

**OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE'S U.S. PROGRAMS**  
**Closed Programs/Initiatives**  
**1994-2007**

Many Open Society Foundations initiatives are established with predetermined life cycles and funding levels. In the United States a significant number of them were closed down completely, restructured, or spun off as separate entities in the period 2002-2005. Closing years indicate when programs stopped making new grants; if the area of work was discontinued, staff monitored or closed out grants for several years after new grant-making stopped.

**The Lindesmith Center-Drug Policy Foundation (TLC) 1994 – 2002**

TLC was a policy and research institute designed to support research and broaden debate on drug policy and related issues. The center's agenda focused on strategies that had been overlooked or ignored in public discussions and government funded research on drug policy. Named for Alfred Lindesmith, the first U.S. scholar to challenge conventional thinking on drug policy, the center considered a range of topics and raised questions for research and discussion. TLC was spun-off from OSI in 2002 and is now known as the Drug Policy Alliance (DPA). DPA works to end the war on drugs in the United States and to promote new drug policies based on science, compassion, health, and human rights.

**Project on Death in America (PDIA) 1994 – 2003**

Over its nine years, the mission of the Project on Death in America was to understand and transform the culture and experience of dying and bereavement through initiatives in research, scholarship, the humanities, and the arts, and to foster innovations in the provision of care, public education, professional education, and public policy. PDIA and its grantees helped build and shape this important and growing field, and helped place improved care for the dying on the public agenda.

In 2000, as PDIA was winding down its activities in the U.S., the director and deputy director (Dr. Kathleen Foley and Mary Callaway) began the Open Society Institute's International Palliative Care Initiative to focus its work in Central and Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, and South Africa. Part of the OSI Public Health Program, this initiative exemplifies the Open Society Institute's continued commitment to advocate for palliative care as a public health issue. These global issues are an important part of the legacy of the Project on Death in America.

**The Center on Crime Communities and Culture (CCCC) 1996 – 1999**

The Center sought to promote dialogue on crime and critical public safety issues and to chart a strategic course for social change. Through grant-making, research and fellowships, the Center worked to create a better understanding of and support for

humane, effective responses to crime to enhance the safety of all communities while preserving the values of an open, democratic society, making a special effort to look for programs fostering innovation. The Center was transformed and renamed several times (Criminal Justice Initiative, U.S. Justice Fund) before subsequently becoming part of the Criminal Justice Fund in 2007 as it is now known.

**Emma Lazarus Fund (ELF)**

**1996 – 1999**

The Emma Lazarus Fund was a \$50 million grant-making program created to combat the unfair treatment of and discrimination against immigrants who were lawfully present in the United States. By providing grants to nonprofit immigrant organizations, the Fund sought to help those individuals become active participants in U.S. society. Named for the poet whose words adorn the Statue of Liberty, the Fund was established in the summer of 1996 in response to welfare reform legislation that denied legal immigrants equal access to a variety of public assistance programs. The discriminatory provisions of the welfare reform laws reflected a broader trend of increasing hostility toward newcomers to the United States.

**Individual Project Fellowships**

**1996 – 2001**

Through a competitive process, fellowships were awarded annually and supported work on a wide array of topics, relating to the United States and abroad, including access to the courts and legal services; criminal justice; immigration and civic identity; and professional and ethical conduct in law, medicine and journalism.

**Program on Law and Society**

**1996 – 2003**

The Program on Law Society worked to expand access to civil legal assistance for low-income and marginalized communities in the United States, to protect the impartiality of U.S. courts, and to promote professional and public interest values over marketplace values in the U.S. legal profession. In 2003, many of the program's key grant-making initiatives were brought within the broader U.S. Justice Fund.

**New York City Urban Initiative**

**1997 – 1999**

The Urban Initiative included a number of discrete community-partnership grants awarded to organizations that worked to effect change in New York City neighborhoods and communities. These were generally one time grants which were made out of the director's office. During 1999 the NYC Urban Initiative and the NYC Community Fellowship Program collaborated to develop the Community Initiative Program which targeted exceptional grassroots organizations that needed both technical assistance and capacity-building support to more effectively serve their communities.

**Reproductive Health and Rights**

**1997 – 2003**

With some \$32 million in funding over six years, the Program on Reproductive Health and Rights promoted reproductive freedom as a core element in advancing women's civil liberties and human rights, and in securing larger social and economic opportunities for women and their families. The program focused its funding on three principal areas: Advocacy and Public Education, Litigation, and Model Service Delivery, each intended to enhance the capacity of family planning and pro-choice organizations and to mobilize

support for their objectives and values. A signature strategy within all of these objectives involved education and training around emergency contraception and medical abortion. Funds were also directed toward educating and mobilizing a broader constituency for enhanced U.S. foreign investment in family planning and woman-centered development assistance. The program's exit strategy focused on funding core grantees to bolster OSI's investment in arming the reproductive health movement nationally and in several key states with more sophisticated advocacy and public education tools; funding key players in the emergency contraception and medical abortion field; and working with partners elsewhere in the donor community to take over where OSI was leaving off.

### **Youth Initiatives**

**1997 – 2005**

Youth Initiatives was the umbrella that housed several programs/projects – **Youth Media, Urban Debate, Arts and Education** that were designed to serve young people. The Initiatives identified strategies that promoted critical thinking skills, self-expression, civic engagement and leadership among low-income, disadvantaged youth, particularly young people from minority communities. The initiatives sought to challenge the stereotypes that racism and poverty generated by supporting organizations that taught young people the skills to produce journalism-based media as well as support for people to gain the skills necessary to live fulfilling and productive lives.

The **Arts Initiative** was established as a pilot program in 1998 after a lively internal discussion about the relationship of the arts in fostering the values of the Open Society Institute. The mission of the program evolved to support arts organizations and artists whose work increased access to the arts, particularly for young people and communities that did not traditionally have such access. Arts Initiative grants were directed specifically to the field of community arts, with an emphasis on New York City and Baltimore where OSI had ongoing commitments. Grants included support for policy initiatives related to free expression and increased participation in arts activity for all citizens; strengthening organizational capacity; and special projects that would engage the public on issues relevant to the Arts Initiative and to the programs of OSI. Overall, the Arts Initiative awarded almost \$6,000,000 in grants to 55 arts organizations.

In place of a full-fledged education program, OSI instead sought to fund discrete projects that reflected the mission of building free and open societies. To that end, OSI funds were used to advance opportunities and resources for young people through initiatives for school reform and after-school programs. A major initiative of this portfolio was a \$10 million grant for the New Century High School Initiative for school reform in New York City, co-funded with the Carnegie and Gates Foundations.

The **Urban Debate Program** aimed to institutionalize competitive policy debate in traditionally underserved public high school districts. These programs provided young people with formal competitive debate training to develop their skills to express themselves, command attention with words, and respond effectively to arguments. Since the program's 1997 inception, more than 19,000 urban public school students from over 300 high schools competed in Urban Debate Leagues. As OSI began to phase out funding for urban debate, it launched the National Association for Urban Debate Leagues

(NAUDL) in 2002 to carry forward the success of the Urban Debate Program by continuing to strengthen and propagate formal debate training in public schools across the country.

The **Youth Media Program** was framed as a strategy to support opportunities for authentic self-expression while teaching young people the practical and ethical aspects of journalism. The program goals were to provide ways for young people to affect public debate and become more civically engaged; to support the development of alternative media as well as a new segment of mainstream media; to influence how mainstream media covered youth-related issues; and to expand freedom of expression to counter censorship in and out of schools. As part of its exit strategy the program published the *Grantmakers Guide to Youth Media* which continues to be distributed through the affinity group, Grantmakers for Film and Electronic Media.

**Resident Senior/Program Development Fellows** **1998 - 2000**

These fellowships supported scholars, writers, artists, activists, advocates and practitioners who had new ideas and innovative ways of approaching the myriad problems of an open society. One senior fellow examined a possible role OSI might play in fostering professionalism in media and related public policy questions. Another advised on global reproductive rights issues. A number of these fellows subsequently became program directors:

- Jack Willis, Senior Fellow – Media
- Herb Kohl, Senior Fellow – Education
- Ellen Chesler, Senior Fellow – Reproductive Rights
- John Kowal, Program Development Fellow – Law & Society
- Jocelyn Sargent, Program Development Fellow – NYC Fellowships & Southern Initiative
- Mark Schmitt, Program Development Fellow – Governance & Public Policy
- Mindy Duitz, Program Development Fellow – Arts Initiative

**Funders' Collaborative for Gun Violence Prevention** **1998 – 2002**

The Funders' Collaborative for Gun Violence Prevention – housed and staffed at OSI-NY – supported projects that reduced the harm caused by the widespread availability and misuse of guns. A notable accomplishment of the Collaborative was publication of the most detailed picture ever of the patchwork quilt of gun laws in all fifty states. The collaborative was funded by OSI, the Irene Diamond Fund, and other private donors.

**Medicine as a Profession (MAP)** **1998 – 2004**

MAP aimed to stimulate new conceptual and policy approaches to professionalism within the field of medicine. The program also worked to advance trust, quality, and integrity in American health care. Its goal was to re-instill a sense of trust and integrity in the medical profession. Through its grant-making, MAP supported efforts by physicians to improve the quality, distribution, and accessibility of health care in the United States. It operated a resident and visiting fellows program, including doctoral students and senior faculty, for periods ranging from several months to a year or more, giving them the opportunity to explore the most salient issues that confront medicine and society in the first decades of

the 21<sup>st</sup> century. MAP spun off its policy-oriented work to an independent non-profit organization, the Institute on Medicine as a Profession that was established at Columbia University. Also spun off was the Soros Service Program for Community Health. Two consortia were established in New York City and Baltimore, the cities where the program had been active, to take over its operations. The consortia were made up of the community-based organizations that hosted medical students in the previous years of the program.

### **New York City Community Initiative**

**1998 – 2002**

The New York City Community Initiative aimed to enable exceptional grassroots organizations to build their capacity to more effectively serve disadvantaged communities. Specifically, the Program sought to fund community organizations with the following characteristics: innovative organizations that were involved in building participation of the community; organizations that were started by a visionary leader, who often remained a key staff person or board member; organizations that made community membership and volunteerism central to the group's work; organizations that were funded generally through a series of small grants and/or donations; and medium-sized organizations that did not necessarily attract grants from larger foundations.

### **New York City Community Fellowships**

**1998 – 2005**

The Community Fellowship Program encouraged and supported 77 individuals who created innovative public interest projects that addressed critical issues. The program was designed to provide individuals with an opportunity to apply their leadership in community-led projects that empowered and improved the quality of public life in New York City and its neighborhoods. The program identified and supported social change agents who engaged passion, ingenuity, and dynamism to remove social barriers by creating new opportunities for disadvantaged and marginalized communities. The program invested in viable public service projects that supported social equity among all members of society. This fellowship was replicated by OSI-Baltimore. In January 2006, with OSI's support, the program moved to the Research Center for Leadership in Action at the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service and was re-named the New York Social Justice Fellowship

### **Governance and Public Policy**

**1999 – 2003**

The Program on Governance and Public Policy awarded roughly \$25 million in grants focused on three areas. A main goal of the program was to reduce the influence of money on democracy, with a particular emphasis on public financing of elections, political reform in the states, and improving public participation. Growing out of U.S. Programs earlier grants dealing with welfare reform, the program also worked to strengthen the infrastructure for sound policy and advocacy, and grassroots engagement at the level of state government. Finally, in 2001 the program took responsibility for OSI's media policy program and linked it to political reform issues. In all three areas, a set of organizations that were critical to moving this agenda forward and that had consistently been a part of the program's strategies emerged. The essence of the program's transition strategy was to identify these organizations and help them move into the future with multi-year funding that provided significant flexibility.

**Southern Initiative****1999 – 2002**

The goal of the Southern Initiative funding strategy was to promote democratic participation by marginalized communities across the southern region of the U.S. The southern funding intervention rested on the principle that long-term democratic transformation of the region would only be attained through holistic organizing and advocacy strategies that centered on participation and policy accountability for communities – from the bottom-up. OSI funding in the South directed resources and technical assistance to grassroots organizations to do the “on-the-ground” community education, outreach, and mobilization. The Initiative also provided resources for regional support organizations, thus supplying crucial research, training, and advocacy services to community groups (i.e., legal advocacy, voter education, social and political research).

**Special Chairman’s Fund (Progressive Infrastructure initiatives)****2006 – 2007**

In 2005 the Open Society Institute opened a new chapter in its work in the United States. In addition to supporting organizations based solely on projects and issues, OSI sought to establish and expand the network of organizations that, together, would lead to a more coherent progressive vision. The mission of OSI’s progressive infrastructure grant-making was to develop at all levels, from the national to the neighborhood, strong and, above all, collaborative institutions that could give shape and substance to values such as justice, equality, and respect for the future, and that gave voice to citizens. To be considered an infrastructure, these needed to be organizations that were designed for broad rather than narrow purposes; that understood the political context and the nature of power; that worked together rather than in competition; and that were able to respond to changing circumstances and new issues. In agreement with the board, USP emphasized three areas where it had the expertise and record to provide leadership: support for multi-issue policy centers and organizing; support for developing the next generation of progressive leaders; and support for building the progressive legal infrastructure.

**Special Opportunities Fund****2003 – 2004**

This was the first incarnation of a U.S. programs’ flexible fund which initially provided an infusion of funds to organizations that were working to thwart the privatization of Social Security. It was an unstaffed fund, drawing on in-house expertise and occasional consultants. It was subsequently renamed the Strategic Opportunities Fund in 2004 and was fully staffed in 2009.