



Young Cultural Leaders Forum

The first *Salzburg Global Forum for Young Cultural Leaders* brought together forty-seven dynamic young cultural leaders from thirty-seven countries around the globe for an intensive leadership development program at Schloss Leopoldskron in Salzburg, Austria. The [Salzburg Global Seminar](#), a non-profit organization known for its global convening power, and [National Arts Strategies](#), a non-profit organization specializing in leadership development for the cultural sector, launched this new series in November 2012 to provide a unique learning opportunity for “next generation” cultural leaders from Argentina to Zambia and to strengthen the cultural sector worldwide.

The session in Salzburg included a series of plenary sessions, facilitated break-out groups, and praxis-oriented training sessions in critical leadership skills, as well as informal networking time. The plenary sessions focused on the following themes: *The Role of Arts Organizations in Society and their Place in the Community*; *The Creation and the Communication of Value*; and *“Glocal” - What is Global and What is Local in Today’s World?* The training sessions provided skill development in these critical areas: *Change Management*; *Innovation*, and *Team Building and Communication*.

The first “class” of the YCL Forum series included a theater festival director from Chile, a creative producer from Australia, a dance company director from Ireland, a cultural heritage specialist from Mozambique, a music manager from Hong Kong, and forty-two other young cultural change-makers from around the world. The average age of the participants was thirty-two years old. Responding to questions in a post-session survey, 100% of the participants rated their overall seminar experience as outstanding (81%) or good (19%); 82% stated they had acquired valuable new skills as a result of their participation in the program, and 92% felt that the networking opportunities had been good to outstanding.

Post-session survey responses to the program were extremely enthusiastic, describing the Salzburg experience as “a genuinely global conversation and a rare opportunity,” “exceeding every one of my expectations,” “transformational,” “not competitive, but collaborative,” providing “short *and* long-term takeaways,” and, in a word, “thrilling.”

The learning from the session is also shared with the cultural sector via FIELDNOTES, the National Arts Strategies’ blog on [artsjournal.com](#). More than twenty interviews, brief presentations, and blogs from the 2012 Young Cultural Leaders Forum in Salzburg can be viewed here: <http://www.artsjournal.com/fieldnotes/2012/11/what-does-it-mean-to-be-a-cultural-leader/>. Other immediate post-session outcomes include the establishment of a “Yammer” enterprise social network to which all session participants have subscribed (and to which future YCLF participants will be added) to continue the sharing of resources and information that began in Salzburg, and a YCLF Facebook group page for informal exchanges. In addition, many of the Fellows have already embarked on collaborative projects, established peer mentoring teams, and are sharing their learning within their own organizations and their local cultural networks through mini-workshops.

In the Fellows’ own words:

“I will use the knowledge gained to nurture the capabilities of my institution to better respond to the challenges in terms of the training of future professionals in the field of archaeology and cultural heritage in Mozambique. I would also like to use what I learnt to make my work more relevant to society by contributing in cultural development in Mozambique. The network developed out of my participation in this session will be important in establishing collaborative initiatives to address some of the common challenges in the cultural sector.”

-Albino Jopela, Lecturer, Archeology Program,
Eduardo Mondlane University, Maputo, Mozambique

“The 2012 Salzburg Global Seminar Young Cultural Leaders session was a transformative experience for me — a before and after. I am shaken, still unsure of what will settle from the new thoughts, perspectives and peers I’ve discovered. It is difficult to know what all I’ll bring back to my workplace and life as a result of this experience, but it isn’t difficult to say that it has altered me to my core. This experience has pushed me to imagine my future and impact in a broader, more global sense. To listen so that I do not miss out. To trust.”

To be more daring and thoughtful and provocative. To find grit. To grow from it. Salzburg Global Seminar was the most satisfying educative experience I've ever had. It has raised the bar for all others I will experience. "

-Beck Tench, Director for Innovation, Museum of Life and Science, Durham, North Carolina, United States

"The week I spent in Salzburg for the Young Cultural Leader Forum is definitely a lifetime experience. I am especially thankful for having the chance to listen to panelists from different areas sharing their experiences and views, which indeed enriched my understanding of the cultural sector in an international sense. Meeting with all the brilliant fellows is so precious not only because of the exchange of ideas and experiences, but also the friendship and passion we shared during this time. It will become a source of energy to keep up my work for arts and culture, and I am going to share the skills as well as the energy with my colleagues in my workplace and local cultural circle."

-Yolanda Ngai Chi Yin, Assistant Manager, Chinese Opera Festival, Hong Kong SAR, People's Republic of China

"The possibility of engaging with such a diverse group of highly committed young cultural managers and mentors provided a unique environment that fostered some of the most meaningful insights I have had in the professional realm. The Seminar provided a priceless opportunity to reflect on the different value systems that we are engaging with when creating public policy or arts programming for a given community, and on how to provide a flexible environment for all the stakeholders in it to be able to engage in—and benefit from—the production of value. The lectures allowed me to reflect on the complexity of our work, while the small group work provided invaluable feedback to develop the practical skills required to deliver results both in global and local scales. I can sincerely say that being a participant at the Young Cultural Leaders forum was a life-changing experience."

-Jimena Lara Estrada, Program Coordinator, Mexican Cultural Institute, New York, New York, United States

"The session clarified many aspects I needed to engage in my organization as well as other personal skills that I can invest while being a young cultural leader. Though my organization is still young, the session enlightened various thoughts and ways forward for managing and self-assessing while progressing hence avoiding unexpected and undesired obstacles."

-Maram Na'és, Vice President, International Institute of Conservation, Zarga, Jordan

"I expect that in ten years time I will reflect back on my time at SGS and see it as an important milestone or perhaps even a turning point, in making me and my institution more effective and focused on real, not imagined, social impact."

-Sebastian Chan, Director of Digital Media, Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, New York, United States

"The SGS managed to bring together an amazing group of people from all over the world and this made the environment ripe for creativity and enacting change. I think the impact of those five intensive days spent in Salzburg will ripple for a generation of young cultural leaders."

-Claire Power, Head of Institution, Temple Bar Gallery + Studios, Dublin, Ireland