

IMTN *A conversation of trainers that leads to action*

Bulletin 7

April 2017



The arts in mission

Jill Ford, Robin Harris and Brian Schrag

Introduction

Ruth Wall

Chair, IMTN

Trainers always have a lot to talk about! In this Bulletin we are talking about the arts and how to engage the arts in mission. Every culture has its own unique “ethnoart”. Often as we cross cultures we are ill-prepared to engage and connect with people in their music, art, dance or stories or, to share the gospel in ways that engage with their creative expressions. One consequence is that Christianity is seen as a foreign religion expressed in foreign ways and another consequence is that new believers are not enabled to share their faith and their worship in their unique art forms.

Mission training needs to equip people with the necessary framework and tools for engaging with local art but more than this, mission training needs to provide an experience of creativity in learning that is in itself transformative. I am convinced that engaging the arts in teaching can foster powerful and life-changing learning. If students have no experience of using creativity in their own learning they are not likely to appreciate the importance of engaging in peoples’ local ethnoart.

The question of creativity in teaching and learning is an important one. A better engagement of the arts in learning is needed but this will only arise when educators understand the importance of the arts in enriching and embedding learning in powerful ways. Creativity gives expression to experiences and understanding that may not easily be put into words connecting learners to deeper levels of knowing. Creativity enables the emotional and cognitive dimensions of learning to be connected, thus making learning more holistic. Creativity also powerfully aids memory, making learning more easily remembered. To this day I still remember a whole variety of songs, short films, images, painting, dances, models and carvings students shared over the years in response to an assignment on their identity in Christ, whereas their written answers are lost to me. The arts can be integrated across the curriculum using as many creative forms as possible to enrich learning. Assignments can be offered in a variety of ways using both (traditional) written essay or exam combined with creative assignment options. If you want to talk more about integrating the arts please get in touch!

This Bulletin focuses on two excellent courses that are now well developed; ‘*Introduction to Ethnodoxology*’ and ‘*Arts for a Better Future*’. The Arts in Mission (AiM) Task Force are members of the WEA- Mission Commission and part of the IMTN. They have valuable experience and expertise in training people to engage local arts in sharing the gospel and to enable local communities to work toward Kingdom goals such as reconciliation and trauma healing. To find out how this arts training can be adapted for your training context please get in touch with Robin Harris (Robin_Harris@gial.edu) or one of the AiM Task Force.

The arts in mission

Jill Ford, Robin Harris and Brian Schrag

The Current Landscape

Recent considerations of art within evangelicalism tend to focus on worship. This is true whether one is looking at the church in the west or mission ventures around the globe. Worship arts endure as an important part of an artistic presence in our faith communities and one of the ways art is integrated into the life of those communities. But more can be done in the mission context through tapping the rich resource and wide appeal that the arts provide. The AiM Task Force team wishes to cast a broad net and include all artistic expressions through which people of faith can bridge social, cultural and religious differences and open the way to deepening human relationships, thereby conveying the power and truth of the gospel. Believing that art is one of the “locations” for the Spirit to do his work, it follows that every effort to draw on the creative arts is worthwhile for the missional task.¹

Looking Forward: Training and Education in the Arts and Mission

For decades, ethnomusicologists, anthropologists, and others have decried the weakened local music cultures that frequently accompany Christianity's spread. Furthermore, although ethnomusicology programs and scholarly organizations blossomed in the 1960s and 70s, the discipline's evidence for musical relativity remains unknown to most students, who continue to believe that “music is a universal language.”² And while many schools offer conventional ethnomusicology courses, applied methodologies for cross-cultural engagement with local arts are extremely rare. Consequently, missionaries working cross-culturally are often conspicuously ill-prepared for service in the areas of music and other arts.

The methodologies and resources we recommend here derive from various theological, anthropological, missiological, and ethnomusicological approaches to the arts. They feature a core set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and pedagogical approaches that can be adapted to diverse learning contexts. Despite divergent educational settings, students grounded in these conceptual and methodological frameworks emerge from these courses better prepared to demonstrate cultural sensitivity in their cross-cultural engagements with artists and their arts.

This applied approach to arts training has begun to produce some new vocabulary: *ethnoarts*, *world arts*, or sometimes *ethnodoxology*. The International Council of Ethnodoxologists (ICE) serves as a global network for people using this approach, partnering with the WEA Mission Commission to make these tools available to cross-cultural workers around the world. Increasingly, universities, seminaries, and missionary training programs are incorporating these ethnodoxology approaches into their own educational offerings. We hope to see this trend continue, and even increase.

In the following paragraphs, we recommend two textbooks—the *Ethnodoxology Handbook* and *Manual*—and a course model for each. Other courses have been developed from these books, and you may even be able to develop your own CLAT-based (Creating Local Arts Together) or ethnodoxology-focused curricula. We would be delighted to see that happen!

¹ Mission Commission –Task Force on Arts in Mission Report, May 2014, by John Franklin.

² See Robin Harris' article on this topic at <http://worshipleader.com/music/the-great-misconception/>.

Textbook #1: “Ethnodoxology Handbook”

The first volume is *Worship and Mission for the Global Church: An Ethnodoxology Handbook*³ which features three sections and a collection of media materials:

- 1) Foundations: theological, missiological, artistic, and anthropological reflections on engaging the arts in culturally appropriate ways;
- 2) Stories: over 90 short case studies and stories of ethnodoxology in practice, organized by geographical region;
- 3) Tools: praxis oriented articles focused on such topics as arts advocacy, teaching and how to create an arts curriculum, how to develop culturally appropriate worship, and how to create local arts together;
- 4) Media materials (formerly on DVD, now online) include over 30 articles, full pdfs of 6 books (some in French and Spanish), all the back issues of two journals, and audio and video clips in several languages, all of which can be used in classroom settings to augment the teaching process.

Course #1: “Introduction to Ethnodoxology”

Although a number of schools use the *Ethnodoxology Handbook* in their programs, the classic version of the course, sometimes titled “Ethnodoxology in Christian Ministry,” features a collaborative team of 3-4 ICE professors who work with students in the following areas:

- a) developing a biblical and missiological framework for arts in cross-cultural ministry
- b) learning field research skills for the arts
- c) gaining practical tools for multicultural congregational contexts
- d) learning songs and experiencing the arts of a variety of world worship traditions
- e) integrating ethnodoxology principles into a community they serve.

The website for the International Council of Ethnodoxologists (www.worldofworship.org)⁴ provides information about current venues for this course and some student responses to this course.

Textbook #2: The CLAT Manual

The second volume, *Creating Local Arts Together: A Manual to Help Communities Reach Their Kingdom Goals*,⁵ provides a methodology for engaging arts in communities. This flexible seven-step process is called “Creating Local Arts Together” (with the inelegant acrostic CLAT). Students trained in CLAT methods can help to facilitate a process in which local artists (and other stakeholders in a community) research and create local arts to meet community needs. The seven basic steps of the method are reflected here in graphic form:

³ James R. Krabill, general editor, with Frank Fortunato, Robin P. Harris, and Brian Schrag (William Carey Library, 2013). See www.ethnodoxologyhandbook.com for more information and “preview” pdf of the Table of Contents, foreword, preface, introduction, and author bios.

⁴ Note the menu item - “Seminars and Short Courses” at the ICE home page - www.worldofworship.org/.

⁵ Brian Schrag, with James R. Krabill, gen. ed. (William Carey Library, 2013). A faith-neutral version, *Making Arts for Life: A Community Guide* (by Brian Schrag and Katie Van Beuren) is forthcoming.



1. **MEET a Community and Its Arts.** Explore artistic and social resources that exist in the community.
2. **SPECIFY Kingdom Goals.** Discover the kingdom goals that the community wants to work toward. These could include deeper worship, greater shalom, healthier families, strengthening identity, working toward reconciliation, trauma healing, and more.
3. **CONNECT Genre to Goals.** The community chooses an artistic genre that can help them meet their goals, and activities that can result in purposeful creativity in this genre.
4. **ANALYZE an Event Containing the Chosen Genre.** Describe the event and its genre(s) as a whole, and its artistic forms as arts and in relationship to broader cultural context.
5. **SPARK Creativity.** Implement activities the community has chosen to spark creativity within the genre they have chosen.
6. **IMPROVE New Works.** The community evaluates results of the sparking activities and makes them better.
7. **INTEGRATE AND CELEBRATE for Continuity.** Plan and implement ways that this new kind of creativity can continue into the future. Identify more contexts where the new and old arts can be displayed and performed.

CLAT-based curricula have been expanded, contracted, and adapted to diverse learning contexts, including everything from one-day seminars, five-day workshops, and informal customized instruction, to PhD level coursework. Regardless of the educational setting, students grounded in this conceptual and methodological framework are better prepared to demonstrate cultural sensitivity in their cross-cultural engagements with the arts. Here is an example of one intensive course that trains people to use CLAT methods.

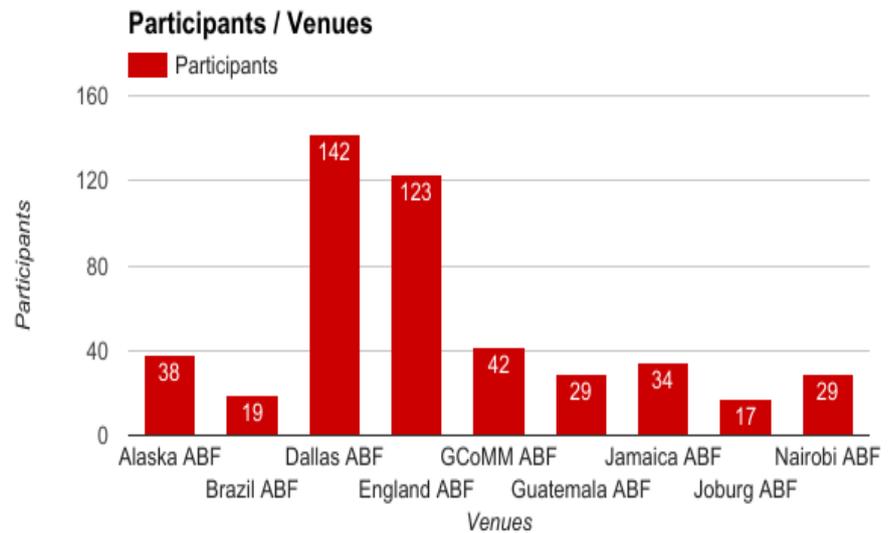
Course #2: “Arts for a Better Future”

The one-week intensive course, “Arts for a Better Future” (sometimes called “Arts in Mission”) trains participants to do the following:

- a) **guide** a community through an overview of the 7 steps in the Create Local Arts Together (CLAT) process;
- b) **consult** with members of a community as the community plans to draw on their artistic resources in working toward a better future; and
- c) **contribute** to a community’s plans as appropriate, especially if their relationship with the community is ongoing.

Since 2011, 473 participants from the following continents have been trained, many of whom serve in cross-cultural contexts around the globe:

Regions	Participants
Africa	46
Asia	42
Central & South America & Caribbean	82
Europe	123
North America	180
Grand Total	473



The most significant numbers of participants have been trained at GIAL’s Center for Excellence in World Arts in Dallas, Texas, and at All Nations Christian College in the UK. The course runs regularly at both venues and enjoys accreditation for possible credit transfer to other programs.

Arts For A Better Future – Credit version

The credit version of the course requires pre-reading and writing assignments, a one-week (35 hour) highly interactive, praxis-oriented residential module, followed by a post-residential project and written report submitted online from the student’s home community or wherever the project is completed. The syllabi, available for either undergraduate or graduate credit, largely differ in the amount of writing required and in the complexity of the final project. The one-week intensive experience works well for both undergrad and grad level students. This highly interactive course utilizes adult learning methods and requires the participants to play various roles as they practice the skills of appreciative inquiry and ethnographic interview.

These two intensives—*Introduction to Ethnodoxology* and *Arts for a Better Future*— provide training, both for transfer credit into your own accredited programs and for adaptation and hosting by your educational institution. Since the courses were developed by the International Council of Ethnodoxologists (ICE), they are happy to provide the course material, including syllabi, for use at any institution with an approved instructor.

Resources

For more information on:

- Upcoming training venues, please see the “Seminars and Short Courses” link under “Training” at the ICE site - www.worldofworship.org.
- Arts Training courses at All Nations in the UK, please go to: www.allnations.ac.uk. Next course is July 9th-14th 2017
- Arts Training courses at GIAL, Dallas, TX, go to: www.gial.edu/arts

- A draft syllabus, write to [Robin Harris@gial.edu](mailto:Robin.Harris@gial.edu).

For books and articles about ethnodoxology, including those mentioned below, see www.worldofworship.org/what-is-ethnodoxology/

- *Worship and Mission for the Global Church: An Ethnodoxology Handbook*. This volume has four editors, all of whom are members of the AiM Task Force team: Robin Harris, Brian Schrag, James Krabill and Frank Fortunato.
- *Creating Local Arts Together: A Manual to help Communities Reach their Kingdom Goals*, by Brian Schrag.

Concluding Thoughts

We observe an increasing emphasis on the arts in the evangelical world. Accordingly, we want to both acknowledge these initiatives and seek as appropriate to collaborate with other arts focused ventures or organizations consistent with the objectives of the Mission Commission. In order to enable you to engage further in the arts and to recognise God's handiwork in this area of missions, we hope to profile examples of where art and mission are woven together.

We are very thankful that the IMTN network has invited us to share some reflections and arts resources in this bulletin, and we are keen to find ways in which we can continue to partner with you. We will consider how we might provide ongoing training sessions in the arts and mission that are relevant and beneficial for you, and how we can continue to resource you in your missional endeavours. We are committed to collaborative initiatives that will serve to strengthen artistic presence in mission, deepen understanding and generate the needed momentum in this important area.

Members of the Core Arts in Mission (AiM) Task Force team:

Jill Ford—AiM Task Force Chair, Arts Lecturer at All Nations Christian College

Dr. Frank Fortunato—Director of Global Renewal of Worship (GROW) at the Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies

John Franklin—Executive Director, Imago Arts

Dr. Robin Harris—Director, GIAL's Center for Excellence in World Arts, ICE President

Dr. James Krabill—Senior Executive for Global Ministries for Mennonite Mission Network

Dr. Brian Schrag—Founder, GIAL's Center for Excellence in World Arts, Int'l Coordinator for the SIL Int'l Ethnomusicology and Arts group