

December 21, 2011

Dear Friends –

As we approach the New Year, I want to take a moment to reflect on all that you have accomplished in US Programs in 2011 through hard work, strategic thinking, and hardcore commitment to open society principles. The year also kicked off important organizational changes within USP: a significant staff leadership change in May and the transition of the US Programs advisory board into a governing board. Through it all—including hectic docket schedules, an impressive number of forums and meetings that you initiated, and the mid-term review—your commitment to open society values and to your respective fields has shown through, like a bright North Star. Your combination of intelligence and commitment not only makes OSF an exciting place to work but also allows us to take full advantage of the amazing opportunity OSF gives us to award \$150+ million in grants and to undertake a creative array of complementary activities.

Please take a moment to peruse just a few of the highlights from this year from each program, campaign and office (at the end of this note) to get an overview of the range of strategies we are using to prevent and address attacks on open society and to create new opportunity for vulnerable populations who historically and today are the targets of discriminatory action, bias and unfair treatment. I also note that the Special Fund for Poverty Alleviation, which will be ending its grantmaking this year, has made a number of important grants this year to improve access to public benefits, education, and job training and employment. Mimi Corcoran, with her superb networking skills, will work closely with USP staff in 2012 to connect these grants to our ongoing policy work, sharing the findings from her monitoring and evaluation of these important set of grants.

I want to thank you all for welcoming me as the Acting Executive Director and integrating me so quickly into the rhythm of US Programs planning, grantmaking and convening in New York. It has been a tremendous learning opportunity for me, thanks to your willingness to brief me on the state of each field and your own thinking about how best to use our resources. I appreciate your ability to get the work done at the same time as you consider ways to improve it, both procedurally and substantively.

We began the process of identifying ways in which to improve the docket process and the quality of grantmaking—both to engage each other in substantive discussion of proposed grants earlier in the process and to streamline the recommendation and approval process. And, we have talked about awarding certain grants for longer grant terms in order to reduce our workload. We have already taken steps to implement some of these suggestions (for example, the addition of an early docket meeting in 2012) and will work with other parts of OSF to make other changes.

My lunches with the program associates made it abundantly clear that, between Baltimore and New York, we have a hugely talented group of young people who come into OSI with experience and the desire to advance human rights and social justice in the United States. The result is that we have programmatic teams whose members enjoy each other and have the background and understanding to take the initiative and make critical, valuable contributions.

It was not news to me that the program directors, campaign managers and program officers bring tremendous expertise to their work. But I now also know, firsthand, that they care deeply about their colleagues, work long hours to get all of their work done well, and spend considerable time providing leadership to their respective fields and to other donors. They take deep pleasure from advances in the field—concrete successes which we should take more time to publicize and to celebrate. In that regard, we have begun to integrate communications into our programmatic work earlier and more thoroughly—thanks to the ready assistance of Maria Archuleta, Debra Rubino, and other members of the communications staff. And, we will further this approach in 2012, thanks to the addition of another communications position dedicated to USP and the implementation of recommendations of the board/staff Communications Working Group (now being drafted).

I am excited that, thanks to the leadership of Cristina Parnetti, we have spent the last four months taking the initial steps to become familiar with the methodologies and language for evaluating policy change. Along with giving more attention to the narratives for our work—which will make clear the open society values that motivate our work and shape our objectives—our growing use of evaluation techniques will ensure that our work is focused and logical and that we can assess its progress. I have asked Cristina to work closely with Ramesh Singh, an evaluation expert who joined OSF international programs this year, to ensure that we develop one approach for the entire foundation—and that process is now underway. It will be strengthened next year when Cristina adds a staff person with evaluation background to the grantmaking operations staff.

The mid-term review, which the USP Board initiated in July, accelerated the timeline for the process that we would have launched in 2012 as most of our three-year strategic plans come to an end. As planned, it allowed the Board, as it evolves into a governing Board, to become more fully familiar with our objectives, priorities and strategies. While it was not a perfect process, it carved out time for us to reflect and set the stage for more thinking, brainstorming and refining in 2012.

In retrospect, especially after reading some of your very strong and well-considered docket items, I thought that we did not always present our goals, the relationship of our grantmaking strategies to those goals, and the impact we are having as clearly as we could have. Training in using an evaluation framework

should help going forward. In other instances, the Board came away from the review fully invested in the direction we are taking. Like all of us staff, they also remain dedicated to asking tough questions to hone our strategies and increase our impact.

The Board also suggested that some of our work move in new directions, responding both to changed external situations and its analysis of the greatest threats to open society and the particular role that US Programs can play to anticipate as well as redress those threats. The combined board/staff strategizing that we will undertake in the Working Groups in early 2012 will help us identify new frameworks and clear goals going forward. We are fortunate to have such a talented and experienced set of Board members to help us move forward and the resources to think big.

As we look towards 2012, we share in Aryeh Neier's obvious excitement about the appointment of Chris Stone as OSF's second president. Chris's expertise in US justice issues as well as the roles of non-profit organizations ensures that top OSF leadership will continue to help shape our work, fully cognizant of the country's history, great potential and shortcomings. Chris is also dedicated to encouraging interaction between USP and the international programs. On that score, I have been happy to schedule additional US/international staff collaborations and exchanges with Jim Goldston (Center on Rights and Justice), Marine Buissonniere (Public Health) and Tawanda Mutasah (International Director of Programs). These meetings will add to the collaborative US/international efforts already underway, for example in drug policy (undertaken by Lenny Noisette, Andy Ko and Kima Taylor), in national security/human rights (undertaken by Nancy Chang), in internet/media policy (undertaken by Lori McGlinchey), among many others.

In closing, I want to give special thanks to the Senior Management Team for working, in fact, as a team and focusing on US Programs overall, volunteering to take on many special assignments, and keeping us focused on the work in the midst of organizational changes and uncertainty. Eric Ferrero, as deputy, has been indispensable—fueling the engine that kept us all going, together, in the right direction, with zip, and with good information. Thanks also to Monique Dixon who took on extra responsibility as an interim Deputy Director for Programs in Baltimore in my absence and to all of the Baltimore staff who graciously weathered delayed communications, postponed meetings and extra work all around during the past year. Finally, special thanks to Priscilla Newton, Jimmy Lam, Michael Sosa and Gladys Lopez for making it possible for me to be two places at once.

If I have three wishes as we approach the New Year, they are the following. First, I hope you each have a deep feeling of satisfaction about the work you have made possible in communities and fields across the country—allowing people in cities, states and the nation's capital to protect, advance and fight for fair and equal treatment, a transparent and responsive government that respects human rights,

and access to opportunities that are essential to healthy, self-sufficient and engaged citizens.

Second, I hope you approach 2012 with a sense of excitement about the opportunity we will have to reflect—with each other and with Board members—about how we can best use the significant financial resources allocated to USP and the assortment of non-grantmaking strategies we can initiate to head off, minimize and redress attacks on open society. The next year will be an opportunity to see our three year plans to completion and to turn to the future, building on our successes and examining what we should do differently given changing needs and our desire to have as much impact as possible. As part of this, we will aim to streamline our grantmaking so we integrate more time for reflection and non-grantmaking activities into our regular schedule.

My third wish is that you use this winter break to relax and enjoy time with your friends and families. You deserve it! Happy New Year!

--Diana

A Few Highlights from 2011:

Equality and Opportunity Fund

- EOF has been engaged in developing a compelling narrative about the impact of current immigration enforcement policies on women and families. In October, it convened funders and 40 field leaders to develop a shared work plan for supporting immigrant women's leadership and advocacy. Out of this work, two grantees, the National Domestic Workers Alliance and National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, spearheaded an effort to collect 5,000 "Dear Santa" letters from people around the country asking for a stop to deportations so that families can stay together. They have delivered the letters to Congress as part of the newly launched "We Belong Together" campaign.
- In response to the aggressive advocacy of grantees Direct Care Alliance and the National Partnership for Women and Families, the White House and Department of Labor announced a proposed rule on December 15 that would extend minimum wage and overtime protections to home care workers.
- The National Gay and Lesbian Taskforce, a grantee, supported a range of federal administrative reforms, including securing equal access to housing in HUD programs for LGBT people. The Department of Labor also added gender identity and pregnancy status to equal employment policy.

- In July, the *Chronicle of Philanthropy* profiled the work of grantees **Boston Community Capital** and **City Life/Vida Urbana** to create a program that allows homeowners in communities hardest hit by the foreclosure crisis to repurchase their homes after foreclosure with affordable mortgages and, in doing so, prevent wealth loss, displacement and property abandonment. OSF was the first national funder to support this unconventional, but highly effective program, which has been hailed by Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke as a national model for how "local communities are meeting the challenges of tough times in troubled communities."

Strategic Opportunities Fund

- Grantee Alternate ROOTS organized a successful three-day national conference in Baltimore this summer, which drew 200 artists, cultural workers and social justice organizations for a learning exchange that focused on the role of resiliency in rebuilding communities. It was followed by a two day festival organized across the 52 acres of green space atop West Baltimore's "Highway to Nowhere," a 1.8 mile stretch of road that ends at a concrete wall that became the site of an extraordinary national celebration of arts, culture, and community resiliency. The festival received both national print and electronic press, thereby helping to expand the national dialogue around art, community resiliency, and social change.
- With Grantmaking Operations and consultant Nonprofit Finance Fund, SOF launched the new USP Technical Assistance Initiative to "Strengthen Field and Grantee Capacity in a Challenging Economy." Over 40 participating grantee organizations received both peer-based and one-on-one financial coaching to increase their financial capacity and sustainability. The tools provided by NFF have helped grantees analyze financial data for strategic decision making and better articulate their financial stories to different audiences. A more formal evaluation process will provide feedback on the overall grantee experience.
- SOF and grantee First Peoples Fund organized a five day funders learning tour to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota in late September, helping to connect USP colleagues across funds (EOF and CJF) to the work of our art and culture grantees. The tour examined core issues faced by Indigenous communities across the continent and current strategies related to civic engagement, community organizing, advocacy, and public policy reform by and for Native peoples.

Campaign for Black Male Achievement

- CBMA partnered with Echoing Green to launch a new fellowship program (Open Society Black Male Achievement Fellowship), the first of its kind in the US, to target social entrepreneurs who are starting up new organizations in the field of black male achievement. The fellowship will include start-up capital and technical assistance

over 18 months to help new leaders launch and build their organizations, access to technical support and pro bono partnerships, and a community of like-minded social entrepreneurs and public service leaders.

- CBMA partnered with Root Cause to launch the planning and design phase a Leadership and Sustainability Institute to strengthen the capacity of the campaign's grantees and other nonprofit organizations working within the field of black male achievement.
- Opportunity Agenda, a grantee, published "Opportunity for Black Men and Boys: Public Opinion, Media Depictions, and Media Consumption." The report findings include patterns of distorted portrayal of African Americans in the media and a lack of prescriptive studies around the issue; it also makes recommendations for improving both the content and the reach of media with respect to black men.

Criminal Justice Fund

- CJF launched an ambitious campaign, in partnership with Atlantic Philanthropies, to challenge excessive and racially disparate policing in New York City. The effort, led by a steering committee comprised of grassroots advocates, policy organizations and public interest law offices, seeks to reform NYPD stop and frisk and zero tolerance practices.
- Fund staff also convened a broad cross section of advocates researchers and policy makers to discuss effective strategies and tactics to address the expansion of sexual offender registration laws. Along with partner Public Welfare Foundation, the convening focused on challenging legislation that would expand registration and notification requirements to young people under 18, many of whose cases were handled in under family court.
- CJF also spearheaded the development of a campaign to reduce mass incarceration in California, working closely with both California-based and national foundations, to launch an ambitious multi-year effort. With the group, it has selected a campaign manager.

Campaign for a New Drug Policy

- The campaign is leading an effort to assess the feasibility of creating a drug policy research to address the gaps on science and practice that impedes the creation of a new paradigm for U.S. drug policy.
- Staff also continue to play a leadership role in supporting the field to ensure that national health care reform includes a robust addiction treatment benefit.

National Security and Human Rights Campaign

- To commemorate the tenth anniversary of September 11, 2001, the NSHR launched the “9/11 at 10” blog series on OSFs’ website, which included pieces from over 20 grantees. These pieces testify to the innovation, energy and dedication that the human rights advocacy community is bringing to the national security debate. For example, Retired Brigadier General David Irvine wrote about his efforts in collaboration with dozens of other military officers to hold those responsible for the torture of terrorism suspects to account. Professor David Cole, the editor of a widely used high school debate sourcebook that was commissioned by the Campaign and OSF’s Youth Initiative, *Securing Liberty: Debating Issues of Terrorism and Democratic Values in the Post-9/11 United States*, challenged readers to consider whether our Constitution can safeguard liberty, privacy, and equality not just in times of peace but in times of crisis.
- After the vitriolic swell of opposition to the Park51 Community Center (the so-called “Ground Zero Mosque”) captivated the mainstream media last summer, the Center for American Progress, a grantee, published a groundbreaking report, *Fear, Inc.*, which exposes a small but highly coordinated set of funders, scholars, activists, political leaders and media venues that have come together as a megaphone for anti-Muslim bigotry. Rising above the hate, the Islamic Society of North America united religious leaders from an array of faiths, including Judaism, Catholicism, and Evangelical Christianity, to launch a campaign: “Shoulder-to-Shoulder: Standing with American Muslims; Upholding American Values.” This year the group featured prominently as an organized force of opposition to Rep. Peter King’s (R-NY) controversial congressional hearings challenging the loyalties of American Muslims.

Transparency & Integrity Fund

- The Infinity Project, a grantee, succeeded in getting more women recommended, nominated, and confirmed to the federal and state courts of the Eighth Circuit (MN, ND, SD, NE, IA, MO, AR). Combining organizing, public education, and training, the project is helping make diversity the new normal in discussions of judicial nominations in that region.
- Members of the New Orleans Coalition on Open Governance collaborated with CJF-supported criminal justice reform organizations to challenge plans to build an 8,000+ bed jail for the city. They persuaded the mayor to adopt a decision making process

that allowed for citizen involvement and relied upon expert data to determine the jail's size. In February the city council approved only a 1400 bed facility.

- In December, TIF co-hosted a roundtable discussion with the New America Foundation on misinformation and fact checking. Political fact-checking has been praised as a kind of journalism that may help to anchor political discourse in more reasoned, factual debate over public policy. Little is known about the success of various fact-checking efforts in shaping public awareness or tempering political rhetoric. Understanding both the potential and the limits of fact-checking is all the more important in a highly polarized political environment, and one in which the relationship of facts and values in shaping public discourse can be difficult to determine. Over 35 journalists, fact checkers, social scientists, and foundation staff participated in a day-long discussion that was grounded in three pieces of OSF-supported original research meant to advance the conversation about what works — and what doesn't — in political fact-checking and other efforts to counter the spread of misinformation.
- Thanks to the hard work of TIF grantees and others, the FCC retained its authority over the Internet and the net neutrality rules that were under attack by powerful telecommunications companies were protected. Net neutrality allows the free flow of information and is critical to maintaining an Internet that serves all people equally.
- After ten years of coordinated public education and advocacy by the media policy field, the Community Radio Act was signed into law, creating the opportunity for hundreds of new low power radio stations across the country. The FCC created this service in 2000 to address the shrinking diversity of voices on the radio dial. Over 800 LPFM stations, all locally owned and non-commercial, are already on the air, and an additional 1,000 new radio licenses will now be available in urban and rural areas across the U.S. These stations are run by non-profit organizations, local governments, churches, schools, and emergency responders.

Democracy & Power Fund

- As the nation heads into a hotly contested 2012 election, D&P co-hosted briefings on Latino, Black youth, and youth voter engagement, shared civic engagement “tools,” and voter participation metrics. D&P awarded \$4.5 million into the field this fall, getting much needed dollars to groups early so that they may effectively ramp up their operations and maximize their impact in 2012.

- D&P, with two other funders, has launched a research effort to examine the roots of white working class resistance to open society priorities. The white working class comprises 23% of the nation's population and, with the decline of the labor movement, is drifting rightward, finding common cause with the Tea Party. The project includes a learning community of 60 leading academics, advocates, organizers, public opinion researchers, and faith and labor leaders from all regions of the country. Through convenings and in-depth interviews, new models are emerging to engage white working class people in thinking differently about the role of government and shifting demography in the US.
- As state and federal budget crises persist – putting important programs on the chopping block – D&P is helping state and national fiscal policy grantees to help them tighten their focus on efforts to raise revenues and working with peer funders to launch a dynamic new state and federal revenue increase campaign in 2012.

OSI-Baltimore

- Through a partnership with Baltimore City Public Schools System, the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services and the Circuit Court for Baltimore City, OSI-Baltimore facilitated the creation of an action plan for school police to refer students accused of non-violent, low-level offenses to school or community-based programs instead of arresting them. As a result, school-based arrests have fallen from over 700 during the 2009-10 school year to about 370 during the 2010-11 school year.
- Advocacy efforts of OSI-Baltimore and its grantees led to the creation of an addiction treatment benefit under Maryland Primary Adult Care. As a result, over 5,000 new patients received addiction treatment.
- OSI-Baltimore Community Fellows of the Class of 2010 (Jessica Turrall) and Class of 1998 (Terry Hickey) partnered with grantees and other non-profit organizations to delay the construction of a new jail for youth charged as adults.