as much of an arts/heritage dimension.

- ☞ Partnerships taking place to date have not connected social services and the arts. Some local refugee and immigrant service providers are receptive to the possibility of working with the arts, but nothing has been done yet to draw the connections for them.
- ☞ There is a need to conduct outreach with refugee and immigrant communities, to identify traditional artists who could avail themselves of local resources.
- ☞ A central goal of the *Art of Community* workshop is to bring diverse community players together. People may know each other (or know of each other), but they may never have spoken in depth, and as a result don't know much about each other's work. The goal is to get people together under the same roof and get them talking.
- ☞ Once the various players connect, the goal is to explore programs and projects that connect the arts, refugee and immigrant communities, and social services. What are the resources and ways to connect people down the road?
- ☞ As we brainstorm about future programs and ways of collaborating, it is important to think about *sustainable* project ideas that address issues relating to cultural integration and the arts.
- ☞ Another goal is to create a better awareness of local refugees and immigrants in the arts and culture sphere, and to generate ideas for engaging newcomers with the larger community through the arts.
- ☞ Workshop report outcome: recommendations for tightening connections among various community entities, and directives for where to go from here to make that happen.

Workshop preparation

After establishing these goals, we created a list of potential organizations and individuals to invite to the workshop. We knew we wanted to include arts and cultural organizations as well as representatives from the refugee resettlement and immigrant services communities. We also knew it was important to have representation from artists and especially refugee and immigrant artists, whose stories shape the foundation of the work we do. Nadia and Tim went to work creating an invitation list that included arts and cultural organizations as well as social service agencies, artists, and educational institutions. The invitees came from The Kentucky Museum, the Southern Kentucky Performing Arts Center (SKyPAC), the Kentucky Arts Council, International Service Center, CEDARS, Middle Tennessee State University, WKU, Bowling Green Technical College, the ALIVE Center, Conexión Americas, Art Matters Community Art Studio/Gallery, Global Education Center, Briarwood Elementary, Arkansas State University, and the City of Bowling Green. Nearly 50 people registered for the workshop, including several students in the Folk Studies Program.

Description of Workshop Activities

The published agenda is attached as Appendix I, but we want to provide an annotated overview. Detailed notes, scribed by WKU students are also attached as Appendices II and III.

Morning Presentations

The morning was devoted to laying out possible building blocks for project development during afternoon breakout sessions. After the welcome, we invited everyone to spend a few minutes introducing themselves to their table mates. We had planned the seating in advance so people would not be sitting with their usual cohort. Rather, they would find themselves at a table of potential new contacts and collaborators. Along with their names and affiliations, we asked everyone to share a brief story reflecting a time when they realized the value of culture in their lives. This made for a rich story circle and opportunity to find common meaning in being present at the workshop.

The first item on the agenda was to share examples of national models of work we have done with refugees and immigrants. Amy discussed her work with the Pennsylvania Immigrant and Refugee Women's Network (PAIRWN) and the co-development of exhibitions, theater productions, cook books, retreats and other activities that foster creativity and support among women in central Pennsylvania. Laura talked about her work as art coordinator for the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) in Portland, Oregon. Projects that helped artists integrate into their new home communities included exhibits, concerts, a sewing circle with accompanying exhibition, a seniors project, and a mentoring program. Amy and Laura then shared examples from the publications they have developed together as part of Building Cultural Bridges: the *Newcomer Arts Manual*, designed for refugee resettlement and immigrant service workers concerned with connecting refugee artists and tradition bearers to arts resources; and *The Art of Community*, a series of case studies demonstrating successful programs that link arts programs with social service organizations. Attendees received complimentary copies of both publications. Additionally, participants learned about the *Newcomer Arts and Culture Directory*, a web-based resources including further project profiles from around the U.S. (<http://tinyurl.com/7vvoluh>).

Next, staff from state and local arts and cultural organizations spoke about the work they are doing or would like to be doing with refugees and immigrants. Staff from the Kentucky Museum and SkyPac talked about their resources that could be potentially be mobilized to support refugee and immigrant heritage. The Kentucky Museum can offer space for community workshops. The museum also hosts school programs with kids during the summer, which could be designed to focus on refugee and immigrant arts and youth. SkyPAC, a relatively new community venue, offers \$5 tickets to groups who request this reduced rate. They also have exhibition and film space, and are especially interested in developing a strong artist-in-residence program. They recognize the need for professional development among their staff on working with local artists and understanding the role of traditional arts in the lives of refugees and immigrants. Folklorists Bob Gates of the Kentucky Folklife Program, Brent Bjorkman of the WKU Department of Folk Studies, and Mark Brown of the Kentucky Arts Council spoke about folk arts programming with refugees in Vermont and Kentucky, highlighting specific projects such as festivals, apprenticeships, youth radio programs, documentary film, and teacher training.

From arts and cultural organizations, we then moved to a panel of presentations by community-based resources. Nadia De Leon and Julie Rivas talked about the ALIVE Center for

Community Partnerships, which connects WKU students and non-profit organizations in the community via service learning projects and research. The center offers ESL classes, with 54 students currently enrolled. They also have several programs that support cultural and economic initiatives in refugee and immigrant communities. Jennifer Bell shared her work with CEDARS, an organization she founded to provide services that pick up where local refugee resettlement resources leave off, including advocacy, community leadership, acculturation workshops, refugee-centered drivers education, and more. Leyda Becker, the International Communities Liaison for the City of Bowling Green sees herself as the connector between refugee and immigrant communities and city programs and services. Her focus has been to develop a Spanish-language radio station that draws upon local talent to produce programming. This initiative has been immensely successful.

Our last speaker on the panel was Dr. Suzanne Rose from the International Center, the refugee resettlement agency serving Bowling Green and Owensboro. She spoke with passion and knowledge about the center's role as the starting point for all refugees and immigrants coming to the area, and about the vibrancy they bring to the community. Where the Center's work ends with newcomers is where the rest of us must begin. Dr. Rose explained that in the past the benchmark for integration and success has been jobs – getting people employed to become contributing members of society. She sees that this focus is changing and that we have an opportunity to reinforce cultural and spiritual well-being as key elements in the integration process. This new approach can include the arts as a healing factor in addressing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Before breaking for lunch, we asked everyone to take out an index card and write one or two new ideas that came to them during the morning sessions. We gathered these ideas and they are transcribed in Appendix IV.

The Art of Our Community - Burmese Weaving Traditions & the Community Threads Weaving Cooperative

A highlight of the day was the presentation of and by Burmese weavers who are engaged with the ALIVE Center's refugee handicraft cooperative, Community Threads. Two weavers came to demonstrate both the warping process (preparing the threads to put on the loom) and the weaving process. The workshop offered an opportunity to highlight their work and to discuss the handicraft cooperative as a means of economic and cultural sustainability among refugees in Bowling Green.

During and after lunch, we had a wonderful presentation by Kyle O'Donnell, a student in the MBA program who has been working with the ALIVE Center on the Community Threads project to promote handicrafts of newcomer communities. He also has the distinction of coming from an industrial weaving family, and has an undergraduate degree in textiles, so he was able to shed light on the weaving process through a PowerPoint presentation, while the weavers from Community Threads set up their warping frame and loom. After his presentation, and while the weavers demonstrated their talents, he posed a series of questions to them. He had conducted interviews with each of them in advance and had prepared a handout containing the same questions and answers for the workshop participants to follow along. This worked well both as

a strategy for preparing the weavers for what to expect during their presentation and as a take-away for the attendees. Then participants were also able to ask their own questions.

Small Group Activities

Following the weaving presentation, we asked everyone to return to their small groups from the morning and to participate in two sessions entitled Putting Our Heads Together. During the first half hour, we asked participants to review the notes and thoughts they had generated on their own throughout the day and consider one project idea to share with their group. In story circle fashion (one at a time, listening, not commenting), they were invited to describe their project idea and why they think it would work. Then, together, each group selected the idea they were all most excited about and wrote that idea on a large post-it note. We then took a break and posted the ideas on the wall. Everyone walked around and viewed the ideas, gallery style. We asked them to write their names on the pages holding ideas they would like to help develop. In some cases, they only committed to one idea; in others, they committed to more than one. For the remainder of the day, we worked in four small groups to develop strategies for moving each of the four top ideas forward. The groups used worksheets (part of Appendix V) to identify the steps that need to be taken, the resources needed, the individuals who will take the lead and the timeline for completion. The four ideas that emerged are:

~ *Ethnic in the City* – a cultural tour of Bowling Green representing the variety of cultures in the city

~ *Adapting to Kentucky* – a traveling exhibition exploring the traditional arts of newcomers and the ways they change/adapt through the immigration process

~ *Newcomer Arts in South-Central Kentucky* – introducing newcomer arts into educational settings and exhibits

~ *From Iraq to Bowling Green* – a storytelling film and showing, sharing this culture's story about moving to a new country

Recommendations

Reflecting on the original issues and goals for this consultation, we feel that the workshop accomplished much. Staff members from arts and social services organizations were able to meet with each other, learn about what is already going on, connect to valuable resources in the community, and reaffirm the importance of culture and artistic traditions in the integration process. Working collaboratively in the afternoon, they identified several overlapping project ideas, all of which place the arts of newcomers at the forefront of educational and outreach efforts in the broader community. It is clear there are a plethora of resources and enthusiastic individuals ready to roll up their sleeves and work together.

There are three issues that will need to be addressed as WKU faculty, staff and students, community partners, and newcomer artists and communities move forward:

1. *Leadership.* Since so many of the attendees were WKU students (a revolving population with only two years' presence in the Bowling Green community) it will be important to place the leadership of these initiatives in the hands of a stable long-standing institution. The ALIVE Center, with its bridging role between the academy and the community, seems an obvious choice. Students committed to working on these projects could be placed, through the ALIVE Center, at appropriate institutions to carry out stages of the work.

Alternately or concurrently, the Department of Folk Studies is another clear choice for leadership, partnership with the ALIVE Center, or facilitation of students' participation in community-based projects with refugee and immigrant artists and communities. Folk Studies faculty members have longstanding experience guiding students in community-based fieldwork and research in the context of their course work. The recent transition that has brought Kentucky's state folklore program to WKU adds a new and exciting dimension to this work.

Either organization would bring continuity and consistency to the work. Whichever one is identified, the primary concern is to have clear lines of leadership and responsibility.

As relationships are forged with local refugee and immigrant traditional artists and cultural community leaders, it is important to include their input in the planning process. Forming a project advisory or planning team of more permanent Bowling Green residents will give the project further support and continuity. It is advisable to include refugee and immigrant community members at the table as programming ideas are developed and implemented.

2. *Focus.* While each of the selected projects could stand on its own, they overlap in ways that provide focus for an initial project that would draw everyone together toward a common goal and jump start a longer series of programs. Two of the projects focus on an exhibition, one on a film, and one on a cultural tour of Bowling Green. As folklorists, we know that each of these will take a measure of fieldwork to identify the artists, gather the stories and develop projects that have meaning and relevance. We also know that fieldwork with refugee and immigrant artists requires time to build relationships of trust, and potentially entails linguistic and even cultural interpretation.

It would make sense to consolidate the ideas into a 3-year project that begins with a year of fieldwork and story/sewing circles conducted by WKU students in collaboration with the International Center, followed by a year of planning for a city-wide celebration in the third year. The initial year could include the development of a directory or database containing artists contact info, their needs, and their future project ideas. A template of an artist's information sheet is included in the *Newcomer Arts* manual distributed at the workshop.

The celebration could include an exhibition at the Kentucky Museum, along with a series of performances or film screenings at SKyPAC, and would culminate with a Pecha Kucha-style event focusing on the traditional arts of **all cultures in south-central Kentucky**. Such a culminating event, which draws in newcomer and long-standing artists, might go a long way toward building bridges in the community by helping participants see commonalities across cultures. It could also lead to a mentorship program between artists.

The annual International Festival is a nice step in this direction, but a concerted effort with scholarly interpretation and local support behind it could strengthen the local community in ways the International Festival cannot. Perhaps the new WKU Folk Studies/ALIVE Center refugee and immigrant arts project could have a presence at the International Festival in the form of a narrative stage, and/or a stage and demonstration area at which WKU students could present the artists with whom they have been conducting fieldwork, providing cultural interpretation to contextualize the art forms for the public.

3. *Sustainability.* If WKU students are at the core of this new initiative, conducting fieldwork and working with local professional institutions to design public programs and events, then a key question is, "How will graduating students pass on knowledge to ensure continuity and project follow-through and success?" To this end, it will be important for the lead participating organizations (ALIVE Center, Kentucky Museum, SkyPAC, WKU Department of Folk Studies, International Center, CEDARS and the City of Bowling Green) to design and adopt a long-range partnership with the larger goal of building public awareness over a 6-year period (for instance) of the rich resources that newcomers bring to the Bowling Green community. Because WKU Folk Studies

graduate students are generally in Bowling Green for two years, their participation in this ongoing project will naturally be staggered. Thus second-year students have the potential to mentor first-year students working on the project, which will offer an added measure of continuity from year to year.

This long-range plan could formalize ongoing fieldwork in refugee and immigrant communities, enabling students to work in these partner institutions to further larger goals. If the fieldwork in the first year leads to an exhibition in the third year, fieldwork in the second year could lead to a cultural tour of Bowling Green launched in the fourth year, and fieldwork in the third year could lead to a film or radio show or some other idea in the fifth year, and so on. The key is that the partner organizations share a long-range plan with leadership that is clearly identified and delineated.

Based on these initial recommendations, we would suggest the following next steps:

1. Re-convene the key partners for a half-day meeting to identify a lead organization or forge a partnership among lead organizations, review the four project ideas that came out of the workshop, consolidate them into one project that everyone can support, using the workshop worksheet to identify action steps, resources and individuals to move that project forward. Create the team that will implement this pilot project.
2. Contact Richard Murphy at Catholic Charities (per Suzanne Rose's recommendation) to discuss funding support for the pilot program. The pilot project can be framed as the start of a new way to work with refugees; paying attention to cultural and spiritual well-being, as well as physical and economic well-being. Rose serves on the board for this grant program.
3. Consult Mark Brown of the Kentucky Arts Council, who may presumably be working on the project team, about possible project support through the state's folk arts program.
4. Once the pilot project is off the ground, re-convene to work on and adopt a long-range plan for working in partnership over several years to create awareness and support for newcomer artists and tradition bearers in Bowling Green. Revisit the list of project ideas to build a series of public programs and events that meet this larger goal.
5. Formalize opportunities for WKU students to conduct fieldwork, host story circles or sewing circles and otherwise engage with newcomers through the various resettlement and service agencies. Consider ways of incorporating such projects into WKU Department of Folk Studies course work.

6. There is a need for both cultural institutions and social services agencies to better know how to work with refugee artists. Building from materials in the *Newcomer Arts Manual*, a team of students could create a professional development workshop for these organizations, focusing on identification of artists, access to resources, language concerns, ethics and interpretation. The workshop could be offered each year by a new team of students, under the guidance of faculty and ALIVE Center staff.

There are many other exciting ideas that were generated by the workshop, including: projects that focus on food traditions, dress and adornment; artist mentoring; a film festival; community gardens; and partnering refugee artists with teachers for arts in education programs. All of these are viable and replicable and could be folded into a long-range plan or tackled as discreet internship or independent study projects led by students.

WKU is enriched by having both a healthy relationship with community-based organizations and a structure for engaging students in community-based cultural work. The organizations in Bowling Green are strong and the staff of those organizations are committed to work that strengthens the integration process for refugees and immigrants. In turn, that integration process is core to the work of cultural advocates and especially to students of folk studies. It is an environment that has the potential to become a model for communities around the country who actively resettle refugees.

Amy Skillman and Laura Marcus Green gratefully acknowledge the opportunity to work with this vibrant community of colleagues and students, the inspiration it provided, and the support from the WKU Department of Folk Studies, the ALIVE Center for Community Partnerships and the American Folklore Society that made this visit possible. We also deeply appreciate the gracious hospitality shown to us by WKU Folk Studies faculty and staff during our time in Bowling Green.

Appendix I: Agenda

The Art of Community:
Building a Newcomer Arts and Culture Support Network
In Bowling Green

September 28 2012

9:00 am – 4:30 pm

Presented by Building Cultural Bridges
Hosted by the ALIVE Center for Community Partnerships and the Department of
Folk Studies & Anthropology, Western Kentucky University

AGENDA

- 8:30 Coffee & Tea/Registration – Check-in
- 9:00 Welcome: *Tim Evans and Nadia De Leon*.
Review the Agenda: *Laura Marcus Green and Amy Skillman*
- 9:15 Introduction of participants
- 9:30 National Models of Collaboration Across the Arts & Social Services
Amy Skillman & Laura Marcus Green
- 10:10 Review of Workshop Publications: *Newcomer Arts Manual*
(Amy Skillman) and *The Art of Community* (Laura Marcus Green)
- 10:20 BREAK
- 10:35 Local Arts & Cultural Resources
~ Kentucky Museum, WKU
*Artist-in-Residence Lynne Ferguson & Education Coordinator,
Christy Spurlock*
~ Southern Kentucky Performing Arts Center (SkyPac)
Education & Visual Arts director/artist Andi Rudloff
~ Public Folklore in Kentucky:
WKU Department of Folk Studies & Anthropology: Brent Bjorkman
Kentucky Historical Society: Bob Gates

- 11:15 Idea moment (we'll explain)
- 11:20 Community-based Resources: A panel
~ Multicultural Programs at the ALIVE Center: *Nadia De Leon, Community Engagement Coordinator & Julie Rivas, Multicultural Services Assistant*
~ CEDARS (Center for Development, Acculturation and Resolution Services): *Director, Jennifer Bell*
~ City of Bowling Green: *International Community Liaison, Leyda Becker*
~ Bowling Green International Center: *Director, Suzanne Rose*
- 12:10 Discussion
- 12:30 LUNCH
- 1:15 The Art of Our Community: *Burmese Weaving Traditions & the Community Threads Weaving Cooperative. Demonstrations by Ku Mo Immaculata and She Moo*
- 2:00 Putting Our Heads Together: Imagining the Project: Breakout Session A
- 2:30 BREAK
- 2:45 Putting Our Heads Together: Rolling Up Our Sleeves: Breakout Session B
- 4:00 Closing Session: Where Do We Go From Here?
- 4:30 Adjourn

Appendix II: Detailed notes for the morning sessions

These notes were taken by a series of graduate students and offer greater details for each of the sessions and speakers during the morning session of the workshop.

Amy Skillman: AS

Laura Marcus Green: LMG

8:30 Registration- Coffee and Tea- Check in

9am- Welcome- Tim Evans and Nadia De Leon

Nadia De Leon introduces herself, welcomes everyone. She asks everyone to move to tables closer to the front, pause while everyone moves. Tim Evans introduces himself, checks that everyone has all the conference materials. He mentions the sponsors and introduces AS, manager of the Pennsylvania Folklife Archives, then LMG, independent folklorist. Together, they have created Building Cultural Bridges and the accompanying community workshops.

LMG introduces the workshop. Looking for new ways to collaborate and work together to support the heritage and art of newcomers; new ways to support refugee and immigrant cultures- and how to do that in the Bowling Green (BG) Community.

Overview of Agenda by LMG- talking about community work and listening to immigrant and refugee community workers in BG in the morning, after lunch there will be discussion. Encourages attendees to take notes and write questions to bring up at the breakout sessions. In the afternoon, there will be breakout sessions to brainstorm ideas about collaboration for community efforts. The main focus of today is collaboration.

Introduction of attendees- everyone introduce themselves to those at their table in story circle fashion. Each person talks for a minute to 90 seconds on: who you are, affiliation. Describe an experience that impacts how you feel about culture.

AS has each person get note card and write question about what you want to know about another person at your table, now that you have been introduced.

LMG talks about her background; discusses the Immigrant and Refugee Services in Oregon, working with ESL teachers, social workers, etc. She was building links between social services and artists. Looking for artists and assessing their needs. Used informant sheets and intake forms and make them available to social service workers. Develop public programming to create opportunities to share immigrant and refugee art. Describes work as a switchboard for the community. ESL and social workers are working to identify those who had folk arts. Some excited about the prospect, other social workers not sure of adding work to their cases. Eventually, they developed a partnership that worked.

LMG shows example of African Folk Festival. A difficulty of identifying folk art is that much of it

is part of everyday life, and is not considered art by the people who perform it, an example is hair braiding. A difficulty of finding jobs for immigrants and refugees is that their skills are not always identified or valued. She gives an example of a cobbler and a painter. This program helped these people connect with careers that can value their skills.

Grants are a central part of arts programming.

Part of the programming is connecting established artists with newcomer artists. An example was a Cuban musician paired with a native Oregon musician to make community connections. This was similar to an apprenticeship program, with master artists teaching traditional art forms to classes of children. It was expressed that the community wanted to find a way to pass this to their children and grandchildren and this was a way to do that. Another program was the sewing circle. Its purpose was to bring women together in a safe space. Fiber arts are in every culture and can bring people together. Many connections made between multicultural women, a place to practice English as a common language and not feel embarrassed. Developed grants to support this project, built in interpretation, as well as childcare budget. The group wanted to exhibit work, so group interviews established. Portraits taken of them, stories extracted to create the exhibit. They were partially adopted by the Portland Hand Weavers Guild, who donated materials and space. The women then took the exhibit and the sewing circle around the state. This provided opportunities for cultural sharing, as well as experience marketing their goods in gift shops, etc.

Seniors project was an event that was twice weekly, which served meals and was an opportunity to learn about healthcare, jobs, etc. LMG came and talked together, realized they wanted to do something else, so they decided to write grants to bring in artists, musicians and crafts people to share in cultural experiences. The senior group has monetary resources, so they went to the arts events, decided to start bringing their traditional arts to their lunches. Had public programming, where public could come in and work together on arts and talk to one another.

A lot of tangible outcomes: how many people participated, etc. needed to continue grant. A lot of outcomes are only anecdotal, but very important. She gave an example of an Afghan weaver who felt empowered by her traditional arts when she was being discriminated against in other aspects of her life.

AS begins a discussion of her public programming work in a non-profit community-based organization, working with social services from the outside. Social Service staff is usually overwhelmed, so it can be difficult to pay attention to culture, but is important to look at culture as a way to help integration.

What is traditional art?

- Living, not historical, art
- “art with genealogy” passed from one generation to another
- Excellence is defined by cultural community, rather than an institution

- Community based, integrated within community life
- Reinforce a sense of belonging, affirming identity and facilitating spirituality

Examples of traditional art- traditional dance, with costumes, music, etc.

Children who continue to speak their traditional languages at home, do better in school.

One thing AS found in working with refugee and immigrant women, is that they will travel for hours to get the ingredients they need to make their traditional foods. The women AS talked to said that their most important traditional art is their food.

She offers examples of traditional arts, including an African dress maker, and needle workers who sell their works to an American audience. This is an example of marketing of refugee and immigrant arts to an American artist. The questions of changing art forms to appeal to a new audience brought up. Sometimes, it can be a way for the community to continue to make the traditional arts.

Shows exhibit “Our Voices” a project that was a way for refugee and immigrant women to present themselves and their traditional arts. It began with a story circle. Commonalities found among the multicultural group, was inspiration for art project to decorate story circle chairs with their immigration story. Also, had women collect their food packaging for 6 months and tell stories about their traditional foods. Professional portraits made of the women. A main theme became courage. There were 25 women aged 19 to 82, representing 20 countries. Each woman provided an object that was most important to them from their home country. Women also developed a play to perform their immigration stories to the U.S. They had 6 months to put play together, in partnership with a community theater and its artistic director. They held talk back sessions at the end of performances; helps as a measurement of the success of the program.

The community created by this project became very deep for many of the women, even more so that the communities of their own cultural groups.

Question: Why is dirt the most important thing one woman brought to America?

AS said it was like bringing a thread of connection to her land itself.

Discussion moves to the *Newcomer Arts Manual*

AS- manual designed to help build the bridge; making possibilities to meet in the middle for immigrant cultural arts and social services. She discusses the contents of the book. It was written in language that can be helpful for grant applications. On Page 17, there are questions that could be added to intake process. Most traditional artists think they are not artists, so these questions get help the social service workers get to their skills faster.

Also, Nadia De Leon notes that the questions can be helpful to the community to identify those that can perform cultural functions that others may be seeking.

A working chapter to fill in (3) and keep information that can be a resource for those who may need it; mentors, stores, funders, etc. She gives an example of an artist from Senegal who lamented at one of the workshops not having drums. Someone else in the room happened to have many, and gave him one. It is about making those connections.

Chapter 4 is about recognizing and identifying artists and keepers of cultural resources and interviewing them. She mentions that there are many students in the room that are interested in fieldwork. Students can be a great resource. Needs assessment

Chapter 5 is about engaging artists who are ready to market their work or perform in festivals, and how to write grants. Forms that can be helpful, intake forms with biographical data.

In the back are newcomer resources at the national level as well as other programs that are focused on refugees and immigrants. Finally, there is a survey that they would like to get back if the manual is used.

LMG discusses *The Art of Community – Profiles and Collection of Case Studies*. She solicited essays from people around the country who are doing this work. It is a companion publication to the manual and a partnership with the affiliate Grant makers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees. Their website has a state by state guide, great information.

Many projects that have use the manual as a guide, varied in nature in scope. Each of the essays has a “nuts and bolts” section. The brass tacks information about in-kind support, sweat equity, grants, other funding, who was involved, who was served. There is also a web based directory. Openfolklore.org, click on websites. She shows examples of websites that showcase this work.

Again, group is asked to take out a note card and jot down an idea that got you excited.

Break- 10 minutes

Local arts and Cultural Resources

****Lynn Ferguson and Kristy Spurlock – The Kentucky Museum

We were surprised about being put on the agenda. We develop and manage all community projects at the museum and on campus.

List of Activities:

1. Partner with Warren County ESL and art projects during summer school,
2. Design your own workshop program- anyone can host a project
3. Special artisan projects; pay them a fair rate and organize what they want to do and develop and manage.

* Here is where we can outreach to collaborate with immigrants

4. Day camps are also another outreach opportunity. Beyond the school systems
5. Pioneer Days and learn about the community with community events. Children do specific art projects

6. Pecha Kucha Night

7. Christmas in KY, day of Bowling Green Christmas Parade.

Largest event and goes through the museums' staff

Becca Smith question-Thoughts about the BG Transit system, can you partner with them for free transportation for family events?

LF- Tried it but no one used it. There may be other ways to use this idea in order to reach out to communities

AR- Suggests Boys and Girls Club, kids programming does provide bussing for children, not families.

*****Andee Rudloff - SKYPac

Volunteer usher programs and docent program, blank canvas only open for six months and waiting for voices to tell us what they want.

What is SKYPac, "They have plans to be the best you've ever seen."

Contact Andee to represent organizations and allow for tickets for group organizations and school say performances are available. They want to know why you cannot afford \$5 for tickets. Schools and retirement communities are getting involved in going to these events. Performances have talkback sessions. Merged with Capital Arts Center to facilitate a collaborative effort with SKYPac and Art Center staff, which specializes in theatrical events. They would like to do more artists-in-residence programs; there is a need for curriculum tie in. Professional Development, there is a great need for professional development in order to get experiences with artists and how art becomes a part of everyday life
They have two exhibit spaces the Main Gallery with a current exhibit from KY Folklife and Children's Gallery.

Merged with Capitol Arts Center on July 1st, building needed to have renovations and cleanup. Did it all themselves; fixed everything. Utilizing the Capitol we want to feature ethnographic films. They are already considering potential ideas for projects with Brent Bjorkman and the KY Folklife.

Summer programs are another way to get people involved with the community. The mural project as a way to connect on a level of social media. Andee painted the sketch and invited people to help paint it in. Only rule was to not be monochromatic on both sides. We love to be a part of a variety of artistic forms. Another mural project was the Rivendell Hospital Mural, completed in 2 hours with children from the hospital. We are working on an Artists Demonstration Lobby to introduce artists to the community and doing administration.

***Brent Bjorkman, Mark Brown (KY Arts Council) and Bob Gates (KY Folklife Program)

Brent wants to talk about Vermont Folklife Center, which used to focus on traditional Anglo arts and culture and began to think about using different communities and giving them an outlet. A wide range of people live in Vermont, from Native American to Turkish. Providing apprenticeship and find out what they need in creating workshops such as ethnographic projects with films and interviews. He used the example for a community garden project that

was eventually benefited through the film and with grant projects. They produced a study last year about assessment of arts in the Vermont region, including issues of resources, challenges, and opportunities. Would like to talk to Arts Councils and contribute by sharing their traditions with other people. He talked about the migrant community with young men who were learning ESL. One man in particular came to VFC, they taught him video skills and sent him out to the field. What came back was a pivotal exhibit that had elements of travel, physicality, and audio. There is programming involved with this. The audio slideshow tells the story of the migrant community and the people that they work with. The audio is done in both Spanish and English (through a translator). Stories are also told from perspectives of farmers in the community of Salisbury, VT.

Bob Gates introduced Mark Brown, director of the KY Folklife Program; there is a variety of cultural background here in KY. When you work in a state program you have to work with the tools that you have. Our program served as a model in fieldwork, community scholars, and festivals. They used a variety of presentation formats at the festival, including foodways stages and narrative stages. They were trying to introduce new groups to the broader public, such as the Mariachi band which faced animosity from the community. They took this and did a project called the Community Crossroads, and brought in groups from Guatemala and India. He discussed the shift in folklore where groups should be documenting themselves. This was a challenge because they wanted to find specialties for every person that was there. One of the goals was to represent what they brought from their homeland and how they adapted to KY. One of the traditions was domino playing within the Guatemalan community. Discussion of the use of signs and how signage ties into culture.

Mark Brown – He talked about new arrivals and the state apprenticeships grant program; especially Cheryl Han, Chinese dancer. He discussed apprenticeship in Shelbyville because it was one of the first that was more collaborative with the community. Discussion of how students can work together in state arts models and want to do site visits. Please contact Mark, Bob, and Brent, who are trying to connect graduates and community scholars together in developing festivals and research. Bob discussed the problems that festivals are having with festivals and keeping festivals focused on their materials.

Community -Based Programs

Nadia De Leon explained the functions and creation of the ALIVE Center, which is both a community information center and volunteer center. 2006 added to the campus and use student learning with community learning in coursework. The past two years have seen the largest growth international community.

Julie Rivas- The ALIVE Center, Community in Restoration, ESL Program, and Refugee and Resettlement Program. Spanish and ESL programs are taught by native speakers. Two programs they have 54 students in total. More people are joining us. They are most concerned with community outreach and cultural awareness and sensitivity. Focus is advocacy and cultural programming. Anyone in the community can take advantage of that. These are offered in seven languages. Folders contain a brochure about the ALIVE Center. There is also a community

resource center list for the Spanish community.

Nadia introduced Jennifer Bell, Head of CEDARS, programming. Targeted Assistance Grant designed for communities that have high populations of refugees. This provides funding for advocacy, community leadership (people that demonstrate responsibility within the community) , Community Threads Weaving Cooperative, Refugee centered driver education, acculturation workshops, volunteerism, and cultural awareness. ALIVE is getting ready for “All About you” workshop. The center has done several workshops. Partnered with BRASS and Service One, Department Services, Hope Harbor, International Center, and the Community Farmer's Market, etc.

CEDARS Project, started with the needs that were not faith based within church community. Jennifer started an idea to centralize all of the services that were needed in the area. She received permission from the church as technical administration. Right now they are transitioning to become their own non-profit agency. They do not include direct services. They work with issues that fall in between the cracks, with students, parishioners, and volunteers to work with families, but Jennifer oversees all of this. Volunteers are trained with online sessions and workshops on such topics as individual advocacy, driver's license and personal issues, such as healthcare. Jennifer enjoys working with students and is always with the community.

Nadia, cultural anthropology and assistance programs. Projects feed into each other. HOPE, Hispanic Organization for Progress and Education, which encourages Spanish students to go to college.

Leyda Becker International Communities Liaison, becoming a connector that could be a bridge between the city and communities. Her focus is an initiative to establish a mass media communication system with the Latino community. There was no way to get information there was an initiative to establish a radio program, La Nuestra. Recruit local talent and to produce the show for the community, although the producers did not have background, their passion and development made up for this. The first showing was in May and the response was immense and immediate from community members. In July there was a live broadcast that people from communities from other than Bowling Green came. The only credential is to speak Spanish, it is a show that is community based and homegrown. The show needs local sponsorships. Amigos Resource Network, resource sharing for the Latino community. One of these is list serve emails that are bilingual and pass word on to Latino community. International Council which represents the variety of communities in the region. Met recently and the goal is to talk about job development forum and telling the city what it needs to focus on to meet the needs of the community.

Nadia- October 18th, 2012, center for initiatives and this is one of the ways that the ALIVE Center is working to improve community in the region.

Suzanne Rose, Bowling Green International Center. Bowling Green International Center is one of the contributing factors in the diversity of the area. Vibrant community is the hope in

Owensboro. Serves a variety of cultures and people are now working as case workers. We are the starting point, there are specific promises that we make for refugees; these are called assurances. They have to see if the community and center can serve the person. Fortunately, the only people that we have not been able to serve are HIV-AIDS persons because healthcare, but Owensboro has this opportunity. Where our job ends, it is where people like us, folklorists, can come in and use our toolkit to work with specific groups.

She asks, "What does it mean to join a community?" The government uses jobs as a way to integrate into community. This is changing to include faith communities and hopefully we can extend this to art. We can work together as the government is changing the process of cultural integration and the definition. Parent agency, grant programs that encourage immigrants to save money to start a business, go to school, or purchase a home. Pilot programs are also a way to get refugee programs to get started. Catholic charities (CCH) give national grants for Human Relations and Rose serves on the board for this grant programs. Richard Murphy is the grant contact to apply for local grant money. We need to be aware of fledgling projects with professors and Owensboro community and the issue of PTSD, art can be a part of this, wants this to include a healing medium. www.bgky.org has sources of contact with International Center and www.wku.edu/alive_/campus ALIVE Center Programs.

*AS- Dr. Rose's comment is one of the strongest that she has seen with the refugee and immigrant centers. Then she asked us to grab an index card and write a new idea that this session triggered for you.

Lunch instructions, have each of the speakers positioned at different tables so that you can sit with someone with whom you want to talk more.

Appendix III: Detailed notes from the presentation by the weavers

These notes were taken by a series of graduate students and offer greater details for each of the sessions and speakers during the morning session of the workshop.

Kyle O'Donnell is an MBA student at WKU and his undergrad is in textiles.

Three broad categories of weaving.

1. Woven structure – 90 degree intersection (over-under)
2. Knitted structure – intermeshing of loops (yarn)
3. Non-woven structure – mainly used for homogenous processes such as medical garments, facial cleansing pads, etc.

VIDEO 4 processes for weaving

yarn coming in; formation of a shed; opening created within you can insert a pic; change the shed so you lock the filling yarn in place. Both rolls are moving. These steps are the same processes whether by hand or machine.

VIDEO Knitting process – loops with needles. (This is how our fabrics are made.)

VIDEO Fibers are going directly into a fabric without the knitting. One or two fiber types, one or two colors. Used for functional applications because they cannot be changed so much.

Yarn – cotton fibers being twisted by hand. The twist is to make them stronger.

Question from Kyle to Burmese weaver

How did you get color into the fibers?

HAND-OUT

Before She Moo's family acquired a cotton plant, they had to make all their cotton by the bark, by pounding the tree.

How long does it take to prepare the weft? (Jennifer Bell)

One hour.

Ku Mo Immaculata – she was able to make enough money to pay their electric bill. She started weaving when she was fifteen years old.

Do both men and women weave? Just the girl.

Who taught you how to weave? Her mom.

Ku Mo has four daughters but none of them know how to weave (yet).

She Moo has a sister in Finland and she weaves.

Jennifer Bell expresses how we want to keep this culture alive. Because it is so easy to buy any type of clothing in America, the kids don't see as much value in learning to do this.

Is there a certain age when the women learn to weave? Answer – when they saw the mother weaving, then they have to follow. By the time the girls become 14-15, they have watched so long and they can weave themselves.

Kyle explains:

When you add the color, you cook it in the rice.

There are 3 ways to impart color; at the fiber, yarn, or fabric stage.

Chemically bind the colorant into the fiber OR put a pigment that rests on top of the fabric.

They went out and collected plant matter of the color they wanted to dye, mashed it to pulp, they cooked it with the rice so the starch from the rice is used as a binding agent with the color to adhere to the fabric.

Jennifer says, "To us, these are beautiful art forms but to them, they are utilitarian." They said "Jen, you make this special" they don't talk about it, because everybody does it.

Community Threads developed from the \$100 Solution Project. A group of students from cultural diversity classes were paired with a family with a mother who did embroidery. Their project was to help her sell. They used the \$100 to make business cards, and help her sell her products. They then spoke to the SIFE students (Students in Free Enterprise), ALIVE Center, International Center

They have a partnership with community farmer's market. The women have a booth there. With Kyle's business background, he has the ability to lead the co-op through an economic development process. He helps with the booth at farmer's market. Goal is to teach the women how to do their own inventory and their own sales.

Question from Erika: If they are putting fiber in with starching rice, how do they keep it from felting?

Kyle was not sure of this answer.

Animal hair cannot be treated the way cotton can. It introduces problems.

Three stages for creating a bag:

1. Preparation of the warp yarn on the warping frame.
2. Inserts filling yarn (weft), back in forth, by beating it down, it locks into place.
3. Take two pieces of woven cloth and hand-braid them together. Creates very strong seem without any machine.

Yarn is machine made but the fabric is hand-made.

That is very important to the consumer. It increases its value.

Proceeds go to the artist/weaver as someone who has made it locally. This also increases its value at the market.

Question: Did she always have a needle for braiding the pieces together?

Yes. She would go to the city to buy the needle.

They passed around the pieces. Difference in fabric from Thailand verses somewhere else.

Variety included baby wrap, bags.

Kyle: One of the changes in design that occurred when they moved into Thai refugee camps, they had to start using Thai yarn that was factory made and dyed. Shift towards more vibrant colors. Color patterns were naturally changed.

Open to questions:

Where do items go? They are sold at farmer's market, international festival, etc.

Money goes back to the weavers.

Initially they (Jennifer Bell +) discussed 70-30 split but they decided to give them 100%. They have the money needed for the threads.

Who designed the wooden frame? Ku Mo's husband made the frame from leftover pallets where he works (see accompanying photos on CD).

[See FACEBOOK photos from "Community Threads Weaving Cooperative"]

How do you know where to put the pegs on the warping frame that create the pattern in the final weave? She Moo decided by the length of her arms. (This also creates the "length" she wants for making her satchel bags.)

The symbols woven into the fabric/object are called "flowers" and the skill of making the flowers cannot be done by all weavers. Without the flowers, it is considered "plain."

How much time does it take to make a bag with flowers? 1 day and a half.

How much time does it take to make a bag with *no* flowers?

How long does it take to make a baby wrap? Half a day

Segue into small groups, working together to develop some action steps for moving forward with ideas. One folklorist at each table

LMG – we just saw a community art form.

Each table will have a scribe. Worksheet – "The Art of Community Workshop"

See Appendix V for notes from each topic/table.

Appendix IV: Project ideas generated by the meeting

Twice during the workshop we asked participants to pause for a few minutes and write down one or two ideas they have had while listening to the presentations. They shared these ideas with participants at their tables and together decided on one idea to focus on for the afternoon. The workshop resulted in action steps for four specific shared ideas; the list below (not in any specific order) captures all the ideas that were generated. Several of these ideas found their way into the four workshop projects, but each one could be explored and developed in more detail.

~ Videography/filmmaker student – evolution of traditional arts – traditional art from recycle materials as they do in native countries.

~ Music – building on the Burmese CD of songs – different types of songs, love songs, sacred songs, native dressmakers etc.

~ Mentoring refugee artists

~ Partnering with refugee fiber artists (sewing circle) with local sewing groups (group that meets at M. Joseph).

~ My idea for representing Bowling Green refugees and immigrants is to set up a local festival here in Bowling Green for the sole purpose of representing and presenting the culture and daily life of these immigrant groups. (not for the main cultures)

~ Art with at-risk populations (or narratives) – abused, elderly, refugee, homeless, addiction

~ Community gardens – public housing, it is so damn ugly. Pride in ownership, food cultivation. Arts curriculum/arts partnership

~ Art as education, like Philadelphia Folklore Program where folk art and folk art education actually connects to students, to curriculum and addresses diversity in real ways, engages students and their parents as community scholars.

~ Traveling exhibition on Kentucky's new arrivals' traditional art forms. Host venues present demonstrations or performances connected to the exhibition. Develop presentations with new arrived groups as an audience.

~ Connect artists in residence @ SKyPAC with traditional artists and artists demonstrations – is there a connection there with programming at the KY museum too? TAAP

~ Are children of refugees all identified as ESL? If not, can we connect with the International Center to identify those children that slip through the cracks in school system identification? Getting traditional arts connected with schools and refugee-immigrant communities.

~ The “sewing circle” excited me. Could this project be implemented nationally? Are there any ideas or considerations in doing this?

~ A (food) culture project that brings in non-profit organizations such as Hope Harbor and/or Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America creating holiday donation bags and asking for additional (if possible) money donations to help fund non-profits in Bowling Green.

~ International adornment section. I am interested in collection that is focused on head pieces and beauty or adornment of multi-cultures. With meanings or coming-of-age ritual or just because that is what the culture identifies as beauty or tradition from the KY area.

~ Hire refugee and immigrant artists to work with educators to lead professional development opportunities for educators in the region/state.

~ Incorporate arts performances of all kinds into a series (monthly) at the Capitol Arts Center and/or SkyPAC

~ Refugee and immigrant art demonstrations at SkyPAC before performances and/or at a time that works best for the community.

~ Using fieldwork class – students to partner with some of the local organizations that work with refugee and immigrant groups, to do extended interviews (more arts-focused) and documentation. Some kind of collection could be gathered somewhere.

~ Looking into Children’s arts

~ Creating a children’s theater (Lexington Children’s Theater) group that could also focus on a broad range of theater types (Bunraku, Noh)

~ Photography project. Give kids disposable cameras and let them go to town. Put photos in a gallery.

~ WKU film festival – relation with Paducah Arts, call in WKU film studies, Confucius Institute

~ I was thinking about an educational component to the Community Threads Coop – a poster or brochure to education customers. On a larger scale, posters on a variety of newcomer arts traditions compiled into an exhibit at SkyPAC with examples of the arts and contact information for groups/artists (if appropriate).

~ Personal project: Burmese grandmother/daughter/granddaughter relationship with their craft

~ I am excited about getting in touch with Leyda due to her connection with a radio station (Spanish). I want to spread the news about Red Cross disaster preparation and relief to at-risk communities including the ESL and non-English speaking communities (among other groups), even if all I do is translate our material into other languages.

~ Tie in foodways (potluck and teach) at Pechua Kucha at KY Museum

~ Develop education for folk arts in daycare/after school programs

~ Find and teach weaving or embroidery arts to children

~ Daycare/ESL – Ethnographic community scholars with the schools – food and material culture based.

~ Finding creative funding grant research for specific material cultural development, specifically in ways the art form can provide opportunities for healing.

~ Develop a project with farmers in Hart County about the role of Latinos in keeping their farms alive. Want to help the rest of the community acknowledge their culture.

~ Sharing suffering through film and non-conventional performances, helping them to blow off steam.

~ Native food restaurant – following the success of Thai, Indian, and Chinese restaurants. BG is a destination for neighboring cities because we're a wet county. Bottling Operation for native beverages and spirits.

~ Ethnographic marketing (a process in keeping with folklorist Kathleen Mundell)

~ Telling the full story of artists from their own perspective is part of a folklorists job. 2-fold results through ethnographic interviews:

~ Amass cultural data for our archive

~ help artists tell their story with concentrated effort in creating concise yet full biographical marketing tools (rack cards, cultural website, with individual stories, film media)

~ Iraq event (from Iraq to Bowling Green) – museum exhibit, SKyPAC, KY folklife program role, Iraqi member of Council, workshop, cross-cultural.

~ An intergenerational educational workshop for young refugees, immigrants' first generation young ones to learn the culture and arts of their ancestors, their heritage, and countries left behind. This includes arts and crafts, food preparation, traditional ceremonies, dances,

language, etc. so that children and young adults learn their parents' and grandparents' heritage.

~ I think refugees/immigrants should be given the chance to share their culture with people in the host society on a personal level, through workshops led by immigrants themselves, for which they can get paid. This can be based on mostly material culture (like food and handcrafts), in order for the language barriers to be reduced. This may give refugees the idea that they are important in the host society for what they can bring to it, not just to be "studied."

Appendix V: Notes and worksheets from the small group activities