Info Cell 1
Funding for cultural and Educational Projects

Thursday, April 23 15:30-17:00

Moderator
Geoffrey Brown – UK – Euclid www.euclid.info / www.culture.info

Speakers:
Natalia Cehlarikova – Bratislava – European Culture Contact Point Slovakia www.ccp.sk
Linda Kapustová Helbichová - International Visegrad Fund www.visegradfund.org
Zuzana Krátka - Central European Foundation www.cef.sk
Janet Livingstone - Central European Foundation www.cef.sk

"I know that not everyone here is a native English speaker, so if you have problems understanding me, which would be completely understandable, just... wave your arms like this!" exclaimed moderator Geoffrey Brown in his opening remarks. This charming apology in a way proved to be an accurate comment on the main point that I came away with from this very informative session, that the funding opportunities in place from the EU are designed to promote collaboration, alliances and a greater connection between all of the countries of the EU, crossing lingual, cultural, and political borderlines.

This session was composed of presentations from various organizations which provide support and advice for artists and organizations seeking to find their way through the massive, complicated, and often confusing and overwhelming web of programs and funding opportunities set in place by the EU. I will attempt here to provide a brief summary of the main funding bodies presented during this session, keeping in mind that this is just a small snippet of the mind-boggling amount of information which is available online about every one of these programs, including who/what/when/where/how to apply.

EUCLID

EUCLID provides European & international information, research and consultancy services to the cultural sector http://www.euclid.info/. It is a private organization that provides seminars, conferences, and databases, such as the very useful CUPID (Cultural Projects Internet Database) (http://www.cupid.culture.info/), an on-line database of cultural projects that have received
funding from European Union's Culture 2000 funding program, and Funds Compare http://fundscompare.culture.info/, which compares and rates funding opportunities, and other online resources such as partners.culture.info, network.culture.info, ccp.culture.info, which are designed to help find, form, and strengthen partnerships between EU member states. According to Mr. Brown, building and providing proof of a strong partnership between foreign organizations is of the utmost importance in creating a successful application, a process which can sometimes take a year or more.

EUCLID also provides, of course, a basic training in EU funding opportunities, which was presented to us with enthusiasm by Geoffrey Brown, the director of Euclid.

First, there are two main types of programs – the **trans-national** and the **Structural** funds.
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Trans-National Funds encourage organizations and individuals to work together.
These funds have a pan-European focus, provide small to medium size grants, focus on projects (1-3 years maximum) – not "revenue" funding, and partners from different countries are generally essential. Under the Trans-National heading, there are two main types of grants:
- **projects** based on co-operation and partnership, involving partners from (usually) at least three different European countries, and
- **exchanges** of individuals or groups, either one-way or mutual.

The available funding programs under Trans-National Funds include:

- **Culture Program - this is where the majority of EU funded art projects and organizations find their funding- a good place to start!** It provides support for:
  ◦ Cultural actions- to enable a wide range of cultural organizations coming from various eligible European countries to collaborate on cultural and artistic projects.
  ◦ Cultural bodies- supports cultural bodies working at the European level: networks, festivals, cultural ambassadors and policy support structures.
  ◦ Analysis and dissemination activities- to support analysis and dissemination activities in order to raise awareness of the Culture program and its activities. http://www.culturefund.eu//#summary

- **Europe for Citizens** – this programme supports transnational exchanges and cooperation activities, contributing to developing a sense of belonging to common European ideals and encouraging the process of European integration. http://www.citizensfund.eu//#summary

- **Media 2007**: the programme for the audiovisual sector / industry – provides community support to enable the European audiovisual sector to play its part in consolidating European citizenship and culture. http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l24224a.htm

- **Lifelong Learning** – the various programmes under this heading enable individuals at all stages of their lives to pursue stimulating learning opportunities across Europe, and also provides opportunities to organizations for partnership projects. There are four sub-programmes focusing on different stages of education and training and continuing education:
  * **Comenius** for schools
  * **Erasmus** for higher education
  * **Leonardo da Vinci** for vocational education and training
  * **Grundtvig** for adult education
  http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm

- **Languages** – fosters and promotes language learning at all levels in order to empower citizens to make full use of the opportunities created by the European project, mostly for regional & minority languages http://ec.europa.eu/education/languages/who-we-are/doc1454_en.htm

- **Youth in Action** – promotes mobility within and beyond the EU borders, non-formal learning and intercultural dialogue, and encourages the inclusion of all young people, regardless of their educational, social and cultural background. http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-in-action-programme/doc74_en.htm

- **Research & Technological Development** – a collection of the actions at EU level to fund and promote research. http://ec.europa.eu/research/fp6/index_en.cfm

The **Structural Funds** provide support for geographical areas within EU which are lagging behind the EU average in terms of economic development and social inclusion. These funds have a specific geographical focus, focus on capital works or people-based activities, are large funds, and partners from other countries are not needed. The available funding programs under the Structural Funds are:
- **Cohesion Fund** – for the least-developed Member States and regions to support actions in the areas of trans-European transport networks and the environment
- **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** – to promote economic change through innovation and promotion of knowledge, entrepreneurship, the protection of the environment, and the improvement of their accessibility.
- **European Social Fund (ESF)** – to promote lifelong learning and increased investment in human resources, the development of qualifications and competences, the dissemination of information and communication technologies.
- **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)** – provides support for innovative investments in agriculture, forestry, food industry in rural areas
- **European Fisheries Fund (EFF)** – provides support for innovative investments in the field of fisheries
http://ec.europa.eu/research/infrastructures/structural_funds_en.html

* Note that the last two categories here seem less relevant to projects or programmes in the arts and culture sector, but under the EAFRD, projects such as turning unused farm structures into performance or residency spaces may be eligible to receive funding, and Mr. Brown even shared a small anecdote of a cultural project which was able to receive funding from the EFF – a museum of trawling in France – so anything's possible!

International Visegrad Fund

Next, Linda Kapustovà-Helbichovà presented information on the International Visegrad Fund http://www.visegradfund.org/index.php. It is an international organization based in Bratislava, founded in 2000 by the governments of the countries of the Visegrad Group (V4)– the Czech Republic, the Republic of Hungary, the Republic of Poland, and the Slovak Republic.

The purpose of the Fund is to promote development of closer cooperation among V4 countries (and other countries) through the support of common cultural, scientific and educational projects, youth exchanges, cross-border projects and tourism promotion. They provide small (under €4000) and medium-size grants mainly to non-governmental organizations, municipalities and local governments, schools and universities, but also to private

companies and individual citizens. Also, the Visegrad Strategic Program supports long-term projects of strategic character that link institutions of all four Visegrad Group countries. The Visegrad Fund website provides an online application system.

Cultural Contact Point Slovakia

The Cultural Contact Points (CCP) were established in the Member States and the associated countries of the European Union in 1998, to offer support to those eligible to apply to the Culture 2000 programme. Natàlia Cehlàrikova is the head of the office of the Cultural Contact Point Slovakia http://www.ccp.sk/, the coordination center for the implementation of the Culture 2000 programme in Slovakia. Essentially, this organization facilitates participation in the program by as many professionals from the cultural field as possible, by spreading information about the programme to Slovak citizens, providing Europe-wide contacts and aiding in the development of partnerships, and providing consultation regarding project proposals and application forms.

Central European Foundation

Janet Livingstone, from the Central European Foundation http://www.cef.sk/, began her presentation with an apology, as she limped to her place beside the projector screen "I injured myself onstage!" Ms. Livingstone, like many of us, wears more than one hat; in addition to working for CEF, she is also a performer. The Central European Foundation (CEF) is an independent, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organization whose mission is to strengthen civil society and protect spiritual values and human rights in Central Europe by supporting cultural and economic development (an interesting fact – CEF is funded by the Slovak oil industry).

The CEF's main activity is grant-making in the areas of culture and the arts, education, civil society development and regional economic development. The foundation has three main programs: Development of Central European Identity, Support and Development of Education, and Celebrating Arts and Culture, and under these topics, supports a wide range of funding opportunities – for individual artists, festivals, exhibitions, conferences, and the reconstruction of schools, art spaces, and historical monuments. Potential grant applicants can apply to the CEF when there is a specific call for proposals announced on the CEF website, but there is a warning that grant approval at CEF is a complex process, and applicants must count on a minimum of 3-4 months from the date of submission for processing of applications and approval. Essentially, projects or organizations outside of Slovakia must have a Slovak partner to apply for funding.

At the end of all of our presentations, there was a brief (too brief) discussion from these funding professionals involving tips and strategies for successful application making, and first timer advice.

First, which may be a statement of the obvious, of key importance is the quality of the idea. Multidisciplinary projects are now particularly appealing, as the EU seems more and more interested in supporting the development of more cutting edge, avant-garde work – keeping in mind, as Mr. Brown admitted, the general EU idea of "radical" may be a little bland compared to what most of us now working in the field have become accustomed to (in other words, don't go too crazy, they won't be hard to impress!) And it was also recommended to not forget the people behind the giant funding machines – they are representatives of European politics, whose names and business addresses are public information. Get to know them if you can, invite them to see your work- as we all know, personal relationships are a great instigator of success in any business, the cultural sector included.

It is also important to be precise and to the point in one's writing- you should be able to encapsulate the project *in the first sentence,* something where, according to our professionals, the vast majority of proposals fall short.

And finally, it was reiterated by Mr. Brown, and echoed by the other panelists, that the quality of the partnerships is a key issue. It is often underestimated how much face-to-face time and coordination is needed to create a sufficiently strong relationship, as seen in the eyes of the EU funding bodies (he added that EUCLID has noticed there seems to be an increase in partnerships between places easily accessible through the flight plans of Easyjet and other budget airlines!). But in the end, what makes the difference between a successful proposal and a rejected one, is the proof of a great connection that will support a European and cross-border cooperation. So shake hands, say hello, have a drink together, and utilize wonderful opportunities such as the IETM meetings to form and strengthen those connections – and if there's someone you don't understand, just wave your arms.

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