

**Final Report for the Chicago Community Trust**

**Collaborative Storytelling Project for On The Table 2017**

*July 31, 2017*

From March to July 2017 The Media Consortium managed the Chicago Community Trust Collaborative Storytelling Project to foster new and substantive relationships among media outlets that serve different communities within Chicago. Through this effort we were able to support development of a local media network for collaborative storytelling that provides more complete stories of Chicago’s neighborhoods—particularly communities of color. We helped expand the civic conversation nurtured at On the Table by helping to communicate the impact of those conversations in specific communities and neighborhoods through 13 stories, seven OTT events and two convenings. (See Appendix A for specifics).

On The Table was founded to connect individuals and communities of diverse perspectives and backgrounds. Like the communities they serve, local Chicago media have been disconnected from each other. When the Media Consortium began this project, we found that journalists working for media serving communities of color on the West side didn’t have relationship with their peers on the South side. For instance, one of the largest Spanish-language outlets in the city (Hoy) was expanding its coverage to target younger bi-lingual readers, but they weren’t collaborating with the powerful Latino youth project (Yollocalli). The leaders of two of the most prominent supporters of Chicago media, Public Narrative and City Bureau, had not established a partnership even though their missions were aligned.

**The lasting impact of the Chicago Community Trust Collaborative Storytelling Project has been to unite these disparate outlets in an ongoing working group that will better serve their communities and all of Chicago.**

Through the course of two group meetings and numerous background conversations, 13 outlets involved in this project have agreed to participate in an ongoing Chicago media hub that serves communities of color, jointly hosted by City Bureau and Public Narrative. This first-ever hub of its kind in Chicago creates a local media ecosystem where there once were only disparate outlets. Working together, this hub will continue the work of OTT, lifting up marginalized voices to address challenges across neighborhoods and working to find solutions together.

Along with the creation of this city-wide hub, the Project fostered ongoing partnerships particularly between youth media and more established media outlets.

a) Hoy and Yollocalli a youth media arts program of the Mexican Art Museum, have established reporting fellowships for Latinx youth in neighborhoods like Pilsen, The Little Village and Back of the Yards. This partnership provides a group of emerging storytellers the opportunity to have a voice in one of the main platforms serving the Latinx community. They have also been receiving training from experienced journalists and are now in a pipeline to work for other media platforms in the city.

b) The Black Youth Project and In These Times are establishing an editorial partnership that will enable Chicago-based Black millennial storytellers and political analysts to have a broader national platform to influence the national political discourse. This helps broaden the perception of what’s happening in Chicago since it infuses the national dialogue with emerging voices that provide depth and nuance to stories about the city’s challenges.

A number of foundations and organizations have worked for years to create partnerships like these among Chicago media outlets: the Trust can take great pride in fostering these partnerships through the On The Table program.

Transforming the media landscape in Chicago would be a big enough win for most organizations, but this On the Table project also provoked conversations and led to real change in two Chicago neighborhoods.

a) In Pilsen, there’s a diverse Latinx community that cultivates cultural programming throughout the neighborhood. However, the Trans Latinx community remains marginalized inside this setting. Their stories and experiences are not part of the greater narrative in the neighborhood and throughout the city. OTT provided the opportunity and resources for El Beisman and Repensar Films to host a conversation in a neighborhood restaurant, and have that story told. The two media platforms produced a write-up of the event in both English and Spanish—which is important to ensure that all generations can access it. They’re also completing a multimedia profile of the Trans Latinx speakers who shared their experiences during that OTT. Gozamos, which was not a host, is additionally profiling the restaurant involved. These stories ensure that the one-time event has continued resonance within the community.

b) On the south side, the Girls Like Me project had been providing young Black women with career training opportunities, but that story hadn’t been told on a larger platform. This kind of story is important to tell about Chicago’s youth. It helps change both the perception of how young people in the city are preparing themselves to be contributing members of society, and it makes a difference for the youth to see that their stories and experiences are valued in their neighborhood and city. It also helps strengthen the broader narrative of Chicago’s Black and immigrant contributions to the city and the global market. Contexture and the Intersection lifted that story up into media.

Integrating media with the On the Table program has been a terrific success. Stories that had been hidden within communities came out, first through hosted events and then through media. Media outlets, which themselves are critically important community players, developed relationships that will unite communities. Through these ongoing programs, the On the Table program itself gains more reach and power.

**Appendix A: Deliverables**

**Outlets Involved:**

* Black Youth Project: blackyouthproject.com
* Chicago Defender: chicagodefender.com
* Chicago Reporter: chicagoreporter.com
* City Bureau: citybureau.org
* Contexture Media : contexture.tv
* El Beisman: elbeisman.com
* Gozamos: gozamos.com
* Hoy: vivelohoy.com
* In These Times: inthesetimes.com
* The Intersection: intersection.tv
* Repensar Films: facebook.com/repensarfilms/
* The Triibe: thetribe.com
* Yollocalli: yollocalli.org

**OTT Participation:**

* Contexture Media and The Intersection co-hosted and covered OTT on the South Side in a conversation focused on Black girls.
* El Beisman and Repensar Films co-hosted and covered an OTT in Pilsen that featured the Trans Latinx community
* In These Times hosted OTT in Logan Square on economic development issues facing neighborhoods on the west side
* Black Youth Project’s Cathy Cohen participated in an OTT co-hosted by Illinois Humanities at ThoughtWorks
* The Triibe covered an OTT at Vice Brewery about equity and inclusion, arts and culture in the South Loop
* Amara Enyia, a political and media leader that participated in this project, was a featured speaker at an OTT hosted by University of Chicago on the cost of segregation and another one at Garfield Park Community council on economic development. (Note: Her OTT involvement was a direct result of the March 16 convening).
* Chicago Defender participated in an OTT on economic development in the south side

**Stories produced to date:**

1. Contexture produced two videos from OTT published on their site

[http://www.contexture.tv/ott-glmp](http://www.contexture.tv/ott-glmp%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

2. The Intersection produced a special report published on their site

[http://www.intersection.tv/ott-special-report](http://www.intersection.tv/ott-special-report%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

3.Contexture and The Intersection jointly produced a different YouTube report

a) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnt9IqrOHhA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnt9IqrOHhA" \t "_blank)

b) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\_M1qU8Vx7mQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_M1qU8Vx7mQ" \t "_blank)

4. El Beisman produced a story in English and Spanish based on their Pilsen OTT about the Trans Latinx community. It was the first conversation of its kind to take place during OTT.

a) [http://www.elbeisman.com/article.php?action=read&id=1441](http://www.elbeisman.com/article.php?action=read&id=1441" \t "_blank)

b) [http://elbeisman.com/article.php?action=read&id=1453](http://elbeisman.com/article.php?action=read&id=1453" \t "_blank)

5. The Triibe produced a video story inspired by conversations held at an OTT that addressed the impact of gun violence— and was included in a piece by the Chicgo Reporter.

a)The Triibe: [https://thetriibe.com/feature/another-life/](https://thetriibe.com/feature/another-life/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

b) [http://chicagoreporter.com/another-life-docu-series-portrays-the-trauma-of-gun-violence/](http://chicagoreporter.com/another-life-docu-series-portrays-the-trauma-of-gun-violence/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

6. The Black Youth Project worked with the Chicago Reporter and the Triibe to produce a follow-up story about the video itself:

<http://blackyouthproject.com/how-two-young-black-chicago-women-are-using-art-and-space-to-change-narratives-about-black-communities/>

7. Gozamos produced a story this week on the restaurant that hosted the Trans Latinx On the Table and the impact of the conversation for neighborhood residents

[http://gozamos.com/2017/07/community-building-in-trans-latinx-chicago/](http://gozamos.com/2017/07/community-building-in-trans-latinx-chicago/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

**Stories to appear by August 4, 2017:**

8. Black Youth Project is producing a piece that will focus on different ways African Americans in Chicago are focusing on invest/divest and economic justice and connecting it to a larger invest/divest movement. This piece is based on the OTT they attended.

9. El Beisman and Repensar Films are in production of a multimedia profile of the Trans Latinx activists who participated in OTT.

**Stories to appear by August 31, 2017:**

Hoy! And Yollocalli are working on four original stories. Two of these stories will feature the Acting Up Awards Q+A

10) Pilsen Community Narratives Podcast by The Chicago Art Collective

11) A family unity biking outing by Universidad Popular

12) Gentrification in Little Village: Rent vs. Ownership

13) Metal scene among Latino Chicagoans

**Note:**

Producing stories ahead of OTT was a priority for the Trust. However, we indicated via email and phone conversation that work would have to begin in March/April. Given that the contract was not sent until May 3, the related check was not sent until May 12 and On the Table was May 16, we were unable to start the work in April to organize outlets to produce stories in advance. As we indicated then in an email of May 3, “because of this delay in payment we may not be able to meet all of the benchmarks in the SOW” and in fact we did not have the time to engage outlets to create stories in advance of On the Table.