

CULTURAL EXCHANGES THROUGH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

STRENGTHENING TIES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE WORLD

ACTION NEEDED

We urge Congress to:

- Encourage the State Department to appropriate a minimum of \$15 million for the Cultural Programs Division of the State Department's Office of Citizen Exchanges within the FY 2013 State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill and dedicate increased resources to the application-based exchanges and Arts Envoy program.
- Encourage the State Department to make information on projects funded through these programs readily available to the public and to encourage broad participation in its grant program in support of artistic and cultural exchanges with an emphasis on providing ample time for artists to apply and simplifying the application process.

Budget for State Department Cultural Programs Division, FY 2003 to present (in millions of dollars)

Fiscal Year	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10	'11	'12
Cultural Programs Division	2.7	3	4.3	4.7	9.3	8.4	9.1	11.5	TBD	TBD

TALKING POINTS

- ***Policymakers agree that cultural exchange enhances international understanding.***
 - Assistant Secretary of State Ann Stock said in a 2011 speech, “Cultural diplomacy is an essential element in America’s foreign policy. It builds on Secretary of State Clinton’s concept of ‘smart power,’ which utilizes a variety of means to achieve our 21st-century foreign policy goals. It is a concept that recognizes and emphasizes those aspects of our society that are literally attractive—that cause others to come forward and join us and partner with us. Nothing in ‘smart power’ is ‘smarter’ than cultural diplomacy: it bridges language barriers, opens lines of communication, and connects people to one another in a way that is both lasting and immediate.”
 - U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Ranking Member Sen. Richard Lugar (R-IN) called for increased cultural diplomacy in his February 2009 article in *Foreign Policy*: “As part of a broader overhaul of its public diplomacy effort, the United States should reinvigorate the old American Centers concept...[and] support active cultural programming. America's best players in public diplomacy have always been its people and its ideas.”
- ***Increased funding and operational capacity for the Cultural Programs Division will strengthen exchange and collaboration in the arts and cultural fields that build bridges among people of different countries, cultures, and faiths.***
 - A May 2006 evaluation of the State Department’s Jazz Ambassadors Program found that more than 90 percent of embassy staff agreed that the program is effective in extending the reach of traditional diplomacy and providing alternative venues for policy dialogue.
 - A review of 29 studies on public diplomacy in 2005 identified the most popular recommendation for public diplomacy reform was to increase U.S. exchange programs. The studies were compiled by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service.
 - An October 2009 report by the New York University John Brademas Center for the Study of Congress called for America to have a renewed role in cultural exchange and cultural diplomacy. “To these ends, [the] report recommends that international arts and cultural exchanges be integrated into the planning strategies of U.S. policymakers as a key element of public diplomacy. History has proven that a robust public diplomacy is essential to U.S. national security and the promotion of American interests around the globe. The arts community has observed first-hand the value of international artistic exchanges in promoting moderation and tolerance among widely diverse religious and cultural groups.”

TALKING POINTS (CONTINUED)

- *States build global trade through the arts.*
 - According to the report by the National Governors Association, *How States Are Using Arts and Culture to Strengthen Their Global Trade Development*, state governments find that incorporating arts and cultural exchanges in their international trade and business development serves to expand trading relationships with other nations and open markets abroad as a complement to more traditional efforts to generate exports.

BACKGROUND

Support for cultural exchange and cultural diplomacy has never fully recovered from the elimination of the former United States Information Agency (USIA) and the USIA's Arts America Program. USIA was an independent government agency supporting U.S. foreign policy and interests abroad. Before USIA was dismantled, the agency administered educational and cultural exchanges; international radio, television, and film broadcasting; and extensive information programs. Support for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a major international organization with significant cultural diplomacy programs, has been withheld by Congress due to diplomatic concerns.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) at the State Department is responsible for the public diplomacy activities of the United States, including international cultural exchange programs. Within ECA, the Cultural Programs Division focuses on cultural diplomacy, exchange, and collaboration by sharing the rich artistic traditions of the United States in the visual arts, performing arts, film, arts education, arts management, and cultural studies. Active programs include Arts Envoys, DanceMotion USA, International Writing Program, Museums & Community Collaborations Abroad, Musical Overtures, American Music Abroad, American Film Program, and Traveling Exhibitions. The Cultural Programs Division provides grant opportunities to U.S. nonprofits for cultural exchange activities; residency, mentoring, and training programs; programs that are carried out overseas by or under the sponsorship of U.S. Embassy public diplomacy offices; and presentations at major international visual arts exhibitions and cultural centers.

In 2011, ECA launched Cultural Crossroads, an online space on Facebook (www.facebook.com/CulturalCrossroadsUSA) to connect U.S. artists and State employees abroad in an effort to provide resources, information, and to facilitate introductions.

2011 Cultural Exchange Highlights

DanceMotion USA: Urban Bush Women traveled to South America and visited communities in Brazil and Columbia. Using dance as an entry point, the company led powerful conversations about dance, the United States, race, and class. Urban Bush Women visited schools, including Incolballet, which works with youth from impoverished backgrounds and uses dance as a foundation for providing a disciplined and structured environment where they can also study math and science. In 2010, three dance companies visited nine countries, hosted 21 public and student performances, held 104 exchange and education activities, and reached more than 15,000 audience members and participants.

International Writing Program: American Filmmaker Ram Devineni and four talented writers—fiction writer Joshua Harris, poet Bob Holman, playwright Nathalie Handal, and reporter Eliza Griswold—offered workshops and shared their expertise on an ECA-sponsored tour of Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and the United Arab Emirates. The group had an opportunity to talk about writing and ethics with Pakistani journalists and had an opportunity to witness the energy and drive to rebuild in Afghanistan.

American Music Abroad: Mountain Quickstep, a musical group that combines elements of old-time bluegrass and early country music of the Adirondack, Appalachian, and Smoky Mountain regions of the U.S., visited Bulgaria, Kosovo, Moldova, and Turkey in 2011. While in Kosovo, the music group participated in a workshop and exchange with the Kosovo national dance company, Shota, where they shared in American folk music and watched the dancers perform. Mountain Quickstep later shared a stage with a youth dance and music ensemble and recorded a segment for a folk show, hosted by famous Kosovo singing artist Shkurte Fejza.

For a complete listing of grantees, please visit <http://exchanges.state.gov/programs/cultural.html>