

JESSICA MELE

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JessicaMeleCreative.com

Core values: Creativity, Learning, Justice

PHILANTHROPY AND NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP

2018-present Principal, Jessica Mele Creative.

Consultant specializing in philanthropic advising for individual donors and small family foundations. Equity-focused storytelling trainer of grantees, grantmaking staff and board members. Expert advising on strategy, grantee cultivation, and program development.

2015-2023 Program Officer, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Menlo Park, CA.

Maintained relationships with 100+ grantees on an ongoing basis, Managed \$90m in grants over eight years. Served as Acting Program Director. Designed and led participatory grantmaking with rural artists and equity, inclusion and diversity capacity building initiatives. Reduced number of grantees by 25%. Developed and led Program's Policy and Advocacy Strategy and Youth strategy. Commissioned critical field research. Funded three successful nonprofit mergers. Hired and managed one Program fellow.

2006-2015 Executive Director, Performing Arts Workshop, San Francisco, CA.

Promoted three times in five years. Raised \$2m annually from foundations and individuals. Led transition of # teaching artists from hourly to salaried positions. Led organization through recession and grew budget by 25%. Designed and led city-wide pre-k arts education program. Cultivated, recruited and managed fifteen-person Board of Directors. Hired and managed a staff of seven full-time and twenty part-time temporary employees (teaching artists).

2002-2005 Project Administrator, Harvard Kennedy School of Government, Cambridge, MA.

Managed projects for Professor [Marshall Ganz](#). Coordinated and led events with 100+ community-based organizations in Boston. Managed grants budget of \$1m annually. Coordinated activities for national leadership assessment for the Sierra Club including: led research team of fourteen undergraduates, managed relationships with 300+ local Sierra Club leaders, and coordinated travel and logistical support for research team of five.

2004-2005 Organizer, Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers (HUCTW, AFL-CIO), Cambridge, MA.

Organized 200 members across three campuses: the Graduate School of Education, the Kennedy School of Government, and the Harvard Museums. Served as the union representative on the Joint University Problem Solving Team with senior members of University HR to resolve disputes between union members and management.

FIELD LEADERSHIP

Chair, Arts Ed Impact Group, Grantmakers for Education (EdFunders)

Led peer learning, strategic planning, fundraising and budgeting for affinity group of

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twenty national funders (private and public) of arts education.

Member, Arts Education Funder's Collaborative, Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA)

Expert panelist on webinar (2022) and podcast episodes (2018 and 2023) pertaining to arts and culture policy and advocacy, reaching 300+ funders of arts and culture. Trainer of peer funders on funding policy and advocacy activities.

Workshop Designer and Trainer, Storytelling Workshops for Funders of Color

Provided an intensive personal, team-based and equity-focused creative writing and performance workshop for 300 educators and funders of color at national conferences. Venues include: SXSWedu, Stanford Graduate School of Design, and Grantmakers for Education.

Landmark Research

Commissioned research that pushed the field of arts and culture and changed narratives related to arts education and arts workers: *Ten Dimensions of Powerful Arts Education* (Hewlett Foundation, 2021), *Arts Workers in California* (Urban Institute, 2021), *California's Creativity Challenge* (SRI, 2022), *The Role of California's County Offices of Education in Arts Education* (SRI, 2022).

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

Creative Team-Building Events

Organized and led the first annual Hewlett Foundation Holiday Wreath Workshop, complete with two gallons of spiced apple cider and 50-song winter-themed playlist crossing musical genres and winter traditions. Organized and led a five-day "Creative Sprint" for foundation staff, mini creative exercises in response to daily prompts that were then shared on the foundation's Slack channel.

Shop Talks and Guest Speakers

Designed and led four participatory "Shop Talks" attended by 50+ staff each on the Ten Dimensions of Powerful Arts Education, Arts Education Policy, Participatory Grantmaking, and Lessons Learned as a Program Officer. Designed and led grantee workshops centered around public narrative and arts policy.

Hewlett Improving Together Task Force

Served on internal task force to collect honest reflections on the Foundation as an employer. Conducted twelve 1:1 interviews with staff and wrote one chapter of twelve chapter report submitted to the Foundation's President.

STAGE AND PERFORMANCE

2009-2023 Chardonnay Comedy.

Writer, performer, director as part of seven-woman sketch comedy ensemble. Wrote, directed, produced twenty shows and one full-length original musical in ten years. Performed annually at SF Sketchfest and SF Improvfest and in the 2018 Boston Women in Comedy Festival.

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2021-present Independent Producer.

Writer, producer and performer in self-produced solo show "Eat the Mama." Wrote and developed one-hour solo work of theater. Raised \$30k from supporters to self-produce, and managed budget. Managed relationships with two venues and one fiscal sponsor. Hired three creative team members (director, designers, and stage manager). Led marketing campaign, wrote all marketing copy (web, social, print), and conducted outreach to media outlets for promotion.

EDUCATION

UCLA Extension, Los Angeles, CA: Television Writing Certificate.

Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, MA, Ed. M.: Education Policy and Management.

Smith College, Northampton, MA, B.A. Cum Laude. Majors: Anthropology, French.

University of Geneva, Geneva, Switzerland, Faculté des Sciences Sociales et Economiques. Year abroad studies.

AWARDS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2023 Grantee Perception Report High Scorer: 91st percentile for Responsiveness, 96th percentile for Clear and Consistent Communication. High scorer compared with peers on transparency, clarity and empathy as reported by grantees.

2022 Austin Film Festival, Second Round Placement, TV Spec Category.

2015 San Francisco Unified School District Arts Education Advocate Award.

2015 ShortLived Short Play Festival Winner. Beat out 100+ other submissions in audience-judged short play competition with "Ingenu: The Musical."

SKILLS

Communication: Exceptional written and verbal communication. Extremely strong public-facing communication skills; authored blog posts and strategy papers. Strong interpersonal skills and deft internal written communication.

Language: Fluent in French, knowledge of Spanish and basic knowledge of German.

Applications: Microsoft Word, Excel, Canva, Evernote, Google Workspace, Salesforce, Apple Systems, basic knowledge of HTML.

INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES

Sketch comedy, theater, reckoning with white supremacy, creating things with friends, deciphering my seven-year-old son's social relationships, ambivalence about motherhood, the Olympics.