What is Alliance for Action?

Alliance for Action is a working group for exhibitors, distributors, festivals, and art houses addressing social, racial, and gender equity issues in our field.

Why? We believe that increasing equity is a moral imperative that benefits all involved by leading to economic, cultural, and social sustainability. In order to succeed, art house cinemas must work to be more inclusive and reflective of our communities.

How? To move forward with our collective commitment to making our field more diverse and inclusive, we must take the first step of self-assessment.
Purpose of the Equity Assessment

This set of equity questions was developed by members of the Alliance for Action for art house cinema organizations to prompt discussions to begin or continue a process of self-reflection and action-planning. The goal is collective transformation to a more equitable and inclusive field.
Work in Progress

This tool is continuing to be developed, and feedback is not only welcome but necessary.

For a link to submit feedback online please visit http://www.arthouseconvergence.org/
Plan ahead. These conversations take time. Set aside several hours or tackle in sections over time. The more you involve people at all levels (i.e. decision-makers, researchers), the more effective your discussion and “next steps” planning will be.

Do not expect to know the answers to (or how to answer) all of the questions. Expect discomfort, frustration, and conflict. Discuss in advance how to identify and manage challenging dynamics and behaviors such as defensiveness, denial, lack of engagement, fatigue, lack of safety (inherent power dynamics in your group will impact who feels safe to say what and whose voice leads). Establish group guidelines before you start. Re-state the purpose of the assessment when the going gets tough.
Using this Assessment Tool

Define the terms: Lack of shared definition or common understanding causes confusion. Bold words or terms have been defined in the resources section available on the Art House Convergence website. Additional terms that may come up are also included. Review these up front or as you go, add to them, and discuss as needed.

Questions are not numbered, and do not necessarily build upon one another. Answer them in the order that makes the most sense for your discussion.

Questions are also not grouped in terms of staffing areas, as there is value in anyone in your organization considering any one of these issues.
Resources

For an ever-expanding glossary of terms and listing of additional resources to aid in discussion, please visit http://www.arthouseconvergence.org/
Alliance For Action Equity Assessment

Whose land is your Cinema on?

What do you know about your community history regarding indigenous people and immigration?
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What do you know about the strengths, sources of pride, and **systemic disparities** in the immediate neighborhood of your cinema as well as your larger community (i.e. town, city, metro area, state, region)? (Make sure that the sources of information are not only from **dominant culture** point of view).
Community: Assess the current demographics of your Cinema’s community (i.e. immediate neighborhood, town, city, state, you choose the applicable region).

- Find and discuss community data for race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, income level, etc.

- What do you know about your community that does not show up in this data?
Community: Assess the current demographics of your Cinema’s community (i.e. immediate neighborhood, town, city, state, you choose the applicable region).

• What cultures are represented in your community?

• What are key interests and issues of your community’s populations?
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**Audience:** Assess the demographics and the culture of your Cinema’s audience.

- Identify and discuss data for your audience regarding race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, income level, etc. Note: data should rely on self-identification. It is not uncommon to lack this data or to have issues with collecting from audiences.

- Are any audiences underrepresented relative to your community's demographics?
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Audience: Assess the demographics and the culture of your Cinema’s audience.

• Identify barriers for underrepresented audiences. Do not make assumptions, use first-hand information, data, multiple sources and follow the “not about us without us” principle.

• Consider environment: who might feel welcome in your space? Who might feel unfamiliar or unwelcome? Discuss why.
Audience: Assess the demographics and the culture of your Cinema’s audience.

• How does your cinema benefit from increasing diversity in your audience? Acknowledge (list) some of the mutual benefits for community and for your Cinema to increasing historically underrepresented audiences.

• What does inclusion look like?
Alliance For Action Equity Assessment

Staff and leadership: Assess the demographics of your staff (all levels) and leadership (board, owners). Consider this question for both past and present.

• How do you currently reflect your community?

• What experiences and perspectives do you bring?

• Are the demographics different among various levels of staffing and leadership?
Staff and leadership: Assess the demographics of your staff (all levels) and leadership (board, owners). Consider this question for both past and present.

- Are staff and leadership board in tune with issues and goals of minority populations in your community? How?
- Does your Cinema’s mission or business plan or statement of values incorporate equity?
Programming: Assess a year of programming at your Cinema.

- What are the demographics of the filmmakers?
- Whose stories does your programming feature?
- What issues, stories, and events are important in your community historically and in the present day? Is your cinema program a platform for these stories?
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Programming: Assess a year of programming at your Cinema.

• Consider expertise: what perspectives do your programmers have?

• If you have stated programmatic goals, what are they? Do they align with your diversity, equity, and inclusion goals?

• What does inclusion look like?
Alliance For Action Equity Assessment

Discuss: Does your Cinema have a correlation between programming and audiences? Note: diversifying filmmaker demographics and/or stories should not be relied upon for diversifying audience demographics.
Bottom Line: What resources have you dedicated in your **general operating budget** (and made a priority that fits within your staff's capacity and time) for sustainable ongoing long **co-programming relationships** or other **equity-based partnerships** or **access initiatives** with regards to your cinema?
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NEXT STEPS
Review what was discovered and the tasks identified in this discussion.

• Discuss priorities and feasibility; state 3 objectives that you could achieve this year within your current budget. Define your goals, responsibilities and roles, and how you will measure success.

• Look ahead, prioritize and map out a three-year equity plan.
What Happens Next

• Review tasks that surfaced during the conversation

• Discuss additional research and information needed

• Identify objectives to achieve to increase equity in any area (this does not need to be realistic—yet)

• Assess priorities and feasibility

• Define goals, responsibilities, and roles
What Happens Next

• Establish outcomes. How will you measure success? Can you use data to demonstrate change?

• State 3 objectives that you and/or your organization or department could achieve this year within your current budget.

• Consider a commitment to 3 objectives that will increase equity in your art house.
Continuing Support

Alliance For Action wants to work with you on going through this process. If your organization would like to pilot this assessment tool, please visit http://www.arthouseconvergence.org/ to sign up.