We intend that IMPACT - Imagining Together: Platform for Arts, Culture and Conflict Transformation, a design and planning process, and its ultimate contribution to an infrastructure for the field of arts, culture and conflict transformation, will contribute to a less violent, more just world. We embark on this process with the hope that it will result in resources, relationships, knowledge, collaborations, and networks that enliven and align forces of creativity commensurate with the challenges facing our local and global communities. At the same time, we recognize that our best intentions do not eliminate risks of harm, that ethical guidelines and better assessment standards and protocols are in need of development, and that training and education opportunities for this field need to be made more accessible. We recognize that in many but by no means all cases, violent conflict is part of the legacy of colonialism and related patterns of exclusion. We align ourselves with values of inclusion, reciprocity, and life-affirming creative collaboration and we invite others to participate in this planning process in this spirit.

We commit to a process that is inclusive of diverse perspectives, languages, professions and ways of seeing the world. We will facilitate participation from people of different regions, abilities, genders, classes, ethnicities, races, and languages.

We recognize the urgencies and fragilities of the moment, including the vulnerability of the planet; the accelerating loss of languages and cultures and the wisdom they embody; and the assaults on freedom of expression and other human rights from many sources.

We value knowledge that arises from multiple sources, including diverse wisdom traditions, indigenous cultures, artistic practices and conventional scholarly disciplines. We seek to bring these different sources of insight, wisdom, and knowledge into generative relationship, in how we work, in the resources we gather, and in the linkages we foster.

We wish to strengthen the multi-sectoral eco-system that comprises the arts, culture, and conflict transformation field. To be optimally effective as artists, cultural workers, peacebuilding practitioners, activists, researchers, policy-makers, funders, and educators, we welcome each
other’s cooperation and support. We intend for this planning process itself to strengthen awareness of our interdependence on all cohorts of players in this field. We aim to propose and cultivate structures that will promote respect and cooperation across the silos and hierarchies that often impede effective collaborations.

We respect our various professions and academic disciplines and hope that this initiative and the resulting collaborations will mutually enrich them. Those of us based in universities value the stability and disciplinary expertise embedded in our institutions; at the same time, we recognize that few challenges faced by local and global communities can be addressed through rational, linear processes alone. We will use the resources of our disciplines, as best as we are able, to lift up the knowledge that emerges from artistic and cultural practices in those communities that are seeking creative, systemic approaches to resolving real world problems.

We aim to conduct this planning process with creativity, joy in the sense of possibility it represents, and with respect for ourselves and the others we seek to engage. We anticipate that imagining together will enhance our vitality, our creativity, and our relationships. We intend for the relationships and structures of support we cultivate to embody these values.

We expect this planning process to advance our practical agenda of mapping the field and making recommendations for a sustainable infrastructure to strengthen work at the nexus of arts, culture, and conflict transformation. While we plan to be widely consultative and to consider all views, we will work with considerable and appropriate efficiency. The urgencies of the moment, the needs and potentials of the field, and our commitments to the Mellon Foundation, our institutions, and communities demand nothing less.