

Final Narrative and Financial Reporting Form for all Wallace Global Fund Grants

Reporting Form Instructions

WGF suggests this form be completed by relevant project personnel. The Fund hopes this format reduces the amount of time and paperwork grantees spend on grant reporting; we welcome your feedback.

As described in the legal and binding Project Agreement signed by each grantee, the Wallace Global Fund requires the submission of project reports. Furthermore, the Fund's Board of Directors has requested reporting on specific elements of all grant projects. In order to aid in the efficient development of project reports, the Fund has prepared a brief set of questions which should facilitate prompt review and approval by Wallace Global Fund staff.

All reports should be clear and candid. Punctual receipt of reports is expected. Please contact the Fund prior to the due date should you anticipate a delay in the delivery of reports, as brief, no-cost extensions can be authorized on an as-needed basis.

Organization Information

Organization Name

The Media Consortium

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Project Title

The Media Consortium

Grant Amount

25000.0000

Project End Date

11/30/2018

Project Start Date

12/1/2017

Date Submitted

1/9/2018

Narrative Report

Original Program/Project Description

Program/Project Description

Over the past year, Media Consortium staff and members conducted a 360 of our organization. The results were positive: we found we had accomplished many of the goals we set out at our founding in 2006:

Our 80 plus members are relatively stable—most are growing, and very few are shrinking. In the past five years, only one member outlet has gone out of business.

Media Consortium members have developed a deeply collaborative culture. When we receive outside funding, we are able to pull together multi-outlet collaborations as we did in 2017 in Chicago. We are thrilled that we will be launching such a collaboration in 2018 focused on campus sexual assault.

With stability and collaboration have come a renewed focus on journalistic excellence. Many outlets that once specialized in analysis, like Yes! and Bitch, are now hiring full-time reporters. The Media Consortium continues to support the development of journalistic excellence with a project that trains journalists in the new economy beat, funded by Park and co-organized with the New Economy Coalition.

Finally, we have taken positive steps towards racial equity. Members are using Race Forward's rubrics to evaluate their organizations, hire more people of color in all positions, and rethink who they aim to reach with their content. We hope to survey members to track advances in equity this year.

With all this positive momentum, we should be able to celebrate success; instead, we find ourselves facing a new reality that requires a new direction for the organization.

News outlets are facing a two-front war on media. On one front is the U.S. government, led by a President who is proud of his war on the news. While Obama was no friend of journalism, under Trump journalists are being arrested for simply asking questions of government officials. An increased surveillance regime at the federal, state and local level is already leading to journalists' phones and equipment being searched without warrants.

Meanwhile, a second war is being waged by large telecom and "social" media platforms to create monopolies over news distribution. Ajit Pai, the current chair of the FCC, seems prepared to push through the telecom dream of an unregulated internet in which ISPs can require payment for content providers to reach consumers. Meanwhile Facebook and Google have defacto control over how users find new content.

A significant number of policy organizations work in the areas of government surveillance and net neutrality. However, aside from the new Open Markets Initiative, no organization is focused on the danger of platform monopoly distribution. Many news associations are unable to work in this area since they receive money from Facebook and Google. Clearly, fighting to ensure that users can access whatever content they choose is a fight we want to help lead.

Taking on the platforms is one fight; another is how independent news outlets see their role in this new environment. How do news outlets that have found sustainability by appealing to a particular niche make impact outside of that niche? How can outlets work together with community-based organizations to break down the boundaries between media that is consumed by white people and media consumed by people of color; between media consumed by urban residents and by rural residents; between media consumed by the economically privileged and the economically underprivileged?

In other words, even as we focus right now on simply keeping distribution channels open for independent media, how are we thinking long term about the task of informing and educating the widest public possible.

Using the original proposal's evaluation framework as a guide, what did the project accomplish, measured against the original objectives?

As a result of our strategic planning, the Media Consortium made the decision that the very best way to accomplish our objectives would be to shut our doors so that new projects could emerge. Here are our accomplishments:

1. Out of the Media Consortium's meetings in 2017 and 2018, a new organization is emerging, the Center for Movement Journalism. Inspired by Anna Simonton's visionary report, *Out of the South*; fueled by a vision of racial and geographic equity; and based on a belief that power should flow from the grassroots to the grassroots, the new Center for Movement Journalism will launch in 2019 with a fellowship program for community-centered Southern journalists co-directed by Anna and our very own Manolia Charlotin. The

Center will also launch a national training program, *Strategies for Transforming Journalism*, run by Lewis Wallace and Mia Henry. A spin agreement, valid as of January 1, 2019, transfers all remaining Media Consortium assets (including approximately \$25,000) from the Media Consortium's fiscal sponsor, the Foundation for National Progress, to the Center for Movement Journalism's fiscal sponsor, Allied Media Projects.

2. While the Center will sustain the Media Consortium's vision, we also need organizations that will support independent outlets as you seek economic sustainability and a voice in the larger news ecosystem. To that end, the Media Consortium has donated our membership database--a value of \$12,000--to LION Publishers. This organization for Local Independent Online News Publishers has grown dramatically in the past several years, offering a terrific conference in Chicago, microgrants, vendor discounts and much more.

3. Because the Media Consortium performed a critically important role for independent media during its existence, the Park Center for Independent Media has announced that it will create an archive of Media Consortium materials. Banners, materials from our conferences, impact awards, and reports will all find a permanent place there.

Did the project encounter any unanticipated problems, or even anticipated resistance? If so, please describe the problems and the adjustments required in the original strategy.

While Media Consortium members were saddened to see their organization disappear, they have been unified in their excitement over what is emerging next:

"Thanks so much for this comprehensive and vigorous report, which creates tremendous excitement about what comes next!

Congratulations on your dynamic leadership, and commitment to the next creative generation."--Susan Haig, Civic Story

"This is great news coming out of the situation. LION is doing phenomenal organizing, and congrats to Manolia and Anna - we can't wait to see all that you do with the opportunity!"--Chris Faraone, Boston Institute for Nonprofit Journalism

Would you consider this grant a success or not? Provide a brief explanation of this assessment. (i.e., Did it achieve the goals/objectives laid out in the proposal?)

Yes. Here is our report:

Media Consortium Final Report

December 31, 2018

Submitted by Jo Ellen Green Kaiser

"The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house"—Audre Lorde

On June 14, 2018, at the Allied Media Conference in Detroit, the Media Consortium met for the last time. The organization stopped public operations on June 30, 2018 and closed on December 31, 2018, having achieved its long-term goals and fulfilled its mission.

The largest vision of the Media Consortium—building a media system that is just and equitable—of course is not anywhere near done. However, after a year-long visioning process that concluded with the Detroit gathering, the Media Consortium as a body has determined that the work to come demands a new approach and a fresh start. We sunset in order to nurture a radical rethinking of the structure of media organizations and the broader media ecosystem, a rethinking centering racial justice and rooted in grassroots communities.

Mission Accomplished

The Media Consortium has achieved the goals we announced at our founding. In our 2005 Pocantico Declaration, members declared that the purpose of the Media Consortium would be to amplify the voice of progressive independent media; increase our collective clout; and strengthen and transform our individual businesses.

Over the past thirteen years, thanks especially to the work of former director Tracy van Slyke and former associate director Erin Polgreen, the Media Consortium built a sturdy, economically sustainable business model for progressive news centered on individual donors/members and supported by related external revenue. This model, based on using social media to drive traffic to email newsletters and then converting

subscribers to donors, has now become the centerpiece of independent news business efforts elsewhere. For the Media Consortium, the strength of this model has been demonstrated by the fact that even as the number of establishment news outlets fell dramatically, the Media Consortium grew by 200%. Outlets like Mother Jones, Truthout, Bitch, The Real News Network, Rewire and The Young Turks have developed budgets well into the seven figures and become strong voices in the national media.

Starting in 2011, executive director Jo Ellen Green Kaiser (later joined by associate director Manolia Charlotin in 2016), focused on building a strong collaborative culture. Told that news outlets would never agree to work with each other, we proved this "common wisdom" wrong with our coverage by 25 outlets of the takeover of the Wisconsin capital in 2011 and with the Occupy May Day effort in 2012 that involved 65 outlets. In the six years since, the Media Consortium ran over forty collaborations, from a six-outlet look at pesticide use in Kauai to the recent #DisHonoroll project on campus sexual assault. Now, collaboration has become an institutionalized journalism practice at the Center for Cooperative Media at Montclair State and at establishment outlets like The Guardian and ProPublica.

The Media Consortium embarked on collaborative efforts out of a belief that collaboration would lead to increased impact. To test that hypothesis, we partnered in 2014 with Prof. Gary King of Harvard on a scientific study to measure whether collaborative stories on particular topics changed public conversation on Twitter. That effort led to a groundbreaking report King published in Science magazine in 2017 demonstrating that even small outlets can have an outsize effect on public conversation when they work together. Goal achieved: impact created and proved.

Members never saw the Media Consortium simply as a means to improve their own outlets. An important objective of the non-profit Media Consortium was to support the entire independent media sector. To that end, we focused heavily on media policy at a time when the independent sector has faced existential threats ranging from telecom ownership of the internet to arrests of independent and citizen journalists to the growing dominance of platform monopolies. In response, we worked closely with allies in media policy on net neutrality, joined RCFP to sign over two dozen amici briefs in support of First Amendment rights for all acts of journalism, and supported efforts behind the scenes to push back against the platforms. To build the capacity for reporting on these threats, we ran a Media Policy Reporting Project, training over 50 reporters in the beat and producing over 300 media policy focused stories.

We thank OSF for funding our business-focused Innovation Labs from 2009-2011, the Voqal Fund for supporting our impact study with Prof. King in 2014-2017, and the Media Democracy Fund for funding our media policy work. Profound gratitude to the Quixote Foundation for its vision, and especially to the Wallace Global Fund, which provided general support from 2010-2018. Special thanks to the Foundation for National Progress, which served as our fiscal sponsor and gave us in-kind support, and to the New Economy Coalition for their fundraising support and partnership on the New Economy Reporting Project.

The Challenge of Racial Equity

A strategic review in 2015 led Media Consortium Director Jo Ellen Kaiser to lift up racial equity as the most critical challenge facing the progressive news sector. Progressive news in 2015 was still largely run by white people, still assumed a white audience, and, though attempting to cover issues impacting communities of color, did not have relationships with those communities. Mindful that "diversity" efforts had not succeeded in addressing these specific challenges, The Media Consortium chose to focus on equity instead of diversity and inclusion. Instead of building a "pipeline" for journalists of color, the Media Consortium began efforts to build workplaces where journalists of color would be the decision-makers, the wielders of power instead of its top-down beneficiaries.

From 2015 the Media Consortium has pursued that goal by

- Hiring Haitian-American Manolia Charlotin in 2016 as Membership and then Associate Director;
- Creating a TMCinColor listserv in 2016 as a safe space for journalists of color;
- Paying for 60 members to take a full-day racial equity workshop run by Race Forward in 2016;
- Using travel grants to ensure that 50% of speakers at our 2016 conference were journalists of color;
- Changing the conference format in 2017 to an unconference to give every participant the opportunity to shape the organization's direction;
- Using travel grants to ensure that over 50% of participants at our 2016, 2017, and 2018 conferences were journalists of color.

This work, and the intentions around it, have already produced concrete changes among Media Consortium members. Bitch Media and Yes! magazine reorganized their staffs as a direct result of our 2016 meeting. Members like Scalawag, The Real News Network, Berrett-Koehler, and Democracy Now! found support for their already-existing efforts to employ a racial equity lens in their work.

As we moved deeper into equity work, however, we recognized that going further would require resources

the Media Consortium did not have and was not able to obtain. Most journalism foundations seem more interested in funding mentorship, fellowship and pipeline programs that move journalists of color from place to place rather than funding programs that create opportunities for journalists and business-side staff of color to obtain positions of power where they currently work.

We also came to understand that the best way to build a racially equitable journalism sector would be to center media and media makers already working in communities of color—to build power from the grassroots to the grasstops, rather than keeping power at the top and drawing individuals up.

We also came to understand that the Media Consortium was not the best container for such work. It was founded by a small circle of elite, white-run (and mostly male-dominated) independent outlets, and despite efforts to democratize and diversify its membership, the organization's history continued to structure its programs, in much the same way that our skeletons determine our body size and shape.

The work of racial equity is deeply rooted in a set of social, moral and political values. Promoting racial equity (as opposed to racial diversity) means believing in the necessity of intersectional analyses of race, gender and class; believing that capitalist economies rely on the exploitation of black and brown people; and believing that white supremacy, patriarchy, mono-lingualism, ableism, and other power analyses are real and must be sites of contestation in our culture.

Journalism institutions—including journalism schools, journalism membership organizations, journalism foundations and the largest news outlets—generally don't want to hear these perspectives. Indeed, in their recent desire to appeal to the "Trump voter" or "middle America," journalism institutions have been rejecting overtly values-based work, even as they admit that true journalistic "objectivity" does not and cannot exist. That means the work of racial equity in media is going to have to move to social justice spaces if it is going to find resources and partners.

Where We Go From Here: Movement Journalism

The journalism world is innately conservative—not in its partisan politics, which skew liberal Democrat, but in its refusal to adapt to new circumstances and a changing world. Nothing stands still, however, and there are exciting new efforts happening right now in the journalism sector.

New Voices New Jersey and New Voices North Carolina, run by Free Press and supported by the Democracy Fund, point to a community-centered vision for journalism. City Bureau in Chicago is receiving generous support because they have developed a model for centering community that also maintains many traditional journalistic practices. The Boston Institute for Nonprofit Journalism has built collaborative ties between community outlets across Boston. Allied Media Projects has worked for over a decade to promote local media makers in Detroit, particularly individuals who cross boundaries between art, education, and reporting. And there are exciting projects happening in Boyle Heights, Los Angeles; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Arkansas; Philadelphia, Baltimore, and elsewhere.

At our Detroit gathering this year, Media Consortium members were most enthusiastic about an effort begun by Anna Simonton which she has termed Movement Journalism. So were attendees at the Allied Media Conference, where Movement Journalism track sessions were so full that people were turned away at the doors.

Movement Journalism argues that social justice movements—and grassroots civil society efforts generally—should be as important to journalists as are Wall Street numbers or pronouncements by politicians. If we think the stock market rising is a story, why isn't the rise of a people's movement a story? If we will run a story about a politician's ideas for affordable housing, why shouldn't we run a story about a land trust that actually is making affordable housing a reality right now?

Movement Journalism is about empowering people in a community to tell the stories of their community—with journalists supporting them, rather than vice versa. Movement journalists are as willing to sit down with activists and advocates as establishment journalists are to sit down with politicians and bankers.

Movement Journalism insists journalists be transparent about our values, even as we pursue a craft that requires us to follow a story where ever it leads.

We are pleased to announce that the Center for Movement Journalism launches on January 1, 2019, with generous support from the News Integrity Initiative and the Foundation for a Just Society—and the remaining Media Consortium funds (approx. \$24,000). The Center's first co-directors will be Anna Simonton and Manolia Charlotin, who will begin by launching a fellowship program to build capacity for grassroots storytellers from the American South. The Center also will launch a national training program in movement journalism run by Lewis Wallace and Mia Henry. Jo Ellen Kaiser will provide operational support for the Center's first six months.

As the Center for Movement Journalism comes into being, outlets and individuals that were members of the Media Consortium will continue to work on specific projects together: continuing to fight back against platform monopolies by supporting new tools for content distribution and audience engagement;

researching new economic models for journalism including coops and public funding; identifying organizations already doing grassroots journalism training and developing a curriculum based on best practices; and sharing power and building power by supporting hubs of local community news outlets, especially those that center communities of color.

The work continues.

"Never be limited by other people's limited imaginations."

—Dr. Mae Jemison, first African-American female astronaut

Financial Report

The following is a list of the pending and secured funding sources listed on your application. In the spaces provided below this list, please enter up to five additional sources of funding obtained since your application was submitted.

Funding Pending 1 Name

Consulting via ITEGA on Google/FB issue

Funding Pending 1 Amount

25000.00

Funding Pending 2 Name

Conference Registration

Funding Pending 2 Amount

12000.00

Funding Pending 3 Name

Member Dues

Funding Pending 3 Amount

16250.00

Funding Pending 4 Name

Conference Sponsors

Funding Pending 4 Amount

15000.00

Funding Secured 1 Name

Park Foundation

Funding Secured 1 Amount

25000.00

Funding Secured 2 Name

Anonymous Donor via Wellspring Advisors

Funding Secured 2 Amount

75000.00

Funding Secured 3 Name

Funding Secured 3 Amount

0.00

Funding Secured 4 Name

Funding Secured 4 Amount

0.00

Actual Funder 1 Name

Anonymous Donor via Wellspring

Actual_Funder 1 Amount

75000.00

Actual Funder 2 Name

Park Foundation via NEC

Actual Funder 2 Amount

25000.00

Actual Funder 3 Name

Conference Registration

Actual Funder 3 Amount

750.00

Actual Funder 4 Name**Actual Funder 4 Amount**

0.00

Actual Funder 5 Name**Actual Funder 5 Amount**

0.00

Explanation of substantial line item variations (over 20%), all of which must have received prior WGF approval

1. Jo Ellen ended up serving as board chair for ITEGA, so her work was uncompensated. The good news is that ITEGA is working with the Local Media Consortium and the Internet Society to create privacy rules for user data. Much success there!
2. We held our conference as part of AMC. While we took in much less in registration money, and no conference sponsorships, our costs were also much lower.
3. We canceled membership dues because we went out of business.
4. Instead of receiving the \$25,000 from Park directly, Park gave the money to our partners, the New Economy Coalition; the money then came to us as fee for service

Attachments

| Title | File Name |
|---|--|
| 2. Program/Project Budget | TMC 2018 final budget.xlsx |
| 3. Supporting Documentation 1 (optional) | 11 |
| | TMC_Financials_201811_Prelim.xlsx |
| | FNP Fiscal 18 Executive Summary - Unaudited Results as of 09.25.18.pdf |
| 1. Organizational Budget | |

Files attached to this form may be deleted 120 days after submission.