

the lewis prize for music

community | collaboration | leadership

2020 Definition of Systems Change

Systems

Society is comprised of overlapping “macro” and “civic” systems. All systems consist of: Beliefs, Attitudes, Culture, Practices, and Policies.¹

Systemic Inequality

The Lewis Prize for Music recognizes that inequities in the United States are rooted in systems that devalue, exploit, and exclude people. Such systems have been in place since Europeans first arrived in the Americas and displaced indigenous peoples. Concurrently, Europeans initiated the transatlantic slave trade that brought African peoples to North America to be enslaved. The systems of chattel slavery and jim crow have been overturned by the efforts of people working toward systems change. However, remnants remain in the beliefs, attitudes, cultures, practices, and policies that continue to marginalize African, Latinx, Asian, Arab and Native American, religious, and gender groups in the United States. Additionally, poor and working class white people, especially, but not exclusively, located in contemporary rural contexts, experience hardships due to unjust systems and ever increasing income inequality.

Disenfranchisement based on race, gender, socio-economic status, immigrant status, and other markers of difference from the dominant culture have developed over centuries to codify macro systems of oppression. Examples of ongoing macro system injustices include racism, gender discrimination, economic and civic exclusion, health disparities, and environmental degradation among others. Correspondingly, these macro systems dictate the shape of civic systems that marginalize and under resource people from targeted communities and backgrounds. Civic systems with this effect include education, redlining, policing, incarceration, and foster care, among many others.

Achieving a just, fair, and humane society for all requires transforming and replacing discriminatory systems, especially those that continue to undermine historically marginalized and under-resourced communities.

Systemic Impacts on Young People

Multiple systems are constructed to specifically interact with young people. These include education, child welfare, juvenile justice, health, and workforce development systems. The

¹ This list of systems components is inspired and influenced by the work of [Emergent Pathways](#).

systems ostensibly intended to benefit young people are operated by adults, often for the benefit of adults, and uphold society's systemic inequities.

Systemic Impact on Youth Arts Learning

One result of systemic inequities in youth-oriented systems is an increasing disparity in access to arts learning opportunities for young people. According to the National Endowment for the Arts, between 1982 and 2008, the percentage of African American and Hispanic young adults who received arts education in childhood dropped from 51% to 26% and 47% to 28%, respectively. In contrast, the percentage of White young adults who received childhood arts education during that same period only dropped from 59% to 58%.²

Systems Change and The Lewis Prize for Music

The Lewis Prize for Music believes that music in the lives of young people is a catalytic force to drive positive change in our society. We seek a future where every young person — regardless of who they are or where they live — has access to creative youth development music programs from an early age. We are convinced this can only occur through efforts to change systemic beliefs, attitudes, culture, practices (including funding), and policies.

The Lewis Prize for Music and Creative Youth Development

The Lewis Prize for Music has identified Creative Youth Development (CYD) as the artistic practice with the greatest potential to positively influence systems change for the benefit of young people, and to create universal access to music learning, creating, and performing opportunities. The CYD field models systems change characteristics by incorporating young people into decision making, giving young people tools to express themselves, and being deeply connected to local culture. CYD's attentiveness to the holistic needs of young people, including their social, material, health and educational wellbeing, makes the field a natural initiator of positive change in other youth-oriented systems. We expect that by pursuing systems change that increases music opportunities for young people this will lead to other systemic changes that achieve equity for young people.

Systems Change as a Process

Systems change is a long term undertaking that depends on trusted individual relationships, shared experiences, and common pursuits. Systems change nearly always requires people internal and external to the system to participate in the full change process. Music is a powerful resource for building trust, creating extraordinary experiences, and transcending codified hierarchies and roles.

The necessary transformations in beliefs, attitudes, culture, practices, and policies to achieve systems change generally take place in this sequence:

1. People experience the need for change
2. Diagnosing the systems

² <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/2008-SPPA-ArtsLearning.pdf>

3. Creating a progressive change initiative
4. Enabling a tipping point to infuse systems with change (partnering with civic systems, coalitions and social movements are a few examples of how to enable a tipping point)
5. Sustaining the transition to new systems
6. The new rules of systems are the new mainstream/standard

The Lewis Prize for Music **seeks applicants who have a solid progressive change initiative underway and are beginning to see progress toward a tipping point or are sustaining the transition to a new system.**

The Lewis Prize for Music System Change Priorities

The field of creative youth development is dynamically positioned to affect change through the empowerment of young people and amplification of their voice through music. The Lewis Prize for Music is interested in championing systems change efforts in all the ways that they are occurring in and alongside the field of creative youth development. Being open to diverse approaches, here are the levels of systems change in which we seek to invest. Accelerator Award applicants will be expected to describe their alignment with these levels of systems change in their Round I Application.

Macro systems change³: Macro systems operate in society at large and shape the formal civic systems. Examples of fair and just Macro Systems include: cultural preservation, racial justice, immigrant inclusion, gender and LGBTQIA+ equality, disability justice, environmental justice, food security, and economic opportunity.

Civic systems change: Civic systems are functions of society operated, regulated and funded by local, state and national government as well as other resourced entities like corporations, associations, and philanthropies. Examples of Civic Systems include: education, child welfare, correctional/justice system, policing, workforce training, employment, housing/shelter, immigration, healthcare, or political/democratic participation.

Applicant's CYD work must increase youth music opportunities and aspire for overall systemic impact within at least one macro and/or one civic system.

(See Case Study | Systems Change Example on the next page)

³ This definition of macro systems change is inspired and influenced by the work of the [Leeway Foundation](#).

Case Study | Systems Change Example

[Freedom House Ambulance Service](#)⁴

OVERVIEW

Before the advent of what is now known as the ambulance, upwards of 50,000 people in the United States died in the process of seeking medical care due to inadequate pre-hospital care. In the early 1970s, John Moon, Phil Hallen and Dr. Peter Safar came together to develop the ambulance and paramedic training, a major innovator and instigator in the emerging field of emergency medicine. John Moon was one of a body of Black Pittsburgh residents who identified the need for better pre-hospital care. Dr. Peter Safar, the inventor of CPR, met Moon and Hallen as they were already on their way to developing temporary care units. Their ambulance service, named Freedom House, served the blighted largely Black Hill District of Pittsburgh. All of the paramedics who were trained and employed by Freedom House were Black. In their first year they made over 6,000 trips and saved over 200 lives. Freedom House, though initially supported with city funding, ceased to exist in 1975 when newly elected Mayor Flaherty cut their funding, implemented restrictive policies and invented a city led paramedic service that was over 95% white. The work of Freedom House was fundamental to the influencing and development of the ambulance and emergency medicine globally.

CONDITIONS OF INEQUALITY

In the 1960s and earlier in Pittsburgh and in many communities nationally, citizens were dependent on haphazardly organized systems of emergency care. These systems engaged the police, fire department and on-call emergency care at hospitals. This led to higher mortality rates because of poor pre-hospital care. For Black citizens, dependence on the police as first responders may have been particularly precarious considering other long standing issues with policing in Black communities. This undoubtedly led to higher mortality rates for Black people in need of emergency care.

MACRO SYSTEMS ENGAGED

- Freedom House, in their work, engaged racial justice in order to offer opportunities for Black people as paramedics
- Freedom House addressed macro systems of health equity by reducing Black mortality previously resulting from racist barriers that reduced access to emergency medical transportation and care
- Freedom House extended employment to Black paramedics and in-so-doing made space for work toward economic justice/equality.

CIVIC SYSTEMS ENGAGED

⁴ Podcast [99 Percent Invisible](#), Episode 405

- Freedom house worked with local government to offer this paramedic service to citizens and in-so-doing transformed the municipal system in Pittsburgh and nationwide.
- Freedom House worked with local hospitals in their work and in-so-doing transformed the medical system
- Freedom House transformed the system of policing by building a distinction between emergency care and the work of policing systems.
- Freedom House created jobs - transforming the local employment system.
- Freedom House offered essential Workforce Training that transformed healthcare systems globally.