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## **EmcArts partners with the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation to launch pilot *Innovation Lab for Arts Development Agencies***

**Three arts development organizations, selected from across the country, will participate in unique immersion program to examine membership, governance and organizational structures**

November 7, 2013— Since 2008, EmcArts has been supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation to design and run the *Innovation Lab for the Performing Arts*. To date, the Lab has focused primarily on producing and presenting organizations in the arts and culture field. Now, EmcArts is beginning to engage with the adaptive challenges of organizations that do not produce or present the performing arts, but rather provide services in support of the ongoing development of an arts discipline, its organizations and practitioners, or of a particular area of arts activities (defined, for instance, geographically, or by theme – such as arts and disability). Given the wide and diffuse range of organizations of these types, we call them collectively “arts development agencies.” We have launched a pilot round of a new *Innovation Lab for Arts Development Agencies*, in order to work in practice with the field to test and further refine our approach.

The pilot Lab is designed in four phases over approximately 18 months. In Phase 1, seven organizations took part in a four-month process of organizational self-examination and assessment focused on adaptive change possibilities. From that pool, three organizations have now been chosen to continue work in Phases 2 – 4, where they will design and prototype innovative strategies and launch real-life projects that address major adaptive challenges that they have identified.

### **Pilot Lab Phases 2-4 Grantees – Project Descriptions**

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#### **Alternate ROOTS (Atlanta, GA): *A Call to Action***

ROOTS seeks to transform this 37 year-old organization, to reach back to its original mission and vision and, over a three-year period, unleash the power of art and artists in action, to become Resources for Social Change throughout the region.

If ROOTS is to transform, not just change or grow, it must transform its governance and membership structures that are inextricably intertwined. All voting members of ROOTS are board members, roughly 175 members per year. Only voting members are eligible to access programs and services. Yet ROOTS’ service region encompasses fourteen states and D.C.

This structure no longer serves ROOTS, its members, or its vision and mission. Over the past few years ROOTS has tweaked processes, and tinkered at the edges of things. Now ROOTS needs to go to the heart of things.



**Dance/USA (Washington, DC): *The Dance Ambassadors Project***

Dance/USA’s mission is to sustain and advance the field of professional dance. To help Dance/USA deliver its public value to support and advance professional dance, the organization proposes developing the Dance Ambassadors Project to kick off a grassroots community building effort in professional dance. Dance Ambassadors will be carefully selected as committed dance artists and/or administrators in their geographic region with a proven awareness of and sensitivity to the diversity of dancemaking in their region. Dance/USA believes that, in order to establish a wholly allied dance environment in America, the organization must reach dancemakers in their studios and homes and connect with them in-person.

The project challenges the assumption that ever-increasing digital communication is the key to building a strong, networked dance community. The project also challenges the idea that establishing a structured local-national network of dance service organizations is the answer to reaching deeper into local dance communities.

**Theatre Communications Group (New York, NY): *For the People: Creating New Pathways into TCG***

Since 1961, Theatre Communications Group has been the epicenter for non-profit professional theatre in the US. TCG is searching to find a new way for as many “theatre people” as possible to benefit directly from TCG without the organization trying to be all things to all people. Whether someone is a scene-shop carpenter, a freelance artist or an artistic director for an institution, we want her to understand what TCG can do for her, know how to engage with our services and be directly impacted by TCG.

By questioning the ways participation in TCG services is “curated” and by busting open the assumption that TCG can’t increase accessibility because of capacity and geographical limitations, the organization will reimagine its pathways of entry, such as, but not limited to, the current membership model. TCG seeks to create a fresh platform for engagement that will increase its public value to as many theatre people as possible, no matter what their role may be.

**Ben Cameron, Program Director for the Arts at DDCF, said:** “The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation is pleased to support for this round of the EmcArts *Innovation Lab for Arts Development Agencies* specifically to support service organizations. We hope that this will have impact, not only on the supported service organizations, but on the larger fields they serve.”

**Richard Evans, President of EmcArts said:** “We are thrilled to continue the development of this new Lab with generous support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Today’s operating environment for the arts is highly complex. Arts leaders must be able to adapt their programs, strategies and organizational structures thoughtfully and quickly to respond to rapid changes and fleeting opportunities. Yet the resource structures and cultures of nonprofit organizations make innovating difficult, and adaptive capacity is typically not advanced enough to meet new challenges. The new *Innovation Lab* provides formal assistance and an effective framework to support the design and testing of new strategies. Its unusual design helps to ensure that bold experiments do not erode into variants on everyday practice. Our aim is that fresh approaches and original solutions are discovered, and the work of arts development agencies can contribute in new ways to the nation’s cultural vitality.”

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### **About EmcArts**

Recognized as a leading nonprofit provider of services in innovation and adaptive change to the arts sector nationwide, EmcArts ([www.EmcArts.org](http://www.EmcArts.org)) serves as a nonprofit intermediary for arts funders, and as a re-granting agency and service organization for the arts field around innovation. Our innovation programs support the development and implementation of mission-centered new strategies by arts organizations of all sizes. The programs range from directly incubating specific innovation projects to introductory programs that enable new thinking and build adaptive cultures across local arts communities. EmcArts is a 501(c)(3) organization.

### **About DDCF**

The mission of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation ([www.ddcf.org](http://www.ddcf.org)) is to improve the quality of people's lives through grants supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research and the prevention of child maltreatment, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke's properties.