Tranformative Media: Responding to the Trump Era

A Media Consortium Conference

Washington DC, Washington Court Hotel

March 1-4, 2017

In May 2015, Journalism that Matters began a conversation at [Pocantico](http://journalismthatmatters.org/pocantico/) on May 14-16, 2015 titled Supporting Independent Journalism to Thrive. The unexpected conclusion from that meeting was that the future of journalism lay in putting community at the center of our work.

So those of us who organized the Pocantico meeting, including Jo Ellen Kaiser, Executive Director of the Media Consortium, began that work. In October 2015, Journalism that Matters held [Experience Engagement](http://journalismthatmatters.org/experienceengagement/) at the Agora Center, focused on how journalists could support communities to thrive. In February 2016, the Media Consortium, a network of independent news outlets, devoted its annual meeting to [racial equity](http://tmcmedia2016.org), putting communities of color at the center of progressive news. By mid-summer of 2016, “engagement” became a trendy word at journalism conferences.

Then came the election of 2016.

As we start 2017, mainstream news is in crisis. Mocked as “corrupt media” by the president-elect, mistrusted by most Americans, corporate news has lost its focus and sense of purpose. Independent news, however, is thriving—gaining more donations than ever before, and breaking bigger stories-- in part because we have begun to put community at the center and to earn our communities’ trust.

We now have an unprecedented opportunity to use what independent newsmedia has learned to transform the larger news ecosystem. On March 1-4 in Washington DC, the Media Consortium will hold the TMC 2017, the [Transformative Media Conference](http://tmcmedia.org/), focused on how media can be transformative by engaging with the communities it serves.

Our conference will kick off with inspiring talks by well-known independent journalists in roundtable formats. These journalists—Amy Goodman, Ricardo Sandoval Palos, Sarah vanGelder, and others--will put out a call to action to participants to both deepen their engagement with communities and to broaden the types of communities they reach.

To achieve that goal, we will take a page from Journalism that Matters and spend Thursday and Friday afternoon in self-organized working groups, each with the goal of figuring out what concrete action they can take to either deepen their own work or to use their practice as a model for transforming the rest of the news media system. On Friday evening we will ask for commitments which we will track at convenings through 2017.

To make the Transformative Media Conference a success, we will need the following resources:

1. A Facilitator who can work with a large group of people in a hybrid conference/ unconference model (cost $15,000);

2. Travel grants to bring in the speakers who will inspire us; we will ask these speakers to participate without honorarium (cost $15,000);

3. Scholarships to bring in a diverse range of participants—seeking particularly people of color and those from the rural and suburban Midwest and South ($1000/person; $25,000 requested).

The total amount we seek is $55,000. Please let us know if you are interested in learning more and may be willing to support this critically important convening.

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