

CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT MOVEMENT (CEM)

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Cultural Environment Movement (CEM) is a nonprofit, international coalition of more than 150 organizations. CEM was founded in 1991 by Dr. George Gerbner, Bell Atlantic Professor of Telecommunication at Temple University, and Dean Emeritus of the Annenberg School of Communication. The coalition is united in its concern about the concentrated power of global media conglomerates, lack of diversity in media, lack of critical viewing, and limited awareness that the airwaves are public property. Just as Earth Day signaled the union of deep concern about the degradation of the world's natural environment, CEM intends to spawn a similar movement on behalf of the cultural environment.

Once all stories were homespun and community-inspired, transferring values, information, and history through people. Today, with its extraordinary ability to shape perspectives, mainstream television, film, and newspapers have a powerful hold on defining culture. Programming is engineered by marketing rather than creative agendas, therefore, does not accurately reflect the American and world scene. CEM intends to alter the structure and nature of the media industry to help Americans and other populations recover control of the stories being passed from generation to generation. CEM's advocacy and outreach efforts work in parallel with research initiatives to affect conditions under which the principles of freedom, equity, and diversity can dominate decision-making in media ownership, employment, representation, and perspective.

CEM COMMUNICATIONS

CEM would like to develop and implement a six-part program to disseminate information about the cultural environment to the public at-large. Top priorities are the publication of a quarterly newsletter and an annual development brochure to increase the visibility of CEM's work. An expanded website and 1,000-member directory will enhance the communications network for those seeking in-depth information and direct access to resources. DAY OF ACTION (described below), audio tapes, and eventually a video series will help CEM reach a wide audience.

CEM'S CONVENTION (MARCH 1999)

Building upon the work of the Founding Convention in 1996, CEM's second convention will explore the theme of *One for One* in media representation. Inspired by a keynote speaker such as Alan Alda, Oprah Winfrey or Harry Belafonte, convention participants will discuss the issue holistically and from various perspectives. Working groups will produce discrete action plans that will inform future strategies. Through educational workshops, CEM will provide technical assistance to organizations and set agendas for DAY OF ACTION and other activities via regional coalitions.

DAY OF ACTION (OCTOBER 1999)

DAY OF ACTION is an outreach and educational tool that will provide opportunities for individuals in thirty cities throughout the United States and Canada to learn how media representation and their own media usage affect their communities. Working with national partners, CEM will help libraries, crime prevention associations, grass roots organizations, media literacy study groups, public radio stations, etc. organize a variety of activities. Major goals include raising public awareness of federal telecommunications policy, urging critical analysis of programming, and encouraging participation in constructive alternatives to watching television.

CEM COMMUNICATIONS

A primary goal is to build a tightly-knit enduring organization and reach a wide audience by disseminating existing and new information to the general public. CEM's Cultural Indicators project – thirty years of research derived from the monitoring of prime time and Saturday morning children's television – feeds much of its knowledge base. An equally important goal of CEM's communications program is to establish a strong networking vehicle for those seeking a dialogue as well as information about issues within the cultural environment. The communications program will enhance understanding so individuals and groups are empowered to take action to improve conditions.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Communications Specialist \$25,000

CEM will hire a staff person to develop and execute its proposed six-part communications program. (Efforts to use print advertising will be focused on specific issues and are included separately under the 1998 Convention and the Digital Conference.) The Communications Specialist will be responsible for the development of materials, including editing and design, and overseeing production. This task-oriented position also includes the implementation of distribution strategies.

Newsletter \$20,000 (6,000 piece mailing each time)

CEM's *The Monitor* will be published quarterly in order to become a continuous source of information. It will represent diverse perspectives on topical issues and present Cultural Indicators research in a format that is useful for greater public understanding and to assist advocacy efforts.

Development Brochure \$5,000 (6,000 piece mailing)

Each year, CEM will print a brochure to outline its mission and annual work plan to potential donors.

Internet Website \$3,000

Via the Institute for Global Communications, CEM's website will become an international, multimedia resource for real-time news, on-line discussions, media literacy exercises, research, etc. Increased visibility will help expand the 200-member CEMnet discussion list to facilitate ongoing dialogue and exchange. CEM board members contribute significant in-kind support to this effort.

Directory and Resource Compendium \$10,000 (2,500 copies)

CEM will produce an outreach and networking tool to enable the varied organizations addressing media issues to identify potential collaborators and have access to experts on specific issues.

Audio Tapes \$2,500 (1,000 tapes produced)

CEM will produce 30-minute tapes of George Gerbner lectures to sell for \$5 each to provide a fundamental framework for listeners to begin to understand the cultural environment system and the roles they can play.

Video Series \$500,000

CEM's long range goal is to develop a sixteen-part video program on a variety of aspects of and perspectives within the cultural environment.

CEM'S CONVENTION

CEM's next national convention is planned for March 1999 at Ohio University. The convention will build on the work of the Founding Convention held in 1996 by exploring the theme of *One for One* in media representation. Planning will emphasize attracting a diverse group of participants from grass roots and community organizations to national and professional associations. This is a rare opportunity to bring together groups whose members would ordinarily never meet, but have been approaching resolution of the same issues from different paths. For example, Artists for Recovery and American Medical Association can join forces to address the issue of how people with mental illnesses are portrayed on television and film. Approximately 250 people are expected to attend over 2½ days.

Also, CEM will conduct its annual meeting to elect new leadership and to establish strategic direction action plans for the next eighteen months. These action plans will be the culmination of a year-long planning process started by CEM's board in May 1997. Pivotal to the strategic planning process will be attention to local organizing and networking for the implementation of DAY OF ACTION, CEM's fall 1999 educational outreach event.

PROJECT COMPONENTS

Project Director \$31,125

A staff person to plan the convention and organize its execution.

Keynote Speaker \$25,000 - \$30,000

A highly visible leader in the cultural environment such as Alan Alda, Harry Belafonte, or Oprah Winfrey will inspire convention participants by bringing a relevant perspective to the convention's theme— *One for One*, striving for equity in media representation.

Public Relations Campaign \$30,000

The conference brochure will be distributed to CEM's entire mailing list and others upon request. Besides some national advertising, there will be media kits, position papers, and press releases.

Artists \$10,000

A variety of visual and performing artists will be featured at the convention enabling CEM to underscore the importance of enabling people to tell their own stories.

Workshops and Technical Assistance \$10,000

CEM will offer several tracks of educational workshops and technical assistance programs to convention participants. Tracks will consider such topics as effective lobbying, developing relationships with mainstream media, and how to access and interpret Cultural Indicators research.

1999 DAY OF ACTION

FUNDING REQUEST \$50,000

CEM seeks funding for a full-time staff person to plan and coordinate DAY OF ACTION. Staff would work with a committee of CEM board members and a national coordinating committee of participating organizations to design and structure the event. Responsibilities include: recruiting organizations, distributing training information, guidelines for event organization, and promotional materials, acting as liaison to the media, setting up evaluation processes, and assisting with fund raising. Through its staff and volunteers, CEM will be the central coordinator of event administration. Local organizations will be responsible for the specific design and execution of their own activities.

GOALS/DESIRED OUTCOMES

Through DAY OF ACTION, CEM intends to increase significantly the public's demand for greater corporate accountability for equitable representation in the media. DAY OF ACTION will foster awareness of the existing cultural environment so that the general public begins to understand the contrast between the homogeneous media culture and actual cultural/economic/racial/age diversity in North America. The event will present pending legislation and inspire public discussion of national communications policy. By providing constructive alternatives to watching television, DAY OF ACTION will emphasize the value of public and non-profit cultural entities such as public radio, libraries, museums, theaters, etc.

DAY OF ACTION will involve organizations in thirty cities across the United States and Canada in a day-long event in the fall of 1999. DAY OF ACTION will forge links among CEM, supporting organizations and grass roots community groups. The event will reinforce the compatibility of missions and strengthen a quick communications network for future projects and collaborations. CEM will establish regional roundtables to cultivate and nurture local and regional leadership. The regional coalitions will serve as supportive structures to mobilize audiences, develop communications and public relations, assess impact of the event and conduct front-line evaluation. DAY OF ACTION will be a catalyst for new structures and programs that will continue to address related issues.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

CEM intends to work closely with a number of national organizations to set up structures for local participation. Libraries, colleges and universities, parent-teacher associations, and crime prevention associations will play a major role in sponsoring activities and mobilizing communities. Potential national partners include, but are not limited to:

Actors Equity Association
American Medical Association
Center for Campus Organizing
Children's Defense Fund
Greenpeace
Libraries of the Future

National Council of Churches
National Film Board of Canada Media
Awareness Network
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Organization for Women
National Public Radio
National Storytellers League