

Capturing Community Value
*The Role of Local Arts Organizations in Revitalization, Civic
Engagement, and Community-Building*

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ARTS EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

RESIDENCY COORDINATOR 2007-2008

Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, PA

- Created proposals and contracts for in-school residencies.
- Developed and evaluated lessons for long-term residencies and short workshops.
- Tracked and processed payment for all residencies.
- Hired and supervised teaching artists for each residency.

INTERIM OUTREACH COORDINATOR 2004

Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia PA

- Scheduled and booked touring performances with local and regional schools.
- Created contracts for performances.
- Tracked and processed payments.
- Supervised 4 acting apprentices and coordinated actors' daily schedules.

TEACHING ARTIST 2003-2008

Walnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, PA

- Taught Youth Acting and Teen Acting (WST Theatre School) for 5 consecutive years.
- Taught Kids Acting and Audition Technique & Scene Study for one term each.
- Children's Theatre Director (Camp Walnut) for 3 consecutive years; 30 students (ages 8-12).

Philadelphia Theatre Company, Philadelphia, PA

- Created and implemented lesson plans for 60 high school students as part of 4-month "Philly Reality" residency.
- Created and implemented lessons for 120 high school students as part of year-long "Passport Program" designed to increase students' enjoyment and understanding of PTC's 4 mainstage shows for 2 consecutive years.

Communities in Schools/New Jersey After 3, Camden NJ

- After-school Drama teacher for 70 students, grades K-6, five days a week. Designed and implemented lessons on improv, guided storytelling, and process drama.

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Belmont Charter School, Belmont Enrichment and Study Time (BEST), Philadelphia, PA

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PROJECT MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE

FRESHMAN SEMINAR COORDINATOR, GRADUATE TEACHING FELLOWSHIP 2008-present

First-Year Programs Office, University of Oregon

- Coordinate and implement the Freshman Seminar Call for Proposals and serve on selection committee.
- Manage student enrollment and registration.
- Represent First-Year Programs at various admissions and student orientation events.
- Graphic design for Freshman Seminar brochure, posters, bookmarks, and other materials.
- Evaluate Freshman Seminar courses and provide feedback to faculty.

SPECIAL PROJECTS COORDINATOR 2000-2003

Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape, Harrisburg, PA

- Supervised project development of 4-6 yearly prevention education projects for children and adults created by crisis centers across the state.
- Reviewed proposals and served on selection committee.
- Edited final product and coordinated publication and distribution of all materials.
- Authored a series of brochures on sexual assault and a 25-page pamphlet for significant others of sexual violence survivors.
- Librarian for PCAR's 1500 item library, supervising acquisition and circulation of all books, journals, videos, etc.

INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES INTERN July-August 2009

Wisconsin Arts Board, Madison, WI

- Authored the toolkit *Capturing Community Value: Measuring Project Impact on Civic Engagement*.
- Created marketing calendar for promoting *Task Force on Creativity in Education Report*.

EDUCATION INTERN September 2009-present

Maude Kerns Art Center, Eugene, OR

- Assist Associate Director with marketing and programming of Education events and classes.
- Assist Associate Director with Youth Art Area portion of annual Art and the Vineyard Festival.
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RELATED SKILLS

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Capturing Community Value

The Role of Local Arts Organizations in Revitalization, Civic Engagement, and Community-Building

Abstract

Over the past 20 years, many have pointed to “the arts” as a way in which to revitalize America’s urban centers (Kay, 2000; Phillips, 2004; Stern & Seifert, 2007; Strom, 2002). All too often, however, a community undergoing a development process is relegated to the role of audience to outsiders’ expertise (Aprill & Townsell, 2007). Local arts organizations are in a unique place to combat the disappearance of community identity. Through programs that celebrate the history and character of the community through art, theatre, and murals they have the potential to empower and maintain the neighborhood’s voice on a city and regional level (Lowe, 2000). Researchers assert that small cultural groups are typically more important to communities and to revitalization of neighborhoods than major institutions (Stern, 2002). Tuned in to the pulse of a community, local arts organizations can use art and culture to ignite civic engagement, thereby engaging the community in its own revitalization and voice.

The purpose of this master’s capstone will be to understand the role of community arts organizations, specifically civic engagement and education initiatives, in community identity and grassroots community revitalization.

Keywords

Community identity, local arts organization, community revitalization, civic engagement, social capital, community cultural development, community engagement

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Chapter 1

Research Design

Statement of Problem

Over the past 20 years, many have pointed to “the arts” as a way in which to revitalize America’s urban centers (Kay, 2000; Phillips, 2004; Stern & Seifert, 2007; Strom, 2002). Million dollar cultural centers lure residents into city centers, artist live/work spaces have remodeled vacant buildings, and public art draws tourists from across the country. All too often, however, a community undergoing a development process is relegated to the role of audience to outsiders’ expertise (Aprill & Townsell, 2007), or worse yet, they are removed altogether to “make room for culture.” What effect does this have on local history, community identity, and the long-term sustainability of arts and cultural programs? How can local arts organizations address this issue? Local arts organizations are in a unique place to combat the disappearance of community identity. Through programs that celebrate the history and character of the community through art, theatre, and murals, they have the potential to empower and maintain the neighborhood’s voice on a city and regional level (Lowe, 2000). Researchers assert that small cultural groups are typically more important to communities and to revitalization of neighborhoods than major institutions (Stern, 2002). Tuned in to the pulse of a community, local arts organizations can use art and culture to ignite civic engagement, thereby engaging the community in its own revitalization and voice.

Purpose

This master’s capstone will examine the relationship between community identity, civic engagement, and local arts organizations. It examines how cultural activity affects community renewal and the role that art plays in this process. Specifically, it will research how the community engagement and educational programming of local arts organizations both reflect and contribute to community identity.

Research Questions

The research will be guided by the desire to understand what role local arts organizations play in community identity. This research question will be supported by four sub-questions:

- 1) In what ways can/do community arts organizations contribute to community identity through programming?
- 2) What role do community arts organizations play in community/urban revitalization?
- 3) Where are the intersections between art and civic engagement and what role do they play in community identity?
- 4) How do local arts organizations assess for project impact on civic engagement?

Conceptual Framework

My research is grounded in the environment of the community arts organizations-community identity relationship. I am specifically interested in exploring how said programming contributes to civic engagement which, in turn, can lead to community cultural development and overall community revitalization. My paper consists of five distinct, yet closely related, sections: urban revitalization, social capital and civic engagement, community cultural development, community cultural planning, and assessment. Each section is, in a sense, a literature review exploring and examining the topic on its own and how it relates to my overall research questions. Connecting research to practice, I weave information from my three capstone courses – Community Cultural Development, Community Cultural Planning, and Public Folklore and Community Programming – into my research and analysis along with vignettes of

successful community art projects around the country and how they illustrate each section's main topic.

Definition of Terms

To ensure that reader and researcher are viewing the context and content of this paper from a similar perspective, it is necessary to define certain terms used throughout this research paper. Terms, as used in the context of this critical inquiry, are defined below.

A local arts organization is an organization whose mission it is to provide arts and cultural programming to the specific community in which it is located. The specific disciplines in which the organizations functions may vary, but they often share a focus on community arts – fostering local dialogue and stimulating positive community change. For this research paper, I am referring to organization's whose programming is intrinsically participatory in nature and that values teaching, learning, and creating.

The term *community* describes a unit of social organization based on some distinguishing characteristic of affinity: proximity (the Eugene community), belief (the Jewish community), ethnicity (the Vietnamese community), profession (the medical community) or orientation (the gay community). For the purpose of this research project, the term *community* refers to a group of people in a specific geographical location (defined by neighborhood, town, or city) who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in common action.

Community building refers to facilitating social connections through shared emotional experiences.

Community identity refers to the distinct traditions and values of a place and its people. It also encompasses the cultural, historical, social, and natural assets of the community. Community identity consists of members' collective self-concept and serves

to unify the individual members into a group with similar traditions, values, experiences, and/or goals.

Civic engagement is defined as participation aimed at achieving a public good usually through direct hands-on work in cooperation with others (Zukin et al, 2006). The goals of civic engagement are a heightened awareness or deepened knowledge of civic/social issues; increased understanding of other perspectives; increased or more diverse participation; increased capacity for engagement and dialogue; and new relationships built and/or existing relationships strengthened (Dwyer, 2008).

Community development or revitalization (used interchangeably) refers to efforts by civic leaders to improve the quality of life in a community. This concept is broken down into four aspects:

Economic: regeneration through the creation of employment opportunities; bringing money into the area through investment and employment; and providing outlets to spend money in the area and invigorate the local economy.

Social: encouraging social connections through organizations and clubs that can enhance the quality of life through human contact between individuals, families and sections of society.

Environmental: improvements in the surrounding area and buildings.

Cultural: how people collectively see themselves. It is about the image and self-image of an area; but is also about the heritage, history, traditions, and skills within a society.

Limitations

Just as it is necessary to define terms as they are used in this paper, it is also necessary to acknowledge my biases as a researcher and the limitations of this capstone paper. My biases regarding this research originate with the belief that arts and

culture can help regenerate a city's core. However, I also believe that sustainable regeneration needs to occur at a grassroots level with input from the community to ensure that the identity of the community is honored and encouraged. Another assumption I possess regarding my research is that community art participation contributes to civic engagement by fostering community pride and social networks, which, in turn, contributes to a healthy community. In terms of limitations, due to the nature of the capstone, I will not conduct field research. My research may be limited by the absence of interviews of professionals in the field of community cultural planning and arts/culture programming. I will attempt to address this limitation through a thorough literature review and vignettes of community art programs contributing to civic engagement and revitalization. It must also be stated that this research cannot be generalized. Instead, some of the findings may be externalized and used by future researchers and cultural programmers as lessons learned or best practices. Finally, qualitative research leads to inherent bias due to the role of the researcher. A researcher's interpretation of the findings is shaped by his/her background, such as gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin (Creswell, 2009). The findings of this research will be filtered through the lens of my background, beliefs, and biases, and therefore may not be interpreted the same by another researcher.

Chapter 2

Urban Revitalization

In this, the first of five sections, I will present an overview of arts and culture's role in urban revitalization. I will critically examine the various strategies municipalities employ to address civic needs through the arts and then turn my attention to the role local arts organizations play in this revitalization. How does programming bridge revitalization and identity efforts? How important is developing, fostering, and maintaining a community's identity to successful revitalization efforts? To illustrate, I will highlight several examples of revitalization efforts through arts in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Since the 1980s, the arts (within the broader category of cultural and creative industries) have gained a key role in strategies to deal with urban problems such as revitalization of poor or decaying neighborhoods (Kay, 2000; Phillips, 2004; Miles, 2005; Stern & Seifert, 2007; Strom, 2002). Research conducted by the Social Impact of the Arts Project at the University of Pennsylvania has documented the link between cultural engagement and community capacity-building and neighborhood revitalization (Stern & Seifert, 2009). According to Strom (2003), "the co-mingling of arts and local economic revitalization ... represents a new reframing of arts policies and their role in the larger community" (p. 247). Performing and visual arts centers, festivals, public art, artist live/work buildings, and community cultural centers have been planned, invested in, and built as ways to revitalize emptying downtowns, attract tourists, preserve historic buildings, and solve community problems.

Municipalities engage in cultural development in multiple ways. The strategies can be grouped into three categories: Entrepreneurial Strategies, Creative Class Strategies, and Progressive Strategies (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007).

Entrepreneurial Strategies most clearly pursue a proactive, market-driven approach guided by purely economic objectives. Public officials place a strong emphasis on creating high-profile centrally located flagship facilities and events to catalyze

economy through tourism and ticket sales and market their cities as “places to play” (Fainstein & Judd, 1999; Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007). A city’s image is thought important in attracting new capital and tourists (Holcomb, 1999), therefore, cultural projects have emerged as a way to bolster the “brand identity” of cities (Fainstein & Judd, 1999). The Avenue of the Arts in Philadelphia can be viewed as an example of the entrepreneurial strategy. Philadelphia has suffered from long-term population decline and job loss and the idea that promoting the arts could serve to promote economic development gained momentum with the Rendell administration in 1991 (Strom, 2003). The target of the revitalization project was South Broad Street, the declining main artery of the business district, with the crowning jewel being a new concert hall for the Philadelphia Orchestra, later named the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. Trying to build broader support for what was seen as a narrow, elite-serving project, the mayor’s office, the Orchestra, and other development constituents pointed to the economic benefits that such an endeavor would bring to the area (Strom, 2003). The Avenue of the Arts is now home to the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, Wilma Theatre, Merriam Theatre, The Rock School for Dance Education, The University of the Arts, The Academy of Music, Philadelphia Theatre Company, and many restaurants. The co-mingling of arts and local economic revitalization has transformed this main artery from a struggling and straggling strip into a buzzing boulevard that is striving to be the red carpet into Center City.

Although this strategy has its obvious rewards, many critics focus on the negative consequences of flagship organizations and large-scale, high-cost revitalization projects. Critics charge that such initiatives are more focused on building the city for visitors and affluent residents rather than supporting home-grown talent and neighborhood projects (Eisinger, 2000). Goldbard (2006) refers to this form of urban renewal as “urban removal” (p. 28) due to its tendency to address urban blight by demolishing inner-city

neighborhoods, forcing the inhabitants to relocate, thus eliminating the networks that previously sustained local culture. All too often, a community undergoing a community development process is relegated to the role of audience to outsiders' expertise.

Community members are asked to furnish token "representation" of the residents' point of view and once they have been represented are asked to approve what the outsiders say is in their best interest (Aprill & Townsell, 2007). In addition, many of these buildings are located in business districts or other locations that are devoid of any neighborhood identity or environment. Their purpose is sometimes viewed as pure surface vanity – to get tourists in and out.

Creative Class Strategies, on the other hand, seek economic development through the provision of quality of life and recreational amenities (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007). Such strategies focus on lifestyle amenities to attract the "creative class" – a wide ranging classification of highly educated workers and "knowledge-based professionals" (Florida, 2002). Recognizing that artist groups can spur the economic redevelopment of depressed urban centers, city planners are increasingly looking at ways to provide incentives for artists to create what are called "creative clusters" (Stern & Seifert, 2007). Often times, an entire district may be redesignated as a cultural quarter. Apart from drawing visitors into an area, such venues and recordings of a district tend to encourage a proliferation of small, broadly cultural businesses all catering to the new "creative class" (Grant, 2006; Stern & Seifert, 2007). In many cities, building renovations have also been intended to provide studio and residential (or "live/work") units for artists, usually at affordable housing rates as set by the federal government. Many cities offer incentives for artists and arts organizations in the form of tax breaks and tax credits, low-interest loans, and grants for developers who commit to renovating abandoned buildings within a geographically defined arts and culture district. In recent years, Northern Liberties, north of Philadelphia's historic Old City, has become something of a center for

local artists and musicians. Musicians and artists have transformed this warehouse and rowhouse district, once home to factories and breweries and more recently vacant lots and abandoned historic properties, into Philadelphia's version of SoHo. Filled with artist live/work space, music and art studios and nightclubs, Northern Liberties enjoys a lively music and arts scene. This approach is based on the premise that cities must preserve and enhance their historic urban neighborhoods, cultural and recreational activities, and ethnic diversity to draw people who are attractive to businesses in the new economy (Florida 2002). As Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris (2007) explain, proponents of the creative city strategy assume that economic benefits will trickle down to those who hold the low-wage service jobs necessary to maintain the creative class lifestyle.

Critics, however, argue that this approach results in a biased economic development program, which targets one favored class of people. Stern and Seifert (2008) argue that Florida values particular workers—typically high-wage, well-educated workers—which has the effect of devaluing those who make a less visible contribution. According to Miles (2005), a cultural zone can easily be read as a zone of affluence. For example, the recoding of a district as a cultural quarter may lead to gentrification – a shift from multiple to single occupancy and from rent to owner-occupation of housing being a key aspect of this – and a marginalization of original residents (Miles, 2005). The Creative Class strategy creates a bubble for artists through low rent and tax incentives. However, once the bubble fills – with cultural amenities and the people who want to live in such an area – the bubble will burst and the very people who created the cultural district will no longer be able to afford to live there. This is happening somewhat in Northern Liberties, and therefore the artists are moving farther north into the Fishtown neighborhood. This neighborhood has been working class for centuries with now an influx of artists and professionals joining the ranks of police officers, fire fighters, nurses, carpenters, electricians, stone masons, plumbers, sheet-metal workers, and teamsters.

The question that this strategy raises is “Where and when will the migration stop?” According to Jones (2005), creativity and the creative knowledge workers whom such initiatives are intended to attract have been objectified and commodified. Instead of growing creative workers from a community’s own residents, these initiatives are intended to retain graduates from a city’s universities (most of whom came from somewhere else to study in the first place) and draw them from other cities. Jones (2005) goes on to explain that this could be called an “irrigation model” for community revitalization as it imports resources in lieu of developing one’s own. One of the great disservices of the naming and imposing of cultural districts from above is that it suggests that all other neighborhoods are *not* culturally interesting or vibrant. In contrast, if cities celebrate the many and distinctive neighborhood cultural venues available to area residents, they can also encourage cross-neighborhood visits, increasing understanding and cohesion across the city (Markusen, 2006).

Critics of the aforementioned strategies argue that it is now time to implement the next phase and develop within communities their own self-sustaining creative environments. Stern and Seifert (2007) refer to *natural* cultural districts – neighborhood-based cultural clusters that have emerged without planning or massive public investment. The density of assets – organizations, businesses, participants, and artists – sets these districts apart from other neighborhoods. What is more, because they combine artistic production and consumption and a mix of institutional forms, disciplines, and sizes and were developed by the residents themselves, they have a degree of sustainability that a planned cultural district is unlikely to match.

This will require focusing on community-based resources such as neighborhood arts organizations and schools (Jones, 2005; Carey & Sutton, 2004; Kay, 2000). Progressive Strategies follow a more grassroots and neighborhood-based approach to cultural development that seeks to respond more directly to the needs of local

communities and arts organizations. Some city governments have developed programs to fund arts education, turn vacant properties into community cultural centers, and stimulate interest in local heritage and culture (Borrupt, 2003). Progressive strategies utilize arts and culture activity to strengthen community identity by strengthening social bonds (Kay, 2000; Phillips, 2004; Nowak, 2007; Strom, 2002). While the arts *are* commerce, they revitalize cities not through their bottom-line but through their social role. Lowe (2000) found that a sense of civic pride in residents achieved through the arts, leads to more engaged citizens and safer neighborhoods. In addition, the arts can help foster a sense of ownership and pride within a community. Lowe (2001) found that many struggling inner-city neighborhoods have used the arts as a means of redefining the community's collective identity. The arts have enabled communities to transform a negative image of their neighborhood into a positive one (Lowe, 2001). Progressive strategies focus on initiatives that connect neighbor to neighbor and community to community. Stern and Seifert (2007) explain that culture generates many types of social networks:

When artists work with eight or nine different organizations during the year—as many do, they build networks. When a community arts center partners with a boys' and girls' club or an after-school program, it builds networks. When community residents are involved in arts programs as well as churches, civic associations, and book clubs, they build networks. When a community development organization reaches out simultaneously to downtown financial institutions and local residents, it builds a network (Stern & Seifert, 2007, p. 1).

Although U.S. cities seem to prefer cultural development strategies that rely on prominent special events and centrally located facilities over city-wide programs that enrich diverse city neighborhoods by encouraging local cultural production (Grodach &

Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007), studies show that *people-centered* development strategies are the most sustainable model. They emphasize local people as the principle asset through which renewal can be achieved (Carey & Sutton, 2004; Kay, 2000). When people have a true sense of “ownership” or connection to the spaces they inhabit, the residents’ feelings of respect and responsibility bond them to the place and to each other (Borrupt, 2006). When a community comes together to share cultural life, through celebration, rites, and intercultural dialogue, it is enhancing its relationships and networks – in other words, developing social capital (Stern & Seifert, 2009). Continuing the Philadelphia examples, the Village of Arts and Humanities is another Philadelphia arts organization that is contributing to community revitalization in the Progressive style. The mission of The Village of Arts and Humanities is to “build community through innovative arts, educational, social, construction, and economic and youth development programs” (The Village for Arts and Humanities, 2009). The Village grew out of a small neighborhood park project headed by Lily Yeh, the Village founder, and two African American men in recovery from substance abuse (unnamed) (The Village for Arts and Humanities, 2009). Since its inception, the Village has transformed a 260 square block area of North Philadelphia, one block at a time through a neighborhood revitalization program that has evolved into a major provider of arts-inspired programs including education, land transformation, construction, and economic development. Incorporating the input and assistance of the residents, the murals and colorful tile mosaics that punctuate housing projects and parks are a visual testament to the work being done by residents to improve their lives. Some of the Village programs include the Village Arts Challenge – a multidisciplinary after-school program educating youth in art making and community; the Annual Theatre Production – original plays developed by staff and local residents that draw on material from neighborhood lore and issues affecting the community and Building Through the Arts – a program that uses land-transformation tools of vacant lot

clean-up, gardening, the creation of public art, and outreach to engage residents (The Village of Arts and Humanities, 2010). The Village's urban landscaping team annually maintains over 200 vacant lots (representing over 1.2 million square feet of land) through Philadelphia Green, a Pennsylvania Horticultural Society initiative (The Village of Arts and Humanities, 2009).

Stern (2002) has two recommendations for those pursuing Progressive revitalization strategies. First, stop trying to turn community cultural providers into flawed copies of larger cultural institutions. Because funders tend to measure an organization's "success" in fiscal terms, cultural groups that work to engage their communities are likely to get overlooked unless they also build new facilities and expand their programs. When small cultural organizations are pushed onto what Stern (2002) refers to as the treadmill – building new facilities to attract larger audiences, and then working harder to increase earned income to pay for the new facilities (para. 18) – they quickly deplete any resources they have for other activities, and as they spend more time worrying about their fiscal health, they are forced to spend less time responding to the needs of their neighborhoods. Stern (2002) uses the example of a community artist/group that has worked for years in a church basement. The opportunity for a new space presents itself and the lure is irresistible. However, once in the new space, the artist/group is less likely to give an unknown playwright a chance and more likely to stage a production that will increase revenue. The cycle continues if the artist is worried about making mortgage payments, and is, therefore, less willing to provide free space to community groups that need performance or meeting space (para. 19). In the end, a small organization using an old church or a rowhouse can have a larger impact than one that spends its energy building a shiny new theater or exhibition space.

Stern (2002) also recommends recognizing that the major way in which local arts and cultural organizations contribute to the economic development of neighborhoods

has nothing to do with them as businesses. Community arts organizations are "successes" when, and because, they stimulate civic engagement and strengthen the bridges between neighborhoods and neighbors.

Stern and Seifert as cited in Bash (2006) suggest the need to understand cultural community-based organizations more as "social movements" than as classically modeled formal organizations. Understanding these groups in this way provides insight into their activities and also explains their effectiveness. Stern and Seifert refer to community-based arts organizations as the "irrational" solution. They are:

- driven by an 'irrational' commitment to mission;
- linked to a community's search for identity;
- opportunistic and nimble;
- able to scan their environment;
- resilient in the face of inevitable crises; and
- have strength that comes from social networks, not organizational structure.

Strength as a social movement – through the social networks created and maintained by the arts – is the value of community arts and local community arts organizations (Stern & Seifert, 2008; Stern, 2002).

As illustrated in the above examination of the literature and accompanying examples, in the arena of the arts and urban revitalization, there is now the understanding that building upon a community's existing assets is a sustainable redevelopment policy. Local arts organizations play a critical role in this shift. Programming that strengthens social bonds and fosters existing community identity is a way to revitalize and redevelop from the bottom up by engaging with community members who live there.

Chapter 3

Social Capital and Civic Engagement

While the arts *are* commerce, they revitalize cities not just through their bottom-line but also through their social role. The construction of an identity of place through cultural programs and festivals and the activity of local arts institutions increases social capital, which in turn has development benefits. In this section, I will continue the previous discussion on the social bonds created through participation in the arts. It is essential to establish context and connect with research on arts and social engagement before moving on to the ways local arts organizations contribute to identity by cultivating social “capital” and encouraging engagement in their programs and larger community civic issues. In this section, I will lay the groundwork for arguing that the presence and work of small cultural groups promotes neighborhood stability, enables a sense of belonging, creates productive uses of underutilized spaces, and provides space for cross-cultural dialogue.

Art is produced in social networks (Becker, 1982), and social networks create “social capital” i.e. the “bridging and bonding relationships that create civic culture” (Putnam, 2000, p. 20). The theory of social capital, as discussed by Putnam, connects the ideas of social networks to strong communities: networks of community engagement foster sturdy norms of reciprocity (2000, p. 20). Putnam uses the economic terminology “capital” to address formal and informal social ties that exist within communities.

According to Putnam:

[T]he core idea of social capital theory is that social networks have value. Just as a screwdriver (physical capital) or college education (human capital) can increase productivity...so too social contacts affect the productivity of individuals and groups (2000, pp.18-19).

Neighborhood arts institutions and public cultural events are incubators of civic culture and social capital. They are places where people learn to be neighbors through

public engagement and recognition. A lively cultural scene appears to contribute to neighborhood vitality in two important ways: it increases the inclination and ability of residents to make positive changes in their community, and it increases the connections between neighborhoods of different ethnic and economic compositions (Stern & Seifert, 2009). Culture increases the perception that community members can control their environment. Engaged citizens not only help neighborhoods thrive, they also create a more positive social environment (Stern, 2002). Using the example of Philadelphia, Stern found that even in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods in Philadelphia – those with the highest poverty and unemployment rates – communities with high levels of cultural participation have much lower rates of delinquency and truancy than other disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Cultural participation also builds bridges across the city's ethnic and class divides. According to Stern (2002), approximately 80 percent of community cultural participants travel outside their own neighborhoods to attend cultural events – a fact that separates culture from other forms of civic engagement. Town watches, neighborhood improvement groups, and school associations, may have high volunteer rates, but generally people volunteer for such organizations in their own neighborhoods. When it comes to cultural activities, however, people are often willing to leave their neighborhoods to search out new experiences (Stern, 2002). This mixing of communities and audiences for community arts reduces social isolation and builds connections across divides of ethnicity and social class.

Related to the concept of social capital is the idea of civic engagement. While social capital is defined as a set of resources that have the potential to influence behavior, civic engagement refers to the behavior itself. Michael Delli Carpini (as cited in Stern & Seifert, 2009), defines civic engagement as individual and collective actions designed to identify and address issues of public concern (p. 8). As the National

Endowment for the Arts found in its 2002 study on arts participation, Americans involved in the arts are more likely to partake in myriad civic and social activities (National Endowment for the Arts, 2007). They are more likely to create art on their own, be more physically active, and more likely to volunteer in their communities.

Does this mean that individuals who attend theatre performances or visit museums are the catalysts for community change; that they are out on the streets working to foster community identity? It is not that simple a connection. Before we can discuss what this means in terms of the impact community-based arts organizations have on community-building and identity, we must define arts participation.

There is widespread acknowledgement that traditional or classic art forms like ballet, opera, and the symphony can no longer be considered “the sole windows into a community’s artistic soul” (Chew, 2009, p. 1). Artistic and cultural expression appears in many places and takes many forms. New research on the Wallace -Reader’s Digest Funds’ Community Partnerships for Cultural Participation (CPCP) initiative (as cited in Walker & Sherwood, 2003) finds that more people attend arts and cultural events in *community venues*— such as open air spaces, schools, and places of worship – than in conventional arts venues, such as concert halls, theaters, museums, and art galleries. New forms of arts engagement reflect current trends in participatory culture. People are seeking active and participatory arts opportunities – for example, taking arts classes, joining a community theater group, singing in a church choir, or playing in a band (Stern & Seifert, 2009).

It is this nexus of active arts participation, social capital, and civic engagement that can lead to community revitalization through collective identity and community-building. Lowe (2000) found that as a result of working together on community arts projects, neighborhood residents developed solidarity and experienced feelings of belonging and unity. In addition, the arts can help foster a sense of ownership and pride

within a community. Many struggling inner-city neighborhoods have used the arts as a means of redefining the community's collective identity (Lowe, 2001). The arts have enabled communities to transform a negative image of their neighborhood into a positive one (Lowe, 2001). Active arts engagement is likely to generate community outcomes around building social capital that are comparable to those associated with more intentional arts-based civic engagement.

The Hello Neighbor project of Caldera and Albany Park Theatre Project's *Saffron* are two examples of how local arts organizations are developing social capital through specific programming to youth and teens. In the Hello Neighbor project, students from ten middle schools across Portland and Central Oregon worked with a photographer to create photo-and-word portraits of community members to be displayed on large 7x5 foot banners throughout their communities (Caldera, 2010). After extensive photography training, students interviewed friends, family members, and strangers about identity and community. Questions they explored included "How do you see yourself?" "What inspires you?" and "Can you tell me a story about the neighborhood you grew up in?" (Caldera, 2010). Similarly, the Albany Park Theatre Project engaged teenagers in connecting to community members and the neighborhood's history. A featured profile in *Animating Democracy*, the Project is a multiethnic ensemble of Chicago teenagers who create and perform original plays inspired by real-life stories told by local community members. They gather material from their neighbors living in Albany Park, who are generally all immigrant, working-class families. *Saffron* is their latest show, based on true stories told by the owners, staff, and customers of Noon-O-Kabab, a Persian restaurant. (Americans for the Arts, 2010). As its website explains, "AFTP's art enhances the vitality of Albany Park; builds relationships among people across ethnic, religious, and economic lines; and models for audiences a multi-ethnic, multi-religious ensemble working together as a community with respect, skill, and love" (Albany Park Theatre

Project, 2010). Both of these projects show social capital and civic engagement in action. More than just art, more than just participation, these projects engage participants with each other in exploring personal and community identity and history. Local arts organizations' projects such as these blur the line between cultural participation and civic engagement. While creating art, participants are also affecting the social landscape of their community by forging bonds and confronting barriers.

Viewed in this way, cultural participation IS civic engagement. This, in turn, has implications for how arts organizations view cultural participation and audience development. For many years, cultural participation was defined as cultural consumption and was closely linked with audience development. As it is typically conceived, audience development is a collection of promotional strategies used by arts organizations to “outreach” to various (often underprivileged) communities as potential arts consumers, thereby increasing paid attendance and getting “butts in seats.” Cultural involvement viewed through the lens of civic engagement, however, focuses less on passive participation at cultural events and more on active forms of arts participation. Rather than arts organizations reaching *out* to potential audiences, many community-based arts organizations concentrate on ways to support audiences reaching *in* to arts organizations and participating in the planning and development of their own community's cultural life. This notion of collaborating with the community to reflect its identity, interests, and individuals is discussed in the next chapter on community cultural development and the unique role community based arts organizations play in cultural programming.

Chapter 4

Community Cultural Development

In this section, I will explore the concept of community cultural development and how it relates to community identity. Specifically, I am interested in the question, “Why is community identity important to the success of a local arts organization and to the success of the community?” I first define community cultural development and then explore the unifying principles of the discipline. Material for this section comes from my capstone course Community Cultural Development and the readings on social action and community-building. This section expounds on ideas presented in the previous urban revitalization section that raised the importance of community ownership and collaboration in development policies.

The term *community cultural development* (CCD) came into common usage in the 1990s and is often employed as cities contract with cultural planners to include the arts in urban revitalization and development plans (Hager, 2008). It is the process in which a community creatively determines and expresses its identity, celebrates its differences, and addresses issues of importance to build on and improve their shared culture while building on cultural capacity and contributing to social change (Flood, 1998; Adams & Goldbard, 2005). If culture is what connects us, then “community cultural development is the tool that tempers and strengthens the connection” (Flood, 1998).

Larger community development principles such as equality, opportunity, choice, participation, and reciprocity, are a useful starting point for understanding community cultural development; however, CCD is more than community development + art. It is a unique practice that works creatively with communities on their own ground, on their own issues, through cultural practice (Community Cultural Development in Australia, 2010). As Hager (2008) states, CCD is a useful term because it “remains rooted in the local but still encompasses the whole range of cultural activities employed in the development process” (p. 161). While community development involves businesses, city planners, housing organizations, real estate, civic institutions, and economic development

specialists in increasing economic opportunity, the quality of public amenities, and flows of capital into the build environment (Nowak, 2007), inherent in CCD is that the community is involved at every stage of the project: in planning and management, in originating the ideas, collaborating in creative development, participating in the realization and presentation of the project, and in evaluation.

While there is no universal manifesto, there are seven unifying principles in community cultural development work. According to Goldbard (2006), these principles are 1) active participation in cultural life is an essential goal of community cultural development; 2) diversity is a social asset, part of the cultural commonwealth, requiring protection and nourishment; 3) all cultures are essentially equal and society should not promote any one as superior to the others; 4) culture is an effective crucible for social transformation, one that can be less polarizing and create deeper connections than other social-change arenas; 5) cultural expression is a means of emancipation, not the primary end in itself; the process is as important as the product; 6) culture is a dynamic, protean whole and there is no value in creating artificial boundaries within it; and 7) artists have roles as agents of transformation that are more socially valuable than mainstream art world roles – and certainly equal in legitimacy (p. 46).

Reflected in these principles are the concepts of cultural competence, cultural democracy, and community participation and ownership. Cultural competence refers to the ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. It is comprised of four components: 1) awareness of one's own cultural worldview, 2) understanding of cultural differences, 3) knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and 4) cross-cultural skills. Developing cultural competence results in an ability to understand, communicate with, and effectively interact with people across cultures (Cross, et al, 1989). CCD workers who are culturally competent develop programs that are accessible

to all, responsive to participant interests, and planned in cooperation with community members (Blandy, 2008).

Cultural democracy is the concept that all cultures are essentially equal and society should not promote any one as superior to the others. It is concerned with enabling different points of view to exist and to be communicated within a society – the processes involving the expression and transmission of cultural values. According to Blandy (2008), a nation that is culturally democratic guarantees people the right to their own history; there is free and equitable access to culture; and there is recognition of cross-cultural shared values, attitudes, and beliefs (p. 174). Adams and Goldbard (as quoted in Blandy, 2008) explain that within this framework, cultural development “becomes a process of assisting communities and individuals to learn, express and communicate in multiple directions, not merely from the top – the elite institutions of the dominant culture – down” (p. 175). It is within community art centers that cultural democracy is most fully realized. Community art centers develop programs that encourage connections between art and the general public.

This notion of community participation and ownership is the final theme of Goldbard’s principles. Central to community cultural development is the collaboration between organizer/programmer/developer and community members. According to Borrup (2006), community arts development is not only about providing arts *for* the people but also includes arts *by* the people. It includes the creative expression of the people who live in the community. Kay (2000) found three elements to successful community development projects: community consultation, community involvement, and community ownership. In arts projects, *community consultation* is important as it solicits the views of members of the community in terms of needs and interests. It also encourages partnership between the arts project and the local community who will then have influence on the development of the project. Similarly, *community involvement* is

essential in arts-based projects as they tend to focus on the personal development and attitudinal change within communities. They are people-centered in their approach and, therefore, change within the community will happen only if there is a high active involvement by members of the local community. *Community ownership* is ultimately important with arts projects working in regeneration as it facilitates a process of local control. The fact that local communities feel sufficiently empowered to take control of arts projects and then guide and develop them for the benefit of the wider population can only be good in strengthening the capacity of the community (Kay, 2000). Aprill and Townsell (2007) reiterate this sentiment in a collective learning framework and explain that when a large number of community residents see themselves as deepening their learning about themselves and their community by working in a learning context with others, they can move much more quickly into a collective problem-solving mode that is respectful of others and that does not reduce their experiential knowledge to tokenism. When people have a true sense of “ownership” or connection to the spaces they inhabit and frequent, their feelings of respect and responsibility for the place bond them to the place and to each other (Borrupt, 2006).

The Mural Arts Program (MAP) in Philadelphia illustrates how local arts organizations contribute to community cultural development through connecting to the residents in consultation, involvement, and ownership. The mission of the Mural Arts Program is to unite artists and communities through a collaborative process, rooted in the traditions of mural-making, to create art that transforms public spaces and individual lives (City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, 2009a). Throughout the city – in Old City, Germantown, North Philly, South Philly, and Chinatown, in affluent neighborhoods, poor neighborhoods, and in communities undergoing change – there are murals that represent the lives, culture, history, and future of the people who live there. Not only are the murals beautiful pieces of artwork, but more importantly they represent a

collaboration between MAP and the community in an illustration of community cultural development. MAP works with more than 100 communities each year to create murals that reflect the culture of Philadelphia's neighborhoods (City of Philadelphia, 2009b). Community partners include block captains, neighborhood associations, public schools, community development corporations, local nonprofits, and city agencies. As explained on their website, MAP “strives to coordinate mural projects with existing strategies for community development, thereby leveraging grassroots social capital to build positive momentum and stronger results” (City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, 2009b, para. 1). MAP involves the community in every step of the mural-making process, from selecting a theme to selecting a muralist, and from collaborating on a design to celebrating the mural's creation. In this way, the mural fulfills its intention by becoming a living part of the community long after the project is completed. According to muralist, Donald Gensler, “I've seen murals bring people together. They don't solve all of a neighborhood's problems, but they can bring new life and energy to the people who live there. They can be a catalyst for change” (City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program, 2009b, para. 3).

Using various art forms, many community cultural development projects and programs focus on working with communities to determine a vision for the future, find solutions, and bring into action new ideas through examining their values and customs. Community cultural development initiatives are concerned with capturing stories that are not reflected in large public displays by adding human-scale information and meaning to the official record through first person testimonies and the artifacts of ordinary lives (Goldbard, 2006). Similarly, preserving folktales and other storytelling traditions is also a common CCD practice to preserve the wisdom of heritage.

Hawaii Alliance for Arts Education's Kamehameha I Statue Conservation Project is an example of community cultural development in service to community history and cultural preservation. From 1999-2001, on the island of Hawaii, local residents, working with Hawaii Alliance for Arts Education, a conservator, Kohala community leaders, and cultural practitioners, deliberated how best to conserve a statue of King Kamehameha I (Korza, n.d.). Should the statue be restored to the mainland artist's original intent of gilded bronze or should it be re-painted in life-like colors continuing a longstanding community tradition? The process included traditional image dance puppetry, informal one-on-one discussions, consultations with elders, community meetings, debates with public forums, and an opinion ballot (Korza, n.d.). Exploring the question of whether to paint or gild the statue deepened understanding of Hawaiian history and connection to cultural identity and traditions. The dialogue and activities themselves were, in a sense, a reclaiming of cultural history as much as was the final decision to paint the statue. According to Korza (n.d.), the project fostered a heightened sense of responsibility toward the statue, which has, in turn, helped people to see their role in larger issues of cultural preservation facing Kohala.

Continuing with the notion of "human-scale" culture, many CCD projects deal with individual identity. As Goldbard (2006) explains, many CCD projects involve participants discovering or claiming their own ethnic, gender, and class identities as a way to recast themselves as makers of history rather than passive objects (p. 72). Much of this work has roots in Paulo Freire's concept of the integrated and adaptive person. In *Education for Critical Consciousness*, Freire (1974) explains that an adaptive person merely reacts to the world around him as a passive object, but that the integrated person adapts to reality, gaining the capacity to make choices and transform their world. In other words, the integrated persons are the active subject of their own lives.

Just as economic development aims to stimulate the flow of capital and goods within a community, community cultural development aims to stimulate the flow of cultural information and resources (Goldbard, 2006). One way this can be accomplished is by training people to assert themselves as artists within their own communities and to use cultural tools for social change. For example, many communities tap into the artistic power of youth and train them to be professionally self-sufficient through creative expression. Such strategies can lessen the effects of what Jones (2005) refers to as the “irrigation model” of community development that lures artists into a community from outside, importing resources in lieu of developing one’s own. Developing artistic and cultural talent from within the community contributes to a stronger native community identity and a stronger local economy.

In contrast to classic art forms with the audience as observer, community cultural development encourages audience participation – often in service to larger goals of social transformation. Of such approaches, one of the best known is the liberatory education of Paulo Freire (1974). CCD projects concerned with organizing may tackle such community issues as environmental poisons, water rights, or fair housing practices and create performance, visual, or multimedia art to increase public awareness and stimulate dialogue and civic action.

In conclusion, municipalities engage in cultural development/community renewal in multiple ways: one of them being community cultural development. Studies show that *people-centered* development strategies are the most sustainable model. They emphasize local people as the principle asset through which renewal can be achieved (Carey & Sutton, 2004; Kay, 2000). According to Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris (2007), when a community comes together to share cultural life, through celebration, rites, and intercultural dialogue, it is enhancing its relationships and networks – in other words, developing social capital (Stern & Seifert, 2009). Local arts organizations are the best

incubators for CCD because they are flexible and responsive to local needs. As illustrated through the Mural Arts Program and Hawaii Alliance for Arts Education examples, local arts organizations are able to work with community members to devise ways to address their needs and express their values through culture in the form of structured learning, public art projects, residencies, and local events.

Chapter 5

Community Cultural Planning

This section draws upon resources, assignments, and material from my capstone course Community Cultural Planning. In this class, we explored the theory and practice of cultural planning through interviews, comparable cities research, and by studying cultural plans around the country to better understand how cultural planning respects the nature and identity of a community as it seeks to improve it. I first define community cultural planning and how it is utilized by communities and local governments as a development and visioning tool. Then, to illustrate CCP in practice, I review the 2005 cultural plan for Ventura, California.

Cultural planning is a process of inclusive community consultation and decision-making that helps local government identify cultural resources and think strategically about how these resources can help a community to achieve its civic goals (Dreezen, 1998; Legacies Now, 2009). In other words, it is an investigation of how arts, culture, and creativity matter to a community's identity, economy, and quality of life (Bulick, 2009). Planning enables a community to have "a sense of place with a sense of direction" (Barry Bergey as quoted in Dreezen, 1998, p. 10). Community cultural planning combats the "geography of nowhere" (Legacies Now, 2009) mentality by providing design opportunities to develop pride of place, supports community empowerment through community involvement, and improves and develops programs and services in response to identified community needs (Bulick, 2009; Dreezen, 1998; Markusen, 2006).

The term *cultural planning* first appeared in print in 1979 when economist and city planner Harvey Perloff recommended it as a way for communities to identify and apply their cultural resources to the arts' dual purpose of artistic excellence and community contribution (Markusen, 2006). The process is rooted in nineteenth century amenity planning, the turn-of-the-century City Beautiful Movement, the Works Progress

Administration (WPA) cultural jobs creation programs of the 1930s and the community arts movement of the 1940s (Dreezen, 1998).

Cultural planning is a public process, usually led by a temporary citizen's steering committee that has been appointed by the municipal government. Volunteers, local planners, and/or consultants gather information and convene meetings that include artists, educators, business and political leaders, and arts and civic leaders to identify cultural and civic assets, needs, and opportunities (Bulick, 2009; Dreezen, 1998). The planning process involves information gathering and research (What do we need to know?); engagement and dialog (Who do we need to involve?); and decision making (What should we do? What can we do?).

Community cultural plans come in various types. Some communities may decide they want to plan a general revitalization or branding; others may conclude that identifying the community's existing cultural resources is of most importance; and still others may want to focus on developing support for artists or increasing civic engagement. Of the nine general types of cultural plans, the four most popular are listed below.

Comprehensive Cultural Plan: Community-wide plan based on broadly defined understanding of culture with integrated goals compiled through community consultation.

Community Cultural Assessment/Cultural Mapping: A comprehensive identification and analysis of a community's cultural resources and needs gathered through a broadly based consultative/collaborative process. Critical in the early phase of any cultural planning process.

Specific Issue Plan: Community-wide plan focused on a single cultural development issue or single arts discipline.

Specific District Plan: Plan for only one geographic portion of a community (e.g. inner city or neighborhood)

(Dreezen, 1998, Table 1, page 11).

Increasingly, communities are undertaking cultural planning as a component of a larger municipal or county-wide master plan. Responding to a survey by Grodach and Loukaitou-Sideris (2007), many cities reported having incorporated cultural planning in economic development functions in recent decades. According to Dreezen (1998), comprehensive community arts and cultural planning is the approach most often used by cultural planners, local arts councils, and civic agencies.

As a way to illustrate what a cultural plan is and how it is undertaken by a community, I will summarize a cultural plan I reviewed as part of my Community Cultural Planning capstone course which has many of the elements common to cultural plans and demonstrates how such plans can be components of larger community master plans.

San Buenaventura, commonly referred to as Ventura, is the county seat of Ventura County, California. The population at the time of the most recent cultural plan (2005) was 104,092 people. The ethnic majority was Caucasians coming in at 79% of the population. The leading racial minority was Hispanic/Latino at 24%, followed by Asians at 3%, and Black and American Indian/Alaska Native at less than 2% each. The median income for a household in the city was \$52,298 (U.S. Census, 2009).

Downtown Ventura is home to the Mission San Buenaventura, museums, galleries, dining, and shopping. Downtown Ventura's Cultural District is home to a lively center for the arts. Artists reside in an innovative live/work space that is sensitive to their creative process and variable incomes. According to *The 2005 Ventura Cultural Plan: Creating California's New Art City*, arts education programs have been fully integrated into the curriculum of the schools. Ventura's unique cultural heritage is celebrated by the

community in festivals that reflect each neighborhood's character (Brokaw & Cusick, 2005).

The following information is from Brokaw and Cusick's *2005 Ventura Cultural Plan: Creating California's New Art City*. In January 2004, a 38 member Steering Committee was appointed made up of representatives of the business, educational, cultural, tourism, philanthropic, and social service arenas. The Steering Committee identified critical issues facing Ventura. In addition, four consultants conducted focus groups and interviews in key topic areas and held seven issue-focused forums to gather community input on the following topics: access and the arts, built environment and historic preservation, cultural heritage/diversity, education, funding and economic impact, marketing and cultural tourism, nurturing the creative community. Ventura residents were also invited to examine the cultural "state of the city" through four town hall meetings and seven focus group sessions. Finally, the draft plan was presented to the Steering Committee, then to the Public Art and Cultural Affairs Commissions for review in February 2005. Comments and suggestions from all sources were then incorporated into the final draft.

The vision for the cultural plan is "a vibrant cultural district as well as a thriving and diverse community of creative individuals...with a pedestrian friendly downtown core, historic architecture, and pristine natural setting [that] delight residents and visitors, as do its many festivals, galleries, performance venues and creative businesses" (Brokaw & Cusick, 2005, p. 19). Because the plan is so closely tied to the community, a focus on authenticity emerged as a core value and staying true to Ventura's identity was designated as policy number one in the plan. Part of the emphasis on authenticity included taking a comprehensive approach to culture, one that weaved together the broad fabric of the community – artists, architecture, culture, history and the environment. Ventura's surf culture, natural beauty, agricultural roots, mission era

founding and eclectic mix of architecture were among the elements recognized as integral to the community's identity.

The Ventura cultural plan has six areas of focus: 1) preserving a city that is reflective of Ventura's heritage; 2) supporting Ventura's cultural infrastructure; 3) creating public awareness of local and regional cultural offerings; 4) enhancing opportunities for lifelong learning in the arts; 5) ensuring access to and involvement in cultural opportunities for all segments of the population; and 6) stabilizing and expanding funding.

The recommendations for goal 1 include not only enhancing the quality of the built environment but also supporting initiatives that enhance, preserve and celebrate Ventura's cultural and heritage resources. Strategies for doing this focus on historic preservation efforts as well as encouraging festivals and events that allow Venturans to embrace the diverse cultures and histories that have shaped the city.

In support of goal 2, building Ventura's cultural infrastructure, it was recommended that the city support artist retention through the creation of affordable artist live/work facilities, develop a "Business Leaders for the Arts" program, and develop an international artists-in-residence program.

In terms of goal 3, public awareness of cultural offerings, recommendations reflected the concern over the "disconnect" between local audiences and Ventura's substantial cultural offerings expressed by plan participants. In order to increase participation in the arts and culture across the entire spectrum of residents and visitors to the city, the plan suggested more collaborative marketing efforts between arts organizations, which could be facilitated through a cultural marketing committee.

Understanding that arts education is key to increasing participation in the arts and culture, recommendations for life-long learning in the arts, goal 4, included integrating arts education into the core curriculum in local schools, enhancing existing

after- and extra-school arts education options, and developing professional development opportunities for teachers and artists.

Goal 5, ensuring comprehensive access to and involvement in cultural opportunities for all segments of the population, reflects an understanding of the role of art in community-building and inter-cultural dialogue. The plan recommended establishing diversity as criteria for certain grants through Cultural Funding Program, pursuing the development of neighborhood-specific cultural plans, establishing ticket subsidy and facilitating transportation to cultural offerings.

Finally, learning from the previous cultural plan that the arts are part of what makes Ventura a successful and healthy community, goal 6 was to expand funding and resources that support cultural assets. Recommendations included securing a dedicated public funding stream for the arts, and examining the relation between the Cultural Affairs Division and the Visitors and Convention Bureau.

As illustrated by the Ventura cultural plan, community input is essential to a successful cultural plan. As discussed in the community cultural development section, community consultation, community involvement, and community ownership are vital to all cultural plans. People who have a sense of “ownership” to the plan are more willing to feel empowered to support the action steps and continue the plan into the future. How does a planner gain community ownership? First, by using the widest possible definition of *culture*. Cultural planners should avoid the common pitfall of asking the social and economic elite to speak for the whole community and define the cultural assets of the community. A step essential to all cultural plans is cultural asset mapping. Asset mapping is the process of mapping a community’s cultural resources. These resources may include the city symphony, the neighborhood community art center, and downtown galleries, but they may also include churches, individuals who are known to practice traditional crafts or languages, historical buildings, or significant locations. Cultural

mapping increases knowledge and appreciation by defining the breadth and variety of local culture, and identifies networks and hubs – the locations where groups obtain their resources, how they communicate with one another, and who the liaisons are.

The above Venture cultural plan example highlights the interaction of community arts in forming and informing the regional cultural ecology and the role of resource mapping and identity mapping in place branding. Cultural mapping brings new depth and authenticity to the practice of place branding. The days of superficial sloganeering or an ad campaign masquerading as a place's brand strategy are over. The identity of a community must be authentic. And the only way to discover, foster, and promote identity is through local arts organizations at the grassroots level. Local arts agencies are pivotal players in the cultural planning process because they have direct links to local arts organizations who best understand the needs of the community.

Community cultural planning highlights another way local arts organizations contribute to community development initiatives by engaging citizens in the civic process and ensuring that neighborhood/city identity is represented in the city's definition of culture. Not only are local arts organizations essential to the development process of a community cultural plan, but they are also crucial in the implementation of the plan. They are the organizations that put the plan into action through programming and outreach, making the long-term goals of the plan relevant to the everyday lives of community members.

Chapter 6

Planning and Assessing for Community Impact

In this final section, I explore my final research sub-question: How do local arts organizations assess for project impact on civic engagement? My interest in assessment arose during my internship with Wisconsin Arts Board where I was the Programs and Services intern. During my internship, I researched FY 08-09 and FY 09-10 Creative Community grants that focused on community engagement and civic participation. During my research and subsequent conversations with grant recipients, I realized that many organizations do not directly assess for project impact on community-building. When asked about assessment, many project organizers replied that they “just know” that the project has a positive impact on the community. In response to this lack of formal assessment, I developed the Capturing Community Value: Measuring Project Impact on Civic Engagement toolkit. It is a 9-page document inspired by Tom Borrup’s work in community development and Robert E. Gard’s pioneering work with the Wisconsin Idea Foundation. Drawing on Borrup’s (2006) book, *The Creative Community Builder’s Handbook*, and Ewell and Warlum’s (2006) edition of *The Arts in the Small Community*, the toolkit offers structured questions for a community to consider when planning projects that can incorporate community identity, civic engagement, community participation, and relationship building. It also illustrates the steps in assessment such as setting goals, identifying indicators, collecting the data, documenting findings, and sharing results. This final section expands upon themes explored in that document. First, I begin by putting the subject in context by reviewing the literature on the social impact of the arts. Next, I take a page from Robert E. Gard’s seminal work, *The Arts in the Small Community*, and discuss how project organizers can think about assessment and impact when first developing a program by brainstorming creative ways to incorporate community identity, civic participation, community engagement, or relationship-building into their project. Finally, I discuss the concepts of indicators and measurements in relation to assessment.

The arts have long been seen as a powerful influence on society. Art participation has been linked to academic achievement (Fiske, 1999), economic development (Grodach & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2007; Kay, 2000; Nowak, 2007), and more recently, to social and community betterment (Matarasso, 1997; Jackson & Herranz, 2002; Stern & Seifert, 2009). This section, as does this capstone paper, focuses on one aspect of the public value of arts and cultural activities: their influence on civic engagement and community-building. When an organization provides opportunities for creative participation, spearheads community initiatives, or offers a community gathering place, it is having a positive impact on the social and cultural landscape of the community. Such initiatives motivate neighbors and help them visualize and make changes in their community. They increase positive connections among neighborhoods of different ethnic and economic groups and they reflect and prompt discourse on social, political, and civic matters. Culture stimulates revitalization by building the social connections between people and increasing the inclination and ability of residents to make positive changes in their community (Borup, 2006).

It follows, then, that organizers of community arts projects can and should have clear, concrete evidence of the project's contribution to the community. However, for project organizers, what to measure in order to obtain that concrete evidence of success is often a point of confusion. This section highlights best practices and steps for measuring a project's impact on community-building. But first, I will place assessment of the social impact of the arts in context by providing a brief history of such research.

According to Landry and colleagues (1993), the earliest conceptual study on the social impact of the arts was a discussion paper by United Kingdom cultural research organization, Comedia, on behalf of the Arts Council of England in 1993 (Landry et al., 1993). The discussion paper prompted a study by Comedia which was the catalyst for the seminal report *Use of Ornament* (Matarasso, 1997). In the U.K., Matarasso reported

on the impact of community arts projects and participation on social cohesion, community empowerment and self-determination, and local image and identity among other themes. Simultaneous to Comedia's work, in the U.S., the Social Impact of the Art Project formed at the University of Pennsylvania in 1994. This ongoing project has conducted a variety of research in the field concluding positive impact of the arts on civic engagement, urban revitalization, and social bonds, among others (Stern & Seifert, 2009).

Arts advocates and researchers have made a variety of claims about how the arts impact communities, but some scholars believe these claims are made problematic by the many complications involved in studying the arts. Guetzkow (2002), for instance, comments

Just consider the possible definitions of the phrase, "the arts impact communities." When speaking of "the arts," do we refer to individual participation (as audience member or direct involvement?), to the presence of arts organizations (non-profit *and* for-profit?) or to art/cultural districts, festivals or community arts? When speaking of "impact," do we refer to economic, cultural, or social impact; do we refer exclusively to direct community-level effects or do we also include individual- and organizational-level ones? By "communities," do we mean regions, cities, neighborhoods, schools or ethnic groups? (p. 1).

In addition, there are also those in the arts and cultural sector who are concerned that social and economic rationales for the arts, with their emphasis on the arts as a means to other ends, will serve to devalue arts for its own sake. Does an emphasis on creating an intended social impact undermine or ignore the creative process? It can be observed that throughout the history of art, art that has made a great impact on society

did not necessarily do so with a planned social objective. This view has been articulated strongly by John Tusa:

Mozart is Mozart because of his music and not because he created a tourist industry in Salzburg... Picasso is important because he taught a century new ways of looking at objects and not because his paintings in the Bilbao Guggenheim Museum are regenerating an otherwise derelict northern Spanish port. (Tusa, 1999, reproduced in Kelly and Kelly, 2000, as cited in Reeves, 2002. p. 36).

Matarasso argues that art is worthwhile as art but that it is not undermined by considering the social impacts. It is not a requirement of the arts to have social objectives but rather that arts *programs* can be used to achieve social objectives by organizations with that purpose (Matarasso 1997, p.80-81).

Which brings me to my original question of how arts organizations can and do assess for impact on civic engagement and community-building.

Although many project organizers “just know” that they contribute positively to civic engagement and community-building, it is important to have concrete evidence to communicate to the broader community, legislators, participants, community leaders, funders, etc. Following are a collection of suggestions from across the field on envisioning a community’s future and how the project or organization will contribute to that vision; determining the goals of the project; identifying specific measurable data to determine if the project or organization is meeting its goals; identifying methods of collecting the data; determining the best method for documenting the evaluation; and choosing the most effective way to share what has been learned.

The purpose of evaluation is to determine if a project is successful in achieving the desired outcome. Findings from project evaluation can benefit organizations in multiple ways, including: providing internal guidance and demonstrating external value.

Internal evaluation provides direction for staff, board, and volunteers; can be used to improve future project development and implementation; and can guide budgets and justify resource allocations. Benefits of externally-based evaluation include promoting the project to potential participants, identifying partners for collaboration, enhancing the project/organization's public image, and retaining and increasing funding (United Way of America, 2002).

Evaluation is not something to think about at the end of a project. It needs to be considered at the same time as planning the project. As the toolkit *Evaluating Community Arts and Community Well-Being* points out, "If you don't know where you're going, how will you know when you get there?" (Keating, 2002, p. 8). Setting objectives for a project provides a goal to work towards and provides a benchmark that can be used at the completion of the project to measure the level of success of achieving the objectives. This includes thinking about what kind of impact is desired. For example, an organization or project manager may want to affect community identity, civic engagement, community participation, or relationship building. Robert E. Gard believed the first step in successful community building through the arts was for project managers to envision what a vital community looks like to them (Ewell & Warlum, 2006). The following is a list of questions, adapted from *The Arts in the Small Community*, grouped into four categories, that Gard suggests organizations contemplate when developing objectives.

Community Identity – The distinct traditions, values, and norms of a place and its people encompassing the cultural, historical, social, and natural assets of the community.

- What is the character of the community? Is there a community attitude, philosophy, or sense of pride that people recognize or share?
- Are there symbols that identify the community? What are the historical landmarks or events of the community?
- How can the project honor place and people?

- What partnerships are desired as a result of this celebration of place?
- How will the project contribute to or renew community identity?

Civic Engagement – Active interest in issues of public concern that can take the form of volunteering, group membership, electoral participation, community problem solving, etc.

- What issues or events bind the community together? What divides it?
- How can this project continue to “live on” after project completion? How can it be used to further community dialogue?
- What kind of community “ownership” of the project will develop after the project is over?
- How will the project broaden participation in the civic agenda by participation?

Community Participation – Participation by community members in either the visioning of the project or the art-making itself. Community members are not merely passive audience members but active participants in the project, thereby developing a connection to the project.

- How will participation be elicited from diverse community members (individuals not already connected with the organization)?
- How can community members be included in the planning process of the project?
- How can community members participate in the art-making?

Relationship-Building – Strengthening ties between individuals or groups based on common interests.

- How will the project contribute to new and/or stronger relationships among participants?
- What opportunities exist for multi-generational, multi-cultural, multi-faith, etc. interaction among project participants?
- How will the project strengthen cooperation among cultural, economic, and civic leaders, sectors, and institutions?
- What new partnerships are desired as a result of the project?
(Ewell & Warlum, 2006)

Once organizations and project managers have thought of creative ways to incorporate community identity, civic participation, community engagement, or relationship-building into their project, have determined project goals, and identified desired long-term impact (such as positive community image or connection to local

history and identity) the next step is to identify what can be measured to indicate success or failure in meeting objectives (Carnegie Mellon University, 2001). The term *indicator* is often used to describe identifiable measures. Indicators give the data that can verify what outcomes are achieved. If, as mentioned above, desired impact is positive community image, potential indicators might be perception of community by members, non-members, and visitors. If the desired impact is connection to local history and identity, potential indicators may be a sense of ownership of project by community members.

Once it has been determined *what* will be measured, the next step is to determine *how* it will be measured; in other words, the methods to collect the needed data (Carnegie Mellon University, 2001). In the previous example, if the indicator was sense of ownership of project by community members, potential indicators might be a record of maintenance by community members or ways the project continues to be used by the community. In terms of the other indicator, perception of community by members, non-members, and visitors, potential methods of collection might include pre- and post-project interviews with local residents, business owners, students, and visitors; and articles written about community in local paper, regional magazines, Department of Tourism, etc. Organizations must be careful, however, not to use too broad a brush when attributing positive social impact to arts projects. As Guetzkow (2002) points out, the causal relationship between the arts and the social impact is often not considered. What evidence is there that the social impact occurred directly as a result of the art? Were there other factors? Could the same impact have been achieved by other means?

The final two steps in assessment are documenting findings and sharing results. Documentation can take the form of digital photographs, written notes, formal reports, letters from participants, case studies, or participant/volunteer/staff interviews. But simply recording what has occurred is not evaluation; it is documentation. Findings must

be interpreted and shared. There are different methods for sharing findings depending on the purpose. The following chart highlights several examples:

| METHOD | PURPOSE |
|--|---|
| Collect and maintain detailed in-house files of project records and reports. | Enable project organizers to discover successful or unsuccessful practices. |
| Post updates to social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. Include podcast of video recordings on website. | Celebrate successes with supporters and gain public recognition. |
| Provide summary of evaluation results to program participants and partner organizations. | Encourage partners to collaborate again. |
| Send complete evaluation results to project funders. | Illustrate the successes of the project. |
| Publish a feature story in the local paper. | Earn community support. |
| Send summary of evaluation results to local and state officials. | Illustrate importance of art in your community. |

(Carnegie Mellon University, 2001)

In summary, evaluation of community impact of art projects is of great value to the organization and the arts and cultural sector. An evaluation provides the opportunity for all participants to measure and compare where they were before the project started, and what they accomplished by the project's end.

Evaluation information can be useful across a range of areas. Internally, project evaluation can help feed into the organization's own planning and evaluation processes and provide useful information for future funding applications. On a broader scale, when community arts projects evaluate and document their achievements, the community arts sector begins to accumulate a body of evidence that provides meaningful information about the contribution of the sector to the wider community (Keating, 2002). Building sector-wide information supports opportunities for cross-sector work. The more that is

known about community arts and its work, the greater the opportunities to form partnerships with other organizations and in other sectors of the community.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

In the arena of the arts, the ground has quietly shifted. There is widespread acknowledgement that traditional art forms like ballet, opera, and the symphony “can no longer be considered the sole windows into a community’s artistic soul and the sole measures of this country’s creativity” (Chew, 2009, p. 1). Art appears in many places and takes many forms. Also included in this transformation is the shift from observer to participant. Participatory arts and cultural activities play a major role in community revitalization, civic engagement, and community-building because of their inherent social nature. They bring people together to address social issues, connect with their individual and collective histories, and to build relationships and skills that, in turn, build social capital.

Although large flagship arts organizations play a role in this shift with recent audience engagement programs, it is smaller arts organizations – once viewed as less attractive than their larger flashier counterparts – that have emerged at the center of this more expansive vision of the arts (Chew, 2009). These typically small and midsized arts organizations, often community-based in their mission and practice, are the laboratories of innovation and community building. The work of these organizations puts the *participation* in arts participation. Arts participation for them is about doing and living rather than attending or observing. The work of local arts organizations shift the focal point from the “art product” to the activity around it and how such activity connects people to resources and to each other (Jackson & Herranz, 2002).

While evidence is plentiful of the economic impact of large budget activities in creating jobs, and attracting tourist dollars and corporate investment, little has been done to look at the local impact of small budget activities. This capstone paper draws attention to the social networks that exist within local communities that enable small-budget arts activities and encourages further exploration of ways to build these networks.

It was the intention of this master's capstone to examine the relationship between community identity, civic engagement, and local arts organizations. Specifically, research was conducted into how the community engagement and educational programming of local arts organizations both reflect and contribute to community identity and why attention to identity is important to the community's success as well as the success of the organization or program.

Through my review of the literature, my coursework, and exploration of community arts programs around the country that address issues of community revitalization, civic engagement, and community-building, I have synthesized several overall findings.

- Cultural activities of community arts organizations leverage assets to benefit local neighborhoods.
- Community arts organizations play a unique role in building social networks in neighborhoods because they enable access to new resources and build civic dialogue.
- Community ownership of projects, espoused by many community arts organizations, establishes permanent and sustainable change in communities.
- The flexibility of community arts organizations as gathering spaces and in participating in neighborhood collaborations, contributes to a stronger cultural fabric.
- Programming choices by local arts organizations strengthens neighborhood identity through themes of history, place, and communication through participatory activities.

The participatory nature and intent of local arts organizations is what drew me to exploring urban revitalization, civic engagement, and community-building. I had always thought I would research arts education, given my background and career aspirations. I realized early on, however, that I wanted to explore concepts that went beyond the traditional definition of arts education. I was interested in examining how educational programming (for youth and adults) affects and is affected by the community in which it lives. As expressed above, there is a shift in how people interact and define the arts. Art and culture are no longer defined in the “high art” or classical sense. As the cultural make up of the United States and the way people spend leisure time have changed, so has the definition of art and culture. Through the lenses of urban revitalization, civic engagement and social capital, community cultural development, and community cultural planning, I have explored how education is participation and vice versa. It has also become apparent to me through this process that for programming to be relevant, it must be rooted in the local and integral to the community. The most sustainable revitalization projects involve community members and local assets. Similarly, the most effective community engagement programs work to develop social capital and civic engagement, thereby increasing the community’s future resources.

As illustrated through the myriad examples sprinkled throughout this capstone paper, arts and cultural participation (broadly defined) are important elements of community life and essential components of community-building processes. Theater and dance can be central to youth development programs. Storytelling is often a key part of community organizing efforts. Cultural heritage initiatives are often anchors for economic development initiatives. Community arts organizations play a strong role in community identity, revitalization, civic engagement and community building through programs that work to instill social networks, neighborhood pride, and stewardship of place.

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