

Community Development

INNOVATION REVIEW

Transforming Community Development
through Arts and Culture



FEDERAL RESERVE BANK
OF SAN FRANCISCO

Community Development INNOVATION REVIEW

The *Community Development Innovation Review* focuses on bridging the gap between theory and practice, from as many viewpoints as possible. The goal of this journal is to promote cross-sector dialogue around a range of emerging issues and related investments that advance economic resilience and mobility for low- and moderate-income communities.

For submission guidelines and themes of upcoming issues, or other inquiries and subscription requests, contact sf.community.development.info@sf.frb.org. The material herein may not represent the views of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco or the Federal Reserve System.

Community Development Innovation Review

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Foreword

Laura Choi

Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco

It has been said that listening is a form of art. The seemingly simple act of listening requires multiple skills: the ability to earn the trust of the person speaking; the fortitude to wholly focus one's attention without being distracted; and the patience to iteratively process and understand what has been shared. Listening, building trust, and engaging in lasting partnerships with communities are key requirements for effective community development, but the process remains a challenge for many organizations. If listening is indeed an art form, and central to achieving the aims of community development, then I can think of no better partners for this work than artists themselves.

This issue of the *Community Development Innovation Review* explores the power of arts and culture to transform the practice of community development. The diverse range of authors includes artists, community developers, bankers, and researchers, and their collective voices frame a rich conversation on how openness to the creative process can help community development organizations better achieve their mission of expanding opportunity for low-income communities. This work is important to the Community Development team at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco because it supports our vision of a healthy and inclusive economy in which all people have the opportunity to fully participate and no one is left behind. Realizing this vision requires a deep commitment to working with communities to catalyze responsive action that allows all people to achieve their full potential. As SF Fed President Mary Daly said, "Reducing the structural barriers that limit workforce participation or keep individuals from reaching their full potential requires taking a hard look at some of our social and workplace policies... We have to combine the forces of our institutions... our communities... our people."¹


Published in partnership with ArtPlace America and PolicyLink, this issue takes a deep dive into the lessons learned from the Community Development Investments (CDI) program, and offers reflections from industry leaders on their implications for the broader community development field. The CDI program, led by ArtPlace America, provided flexible funding to six diverse community development organizations in support of their partnership with artists and creative practitioners. Through a process of listening and discovery, the CDI participants developed locally tailored, creative solutions to challenges that are impacting many low-income communities and communities of color today, such as preserving cultural identity in the face of rapid change, or reducing health disparities tied to community disinvestment

¹ Mary C. Daly, "Beyond Fairness: The Value of an Inclusive Economy" (speech, Los Angeles World Affairs Council & Town Hall, Los Angeles, CA, October 15, 2019). <https://www.frbf.org/our-district/press/presidents-speeches/mary-c-daly/2019/october/beyond-fairness-the-value-of-an-inclusive-economy/>

and intergenerational poverty. The essays build on a prior issue of this journal from 2014 dedicated to the topic of creative placemaking and reveal the ongoing evolution and future direction of this important work. Some of the newly emergent themes that appear in this issue—and reflect broader shifts in the community development field—include a more intentional emphasis on the interplay of arts and culture with issues of racial equity, equitable development, and gentrification and displacement.

The contributing authors share insights into the role of the arts in transforming their respective practice. For example, Joe Claunch, co-director of the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project, which serves the Zuni tribe in New Mexico, shares that the infusion of arts and culture into his organization “has changed the nature of our work; we have always strived to connect Zuni kids back to their traditions... What this project has taught us is how to let the community and the community’s artists lead those initiatives to bring about better health outcomes for Zuni youth.” Similarly, Enzina Marrari describes the transformation of her own work as an artist through the process of working with the Cook Inlet Housing Authority in Anchorage, AK, stating, “We moved from a *social practice* approach—artists identifying a social problem and designing work around it—to a *civic practice* approach—artists responding to problems identified by the community and designing work to address them.”

This issue would not have been possible without the vision and tenacity of guest editors Lyz Crane of ArtPlace America and Victor Rubin and Jeremy Liu of PolicyLink—I am grateful for their thoughtful partnership. Like any creative process, the production of this issue involved a blend of many emotions, including deep sorrow over the loss of contributing author Dean Matsubayashi. Dean served as the executive director of Little Tokyo Service Center in Los Angeles, CA, and was also the inaugural chair of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco’s Community Advisory Council. Dean’s tireless pursuit of justice and passionate commitment to his community shines through in the reflections he shares in this journal. We dedicate this issue in honor of Dean and celebrate the inspiration he provided to so many in the field.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lana". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page.

Introduction

Lyz Crane
ArtPlace America

When the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco published its first volume on creative placemaking five years ago, there was still a lingering fear in many people’s minds that the term and concept would be another trend du jour among both the arts sector and community planning and development sector alike.

And yet, over the past five years, the work has continued to grow and deepen to become not just a kind of project that happens but a kind of practice that community developers and the systems that support them are advancing for the long term. We hope this new volume will offer an opportunity to dive in from every possible angle to explore what this work looks like in practice—developmentally, relationally, and in impact—and what are the implications—policy, capital, practice, research, and more—of this growing field for our community development systems. The joint editorial team has designed it together to go beyond simple case-making and the idea that arts and culture has value. Our aim is to move the conversation into questions of what does it look like, feel like, and mean, and how and why might other community development organizations go on similar learning journeys.

This is a critical time for community developers to look for new tools to address the entrenched and increasingly complex challenges that communities face. At ArtPlace America (ArtPlace), we believe the arts and culture sector has the necessary tools, knowledge, and skills to deploy in partnership with the community planning and development sectors to improve the place-based outcomes that will lead to equitable, healthy, and sustainable communities.

We refer to this intersection as creative placemaking, and we see this practice not only continuing, but also being an important and critical driver of how the field of community development is evolving into the future. For us, creative placemaking is the intentional integration of arts, culture, and community-engaged design strategies into the process of equitable community planning and development. It’s about artists, culture-bearers, and designers acting as allies to creatively address challenges and opportunities. It’s about these artists and all of the allies together contributing to community-defined social, physical, and economic outcomes and honoring a sense of place.

ArtPlace is a collaboration among a number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions that began in 2011. Our mission is to position arts and culture as a core sector of community planning and development. We do this work because we envision a future of equitable, healthy, and sustainable communities in which everyone has a voice and agency in creating contextual, adaptive, and responsive solutions. To this end, we’ve invested more than \$100 million over our lifespan to grow the field of creative placemaking

through demonstration projects, in-depth investments in organizational change, and ongoing support for research and field-building. As a part of our work, we continue to identify and support new stakeholders to embed this way of working and are building the support structures for a sustainable, strong field.¹

As we stand almost at the end of a decade of work, we are able to look at how our own relationship to the practice of creative placemaking has evolved. The 2014 issue of the *Community Development Innovation Review* journal,² which marked a critical validation moment for the field, intentionally sought to broaden what had been a discussion largely oriented around activating places toward economic vitality into one that looked more systemically at how arts and culture is embedded across many community development systems and outcome sets.

Around the same time as the launch of that 2014 issue, ArtPlace was beginning to embark on two new initiatives in support of its broader field-building initiatives: the Community Development Investments (CDI) program and a new set of research strategies. The research strategies were designed to build knowledge and understanding around the roles that arts and culture play across a broad range of outcomes already articulated by various fields within place-based community development—housing, health, public safety, environmental sustainability, etc.—with an end goal of further embedding arts and cultural strategies within the systems of those professions.

The CDI program, meanwhile, was designed to surface a different kind of knowledge about creative placemaking: at the time, many place-based community development organizations were growing increasingly interested in the idea of creative placemaking and partnering with arts and culture, but a very small number actually felt as if they knew how to do it well. Although investing in arts-related spaces and hosting arts programming are not entirely unfamiliar to the world of community development organizations, the idea of partnering on equal ground to apply the components of artistic practice, process, and cultural ways of knowing as a part of strengthening outcomes for a community was largely new. Some community development organizations had arrived at interesting arts-based strategies naturally through preexisting relationships, the passions of leaders and staff members, and the particular contexts of their communities. But over the past decade, with new national and local funding incentivizing changing practice within the field, organizations that had never before considered arts and culture were interested in trying out a new way of working.

For ArtPlace’s goal of creating a strong field of creative placemaking, community development organizations are a key audience. Community planning and development

1 ArtPlace uses Bridgespan’s Strong Field Framework as a part of long-term strategic thinking: <https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/philanthropy/the-strong-field-framework-a-guide-and-toolkit-for>.
2 <https://www.fibsf.org/community-development/publications/community-development-investment-review/2014/december/creative-placemaking/>

organizations are often, as the late Jeremy Nowak³ described in early conversations about the program, “long-term stewards of place.” When their approaches and practices shift, so, too, do investments and long-term decision-making in communities. As organizations, they are able to choose to operate across silos, partner broadly and widely, and think expansively about improving the places they serve for the residents who live there, and yet they have operational blind spots and a toolbox that can be limited by industry policies and standards. These capacities create the valuable conditions for arts and culture to become not just the proverbial “icing on the cake” but the “special sauce” in advancing equitable change.

Therefore, the focus of the CDI program was community planning and development organizations that hadn’t previously incorporated arts and culture into their core work. The challenge was for them to take three years to learn how to do this work in a way that advanced the organization’s core mission and to set up the support structures internally for arts-based strategies to become a sustainable way of working.

To advance our larger field-building mission, ArtPlace designed this initiative as a learning opportunity to follow six very different organizations in different community contexts around the country on their journey to experimenting with and incorporating this new way of working. We provided each organization with \$3 million and asked them to begin their work with cultural asset mapping to understand their community and the arts sector through a new lens, and then to work collaboratively with artists to develop relevant projects over the course of the initiative.

During the course of the three years, we worked with the organizations closely to determine at each phase of their journey: What did they need to understand to do this work? Where were the stumbling blocks? What kind of expertise can be taught, and what needs to be lived? How might this work live long-term within the organizational departments and structures? We had monthly coaching sessions and webinars, periodic site visits, convenings, and workshops. We worked closely with the Center for Performance and Civic Practice—a team of national artists who regularly design supportive processes for artists and non-arts partners to get to know each other and develop projects together. And we watched each organization develop an incredible body of work in partnership with artists that both had amazing outcomes for their communities and also fundamentally changed their institutions. The amount of funding was certainly a factor in their ability to grow, but for us, providing that level of resources was a way to see what happens when the availability of funding isn’t an excuse for not being able to learn something new.

3 In addition to his incredible legacy in the community development financial institutions (CDFI) and philanthropic fields (including a time as chair of the board of directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia), Nowak was an early investor in ArtPlace during his time at the William Penn Foundation, served as Interim executive director of ArtPlace in 2014, and was an incredible thought partner and site reviewer in the early days of the CDI program.

And throughout the whole program, PolicyLink served as our stalwart research and documentation partner. We gave our partners there the incredible challenge of orienting the lessons from this work not back to us, but rather toward practitioners and the field to help drive long-term systems change at the organizational and field levels.

This volume is one of the results of this work, which reinforces three key lessons throughout:

1. Artists and culture-bearers can help community planning and development organizations achieve their core missions in new ways AND also broaden what those organizations see as core to their missions.
2. Building transformative cross-sector relationships requires long-term investments of time and resources in experimentation, learning, and growing.
3. Creative placemaking helps community planning and development organizations be more responsive to the communities they serve by tackling the entrenched issues that cross the traditional silos of policy and funding.

For the creative placemaking field to advance, we need to continue to push the boundaries and structures that have inhibited this kind of work from flourishing. We hope this journal provides an invitation and some new paths for thinking about how, collectively, we can transform community development through arts and culture.

The co-editors would like to acknowledge three giants of the community development field who were instrumental to this program and whom the world sadly lost in 2018 and 2019: Dean Matsubayashi, former executive director of the Little Tokyo Service Center; Rick Goodemann, founder and former executive director of the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership; and Jeremy Nowak, who took on more roles than the world can count. This program wouldn't have been the same without their wise words and leadership.

Lyz Crane is the Deputy Director for ArtPlace America, a national collaboration among foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions that works to position arts and culture as a core sector of comprehensive community planning and development, where she focuses on transforming community development practice. Previously, she served as the Communications Director at ArtHome, an organization that helps artists and their communities build assets and equity through financial literacy; and the Director of Program Development and Program Manager of the Shifting Sands Initiative at Partners for Livable Communities, a national nonprofit leadership organization working to improve the livability of communities. In 2009, Crane was named a 'Next City Vanguard' by urban affairs magazine Next City. She received her MPA in policy analysis from the Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service at New York University and her BA in Urban Studies and Sociology from Barnard College, Columbia University.

Overview

Victor Rubin and Jeremy Liu
PolicyLink

This issue of the *Community Development Innovation Review* captures a fast-moving target: the evolution of arts and cultural strategies being brought to bear for community preservation, health, and revitalization. This evolution has led to a kaleidoscope of ever-multiplying, colorful, and moving performances and exhibits, not just in theaters and galleries but in medical facilities, streets, storefronts, parks, and historic buildings. This new and expanded value of the arts to community development has not been limited to the production of diverse and creative cultural materials such as sculpture, printmaking, photography, music, theater, experimental film, storytelling, quilting, beading, interior design, or many other disciplines and crafts. Artists of various kinds have also honed their capacities as facilitators, guides, motivators, and strategic planners, and they have significantly helped many of the country's leading community development organizations to advance their missions. This growth in smart "civic practice" by artists augurs well for the future of this kind of collaboration.

This linkage of arts with community development has brought about unprecedented cultural exchanges among ethnic groups that had not known much about each other, It has generated new ways by which artists can help to pass down ancient traditions from one generation to the next. It has removed barriers to community ownership of key cultural assets and brought new processes for strengthening the social fabric and identity of places. The intentional strengthening of relationships between the community development and arts and culture sectors have brought about positive outcomes in housing, health, and other dimensions of community development.

A Closer Look at Community Development Investments

Examples of all of these innovative practices and positive outcomes can be seen in the Community Development Investments made by ArtPlace America in six diverse places over the past four years, and it has been our privilege at PolicyLink to document and analyze those organizations and their partnerships. The community development organizations, most of which are in housing or health care, operate in highly regulated and rule-bound systems which normally limit their flexibility and put boundaries on their scope. This time, they got the freedom to think differently and to draw on the creativity and practical techniques provided by working on cultural issues and community identity with artists.

CDI Participating Organizations and Activities

■ Cook Inlet Housing Authority Anchorage, Alaska

Guided by Native Alaskan village values, this regional tribally designated housing authority creates housing opportunities as a way to empower people and build community.

Focus: Solving problems in new ways and elevating resident voices.

Key projects: “Living Big, Living Small,” exploring small space living with set designer Sheila Wyne; “#MIMESPENARD,” mitigating business disruption during a road construction project with performance artists Enzina Marrari and Becky Kendall; the Church of Love, transforming a former church slated for demolition into a community center/art space/performance venue; and embedding story gathering and listening as an organizational practice with Ping Chong + Company.

■ Fairmount Park Conservancy Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

This is an urban parks conservancy that leads and supports efforts to improve Fairmount Park’s 2,000 acres and 200 other neighborhood parks citywide.

Focus: Working with artists to make city parks relevant for a more diverse population of Philadelphians, and celebrate the history, culture, and identity of its neighborhoods.

Key projects: A community catalyst residency with the Amber Art & Design collective at the Hatfield House in the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood, including cultural asset mapping, social engagement, and community building; leading a master plan process for the Mander Recreation Center; co-hosting the West Park Arts Fest in East Parkside; and expanding the scope and reach of The Oval, a seasonal pop-up park in downtown Philadelphia.

■ Jackson Medical Mall Foundation Jackson, Mississippi

This organization manages a 900,000-square-foot medical and retail facility in central Mississippi with a mission to eliminate health-care disparities holistically through the promotion of creativity and innovation.

Focus: Enhancing their role as a neighborhood anchor by fusing arts and culture with health and economic development goals.

Key projects: Intergenerational programming and festivals linking artistic production and economic development with the delivery of health services; “Reimagining the Jackson Medical Mall” with Carlton Turner to introduce history and storytelling into the design of the space; a new community garden and kitchen; and internal and external creative engagement practices with Significant Developments, LLC.

■ Little Tokyo Service Center Los Angeles, California

This organization provides family services, affordable housing and tenant services, and community organizing and planning for the nation's largest Japantown in downtown Los Angeles.

Focus: Facing increasing pressures of displacement, homelessness, and high costs of living, they launched the +LAB (“Plus Lab”) Arts Integration project to test new ways to promote the equitable development of ethnic communities.

Key projects: “Takachizu” with Rosten Woo and Sustainable Little Tokyo, inviting residents to share treasures from the neighborhood; #MyFSN, which seeks to assert “moral site control” over the future of the contested First Street North site; 341 FSN, an experimental storefront space designed to explore community control and self-determination; and the +LAB artist residency program.

■ Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership Southwest Region of Minnesota

This organization provides housing development, preservation, rehabilitation, and supportive housing services for a rural 30-county region.

Focus: Partnership Art, which uses arts and cultural strategies to incorporate new voices, including Minnesota's growing immigrant communities, into local planning processes.

Key projects: Milan Listening House, exploring immigration stories and the concept of home to inform the revitalization of public spaces; Healthy Housing Initiative, an outreach and education toolkit reaching new Latinx communities; “Creative Community Design Build,” where artists engage communities to reimagine underutilized downtown buildings; and hiring Ashley Hanson as an internal artist-in-residence to help sustain their arts and cultural approaches.

■ Zuni Youth Enrichment Project Zuni, New Mexico

This effort is devoted to enhancing the health and resiliency of youth on the Zuni Pueblo in New Mexico.

Focus: Integrating Zuni arts and culture into planning, design, and construction of a new youth center and park.

Key project: Supporting an ongoing artists' committee and other local artists to co-design and contribute to long-term stewardship, activation, and programming of H'on A:wan (“of the people”) Community Park.

The participating organizations and their partners have taken on some of the most pressing and complex issues of our time, including gentrification and displacement, racial health inequities, the isolation of immigrant newcomers, and the historical trauma resulting from racism and oppression. They have combined their expertise and standing with the tools and ways of thinking, imagining, and acting of artists. As a result, they have helped residents to own and express the identity of their communities, built cultural resilience, and changed the terms of engagement and the methods of neighborhood planning and placemaking.

The new strategies can also be found all over the country, as the practice of creative placemaking, whether it is called that or something else, has become more sophisticated and more often attentive to the values and priorities of equitable development. Governmental, philanthropic and some for-profit investors in community development have supported arts and cultural strategies, and each of the big three community development intermediaries have designed ways to build up the capacity of groups in the field. The result is a blossoming of creativity and exploration by both community development organizations and arts practitioners, and greater mutual understanding of how to work together. The approach might be known as “creative placekeeping,” “arts, culture, and equitable development,” “arts-based community development” or as something else, but whatever it is called, a set of common core values, concepts, and capacities are proliferating across a very diverse landscape.

Navigating This Issue

We designed this special issue of the *Review* to bring forward the lessons generated from the Community Development Investments sites and to place them in the broader context of this fast-changing field of practice. To achieve that, we reached deep into the participants in the CDI initiative, getting accounts not only from the organizational leaders but also the artists with whom they worked so closely. We then cast a much wider net, soliciting contributions from the leaders of national CD organizations, bankers, governmental arts officials, philanthropists, and policy advocates. The issue includes 27 pieces from 45 contributors. We thank all of these contributors for enthusiastically joining us on this journey to document, understand, and share what we have all learned. The resulting collection has, we hope, an appealing breadth of styles, perspectives and issues but thematic consistency and practical guidance for investors and practitioners.

We would like to express our appreciation to the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco for their openness to this variety of styles, stories and voices, which go somewhat beyond what is usually seen in journals on investment strategies and CD practices. It is in the spirit of this type of creative work to have an article in the form of a theater script, to have artists tell their personal stories, and to have the indigenous leaders of community organizations explain how their approach to arts and culture is grounded in their own experience of their people’s traditions and collective trauma. There are bankers and social investment leaders speaking in terms that are decidedly different from the typical approach to getting CRA credit, but in ways that show the readers how that gap can be bridged. All of these forms of expression are pointed

toward the goal of identifying a path forward from these remarkable pilots and local innovations to a robust and sustainable national field of investment and practice.

Section One

The first section of this issue addresses the three pillars of the research framework which PolicyLink created with the CDI grantees and ArtPlace to structure the evidence and findings from four years of documentation of the initiative. These three main themes are:

Organizational transformation. We examine how values, goals and strategic direction were shaped and altered through this experience. To bring about this change, the internal operations of the organizations were retooled in order to more successfully –and hopefully permanently – integrate arts and culture into their whole agency, not just a discrete grant-funded project.

New processes and forms of collaboration. The organizations learned, through trial and error, new ways of working with, and learning from, artists, and while each situation and its artistic products may be unique, those methods and effective practices are generalizable to many other situations.

Community development outcomes. The arts and cultural strategies changed the manner in which these organizations interacted with residents and other stakeholders. They provided tools by which to weave a stronger social fabric and by which community engagement and organizing could be newly energized if not transformed. These new relationships led to progress toward positive outcomes in affordable housing, neighborhood preservation and revitalization, youth development, population health, and other goals of the organizations, with more outcomes likely to be realized long-term as the projects and practices continue to bear fruit.

For each of these themes, we have compiled a comparable set of pieces that includes:

- A short framing essay, to convey the main theme and subareas within it, and to capture the overall lessons from across the six sites.
- First-person accounts by two artists who collaborated with the CDI grantee organizations on sustained and sophisticated engagements related to this theme
- An edited dialogue of CDI leaders from two communities with a member of the PolicyLink team, to reflect and elaborate on their experience with respect to this theme
- A topical Response from the Field by a leader in one of the three largest community development intermediaries.

Section Two

The next set of articles provide cross-cutting explorations of the lessons from the CDI experience. The first, a theater exercise, comes from the team at the Center for Performance and Civic Practice – facilitators of arts-based approaches to community problem-solving

who worked extensively alongside program director Lyz Crane from ArtPlace America with all six sites. This section also contains two group dialogues about the implications of CDI – the first among key leaders of the CDI grantee organizations. Those six leaders and their organizations have undergone a shared experience for four years, and this was a rare on-the-record conversation about what that whirlwind of opportunities and innovations meant for them personally, for their organizations, and for the field. The other group dialogue was among researchers from five different disciplines with wide experience in community-based arts, culture and design about the importance of viewing this work through multiple lenses and bringing in historical knowledge to research into the community development field. The final piece in this section, by Jamie Hand, director of research strategies at ArtPlace America, describes how the many cross-sectoral research scans commissioned by ArtPlace in the past five years are providing guidance for the creative placemaking field that complements the documentation of the CDI initiative.

Section Three

The final collection of articles presents the perspectives of leaders in federal and state arts and community development policy, private investment, social investment and philanthropy. Their voices are significant on the national stage and their thoughts about where the field should go next will be influential. Mary Anne Carter, head of the National Endowment for the Arts, reflects on the potential for community revitalization unleashed by the Art Endowment's Our Town program, while leaders of the National Association of Community Economic Development Associations and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies author a joint article systematically outlining areas for growth in state policy in both their domains. The next two articles, by Deborah Kasemeyer of Northern Trust and by Deborah Cullinan and Penelope Douglas of the CultureBank initiative, draw upon their unique and deep experiences to invite new ways of thinking about investment in the arts for community change and revitalization. The collection is closed by Rip Rapson, President of the Kresge Foundation and Michael McAfee, President and CEO of PolicyLink, in conversation about the lessons of CDI and the need for arts and culture to directly address the biggest and most challenging issues of racial and social justice.

Conclusion

It is hard to capture the essence and flavor of culturally-focused activity within the confines of a journal such as this, but the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, ArtPlace America, and PolicyLink have attempted to widen the lens and incorporate more of the color and variety of the cultural mosaic that the CDI initiative has supported. For those readers interested in learning and seeing more, we encourage you to visit www.Communitydevelopment.art, maintained by PolicyLink for the field of arts, culture, and equitable development. The site includes extensive video, photography and text documentation of each CDI site and

the overall themes of the initiative and is continually being expanded with more writings and video about other projects, programs, and policy change strategies.

We hope that this issue helps readers recognize the potential of this type of community development through the creativity shown by its practitioners and the growing evidence base about its methods and its impact on the health and well-being of the people it touches.

Community Development Investments

SECTION ONE

How Organizations Evolve When Community Development Embraces Arts and Culture

*Victor Rubin
PolicyLink*

The combination of community development with the social practice of art can lead to serious dissonance with respect to styles and boundaries. The nonprofit sector builds affordable housing with government support or provides health care for low-income residents according to a massive and arcane set of rules and financial constraints that have conditioned its practitioners to be very careful and attentive to detail, to always know what they will be getting from every contractor for each dollar, and to commit only to things on which they are authorized to spend. The creativity, such as it is, comes in maneuvering that system to get the best results. In contrast, artists who care deeply about being engaged with society and with local communities are experts at freeing and stoking not only their own imagination, but also that of the people with whom they work. They are experts at helping folks not only express themselves, but also become unbound from conventions and envision a radically different future.

What happens when these two very different approaches to transforming communities are brought together, with the time, resources, and support to create something new? The core concept underlying the Community Development Investments (CDI) initiative was to strengthen the capacity of community development groups to fulfill their mission through arts and cultural strategies. There was no intent for them to become cultural entities themselves. They undertook an array of discrete projects that brightened the landscape, improved the facilities, enlivened the discourse, and nourished the soul of each community. When the CDI projects and activities partnered with artists, designed buildings and spaces, or used cultural activities as a technique for community engagement, these were intended to be tools for accomplishing a larger goal. The organizations were invited to use arts and culture to think big, aim high, and find new ways to follow through on those aspirations.

This integration of arts into community development has taken root and changed the ways these organizations operate on two broad levels. The first level involves the overall culture, leadership, and future direction of the organization. The arts and cultural strategies led to fundamental rethinking by these groups of where they were headed and how they would get there. For these community development groups, a common thread was recognizing the value of changing how they operate, a reassessment they undertook even though they were successful with their current expertise and familiar activities. Agencies like these can face a gap between their practices and the voices, needs, and aspirations of the residents

in the communities they serve, especially when those are lower-income communities of color that have been marginalized or disinvested. Or, the community itself can change as populations shift, and the new population will not have strong connections to the more established groups. These gaps between organization and community will remain if they are not directly addressed. For the CDI organizations, arts and cultural strategies became the means to recognize these gaps, trigger a reassessment, and build the necessary bridges to incorporate community-oriented listening and collaboration into their long-term plans. They were acting in response not only to their immediate surroundings, but also to the social, economic, and political forces that shape their fields.

The second level of organizational change involves restructuring to deeply incorporate arts and culture into the daily fabric of the organization. For an organization to move beyond compelling visions and good intentions, the agency's core functions have to be reorganized to put time, talent, energy, and leadership into ensuring that new work lasts beyond a one-time grant.

The various dimensions of these levels of organizational growth and change are listed below. They are addressed in more depth, and with reference to the other CDI sites, in other articles in this volume and in other publications of the PolicyLink CDI research and documentation endeavor.¹

Key Themes of Organizational Growth and Change

Changes in the overall culture, leadership, and future direction of the organization came about as a result of the arts and cultural strategies. These included

- Building greater capacity and more openness to risk and experimentation
- Finding new ways to express an organization's core values and tell its own story
- Specifying different definitions and measurements of success based on those values
- Crafting more effective interactions with community members, partners, and stakeholders

Internal restructuring of the organization was required to deeply incorporate arts and cultural strategies. This includes such factors as

- Empowering key staff members to lead the new work
- Bringing the overall staff around to accepting, if not embracing, the new approach
- Incorporating arts and culture into the organizational strategic planning
- Changing internal systems to facilitate the new strategies

¹ The publications are available at www.communitydevelopment.art.

The Culture Change Underway in Housing and Neighborhood Development

Ever since the formation of community development corporations in the 1960s, countervailing incentives and requirements have pulled nonprofit developers in two directions: (1) to become proficient and effective at financing and getting affordable housing and community facilities built and operating efficiently or (2) to take on the much more open-ended, social, cultural, and economic challenges that underlie persistent poverty and health inequities in their neighborhoods. This pendulum swings between narrowly scoped projects and ambitious community revitalization, and lately, arts and cultural strategies are providing the reasons and tools to take up that broader mandate.



Residents of Milan, MN respond to prompts about their community developed by artists. Photo credit: Chris Johnson

Three of the six CDI lead organizations were affordable housing developers and managers, each of them very accomplished in that practice but with a strong determination to find new ways to have a broader and deeper impact on their communities. For the Little Tokyo Service Center, this meant drawing upon arts and culture to build solidarity and partnerships with other Japanese American groups to preserve the ethnic and historic identity of the neighborhood in the face of intense market pressure.

For the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership, it meant integrating newcomers from around the world, including Micronesia, Latin America, and East Africa, into the civic life of towns with previously largely white, homogeneous populations. What became apparent in the course of generating and applying arts and cultural strategies toward those ends was that the process caused each organization to change and grow in fundamental and important ways. That was also the case for the third nonprofit housing developer in the cohort, whose story we relate here.

Cook Inlet Housing Authority (CIHA) is a tribal housing authority that works with the general Anchorage-area population and with Alaska Natives in particular. CIHA produces and manages affordable housing on a substantial scale. It is nationally recognized as a leader in this field and an important institution in Anchorage, but despite this growth and efficacy, the leaders sensed that something important was missing.

For CEO Carol Gore, the attention to culture was personal as well as organizational. As an Alaska Native woman nurtured by village values in her youth but at risk of losing touch with them while working in the urban setting, she sought to reintegrate a sense of shared

communal responsibility and the linkage of individuals' health with the health of the group. She describes this in the roundtable of CDI leaders by talking about the feeling that something was missing in their developments—they stuck strictly to the rules but failed to honor the long history of the place or the living culture of the people in the community.

For the CIHA managers tasked with considering what roles arts and cultural strategies might play in the diverse Spenard neighborhood, a change in values would need to translate into a change in what drives the organization. The regulation-driven, cost-focused, time-is-money calculus of developing and managing nonprofit housing would have to loosen up to allow for the risk and uncertainty associated with creativity, innovation, new voices, and broader goals for community-level change. The project leaders for the arts and cultural work—Tyler Robinson (Community Development, Real Estate, and Planning) and Sezy Gerow-Hanson (Public and Resident Relations)—met frequently with their fellow division leaders from the onset of each new arts-based project to find the ways in which the innovations might be of value:

- How it could help their colleagues meet their own responsibilities, such as managing the intake of new residents or connecting residents to new services
- How it could achieve better outcomes for the residents, such as providing for more community amenities beyond a simple housing unit
- How it would not endanger project finances or timelines but could actually strengthen the community buy-in for new development
- How it would advance the CEO's goal for the broader culture change
- And as a bonus, how it would be colorful, entertaining, energizing, and aesthetically rewarding

In holding space for these conversations, colleagues were able to provide input, get their questions addressed, and be given the chance to join in the process of change. Over three years, including some unsuccessful early attempts, the effort gradually resulted in a significant integration and acceptance of the core ideas underlying the arts and cultural work and a well-thought-through process for assessing new arts projects.

CIHA's resulting portfolio of arts and cultural projects and strategies represented a reexamination of what it means to succeed as an urban tribal housing authority. Leaders now define its impact as an organization not only by the quality of its housing, but also by how it worked with artists in numerous, experimental ways, took a larger role in community-scale change, and established an anchor for social interaction in the Spenard neighborhood. The CIHA staff came to realize that well-executed cultural strategies were not only good for the community and their residents, but that facilitating in this new, more open-ended, unobtrusive way enhanced CIHA's own reputation. As Robinson said, "We're leaders, [but as part of the CDI experience we've] learned how to not always lead."

CIHA enabled more than a dozen arts-related projects, ranging from eye-catching and

whimsical placemaking (e.g., scores of mimes humanizing a commercial street construction site) to support for the crafts-based enterprises of Native artisans and the creation of an arts-based community center in a once-vacant church building. That center was not only a large capital commitment but a symbol of the organization’s evolution from housing developer to community developer; it also included the creation of a new Community Development department within the organizational structure. These activities were specific to the Spenard neighborhood, but by the end of the CDI grant period, CIHA had established a process to generate new arts, cultural, and design activities in housing developments in other parts of the region.

Health Care Providers: Going Upstream Requires a Different Relationship with Community

The U.S. health care system is organized largely around the financing and delivery of medical services and frequently fails to emphasize not only public health outreach, prevention, and education, but also attention to the root causes of poor health and the health inequities in poverty and structural racism. The consistent empirical finding that medical care accounts for only about 20 percent of population health has not tilted the scale toward addressing the “upstream” social and environmental determinants of health in a proportionally large way. However, awareness of the need to do this has been growing for at least



*Staff and members of the quilting class at Jackson Medical Mall in Jackson, MS show off their wares.
Photo credit: Jackson Medical Mall Foundation.*

a decade.² The CDI organizations in Jackson, MS and Zuni, NM drew on arts and cultural strategies to focus on these upstream determinants and strengthen health-supportive dimensions of community life outside the doctor's office. These new components of their agencies' work—building things, energizing cultural expressions, and facilitating greater resident engagement—were accompanied by determination on the part of the leaders to make these priorities central to their organizations because of the heightened potential to reach new health outcomes.

The Jackson Medical Mall Foundation (JMMF) is a former shopping center that was turned into a medical resource center, with a large and varied range of health operations, that several thousand people visited each day. Its leaders were confident that they had built a unique and essential community asset; they also had a sense that they were mainly treating consequences but could—and should—be doing more to address the causes of health inequities in the surrounding city. To point in that direction, JMMF broadened its mission statement in recent years from addressing the needs of the medically underserved to encompassing technology, innovation, and creativity toward the goal of better community health.

The openness to new approaches and awareness of the economic and environmental conditions in the lower-income, predominantly African American communities near the Medical Mall dovetailed with JMMF's recognition that it should relate to its neighbors more holistically. It wanted to become an influential anchor for community revitalization and to address the physical and social issues that lead to so many health inequities—from diabetes, hypertension, and obesity to the trauma, injuries, and death due to violence. Arts and cultural strategies offered a promising path for redefining the pathway to health.

We view health care totally differently now than we did in the past. Health care to us was nurses and doctors and clinics. Now, we're providing a lot of wraparound services. For example, during our first year as a CDI participant, we did a blues concert during National Diabetes Month. Everybody who came to the concert received information about diabetes, and we incentivized them to get screening tests. We know there were folks who wouldn't have gotten screened, gone to one of the clinics, or may not have even known what was going on at the Medical Mall.

– JMMF Executive Director Primus Wheeler³

2 See various chapters in Thomas A. LaVeist, editor, *Race, Ethnicity, and Health: A Public Health Reader* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2002); Judith Bell and Mary Lee, *Why Place and Race Matter: Impacting Health Through a Focus on Race and Place* (Oakland and Los Angeles, CA: PolicyLink and The California Endowment, 2011); Meredith Minkler, editor, *Community Organizing and Community Building for Health and Welfare, Third Edition* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012).

3 Primus Wheeler, in dialogue with the author in a session at CDI Research and Documentation convening, Los Angeles, February 21, 2019.

The first strategy, then, was to use the arts as a draw, to activate the Medical Mall as a center for local culture, a vibrant ongoing site for musical performances, festivals, and exhibitions of folk arts that have been numerous and broad-based enough to draw in thousands of Jacksonians. In addition to establishing this more welcoming and colorful venue and providing work and revenue for local artists, the events offer preventive and educational services to large numbers of children, families, and individuals.

Once they have been connected to JMMF through the cultural offerings, residents have been engaged to express their opinions and desires, not only about the JMMF space but about the surrounding community. Informal and formal conversations, roundtable discussions, community meetings, and surveys were employed to draw out the residents' perspectives. A concurrent innovative process was conducted to solicit ideas for improvement from JMMF staff members, many of whom also lived in the surrounding community. That was organized by local cultural strategist Daniel Johnson, who encouraged all staff members to see themselves as artists in some fashion, and the result was much more colorful, insightful, and inclusive than traditional workplace surveys. His essay in this volume describes that process.

Hearing from the neighbors, clients, and staff in this way led to a culture change for the JMMF leadership. These more intense and extensive engagements were both humbling and energizing. The leaders realized that they should interact with their visitors not as passive medical consumers but as active stakeholders in a shared, continually changing community. Executive Director Primus Wheeler concluded that he and other leaders should not feel secure that they had figured out their role but that they needed to be open to significant changes. As JMMF's arts and cultural coordinator, Mahalia Wright, put it, "The great thing about our community is that they share their likes and dislikes, so we really have learned to embrace that. We want to hear the pros and the cons and make those cons into our strengths."⁴ JMMF is now expanding its footprint and attention to health factors beyond its walls through new projects that leverage cultural strengths and partners, such as community gardens that supply healthy food to community members and renovations of abandoned properties for cultural use, all of which have been informed and driven by the heightened engagement. JMMF's commitment to becoming a community anchor goes hand in hand with the new centrality of creativity to its mission.

Every kind of community—large or small, urban or rural—can benefit from creative attention to the social determinants of health. The Zuni Youth Enrichment Project (ZYEP) has always had a set of core activities for young people, including sports programs, summer camps, and community gardens. In that respect, ZYEP was already addressing the "upstream factors" that affect health, seeking to foster fitness, positive social environments, and a diet that is not only healthier but also in touch with Zuni agricultural tradition. Zuni youth and their families face daunting challenges of historical trauma and enduring poverty, leaving

4 Mahalia Wright, in dialogue with the author in a session at CDI Research and Documentation convening, Los Angeles, February 21, 2019.

them at risk for mental health problems, including, at their most extreme, suicide. Dr. Tom Faber, founder and co-director of ZYEP, deemed arts and culture critical to creating a “safe, stable, nurturing environment.” This meant more than physical safety in the immediate sense: it reflected ZYEP’s shift to becoming more trauma-informed and resilience-based over the course of three years.

ZYEP designed and led the creation of this new park to expand the reach of its initiatives and provide a new center for community gathering. It was deeply imbued with Zuni art and expression of traditional beliefs in every phase of its design and construction. Art is essential and integral to life at the Zuni Pueblo—to both the economy and the spiritual resilience of the culture. ZYEP saw the power of drawing in Zuni artists to the park planning process, through the creation of a six-member advisory committee, to give input on the design of a park that would address a broad set of psychological and social needs beyond physical activity.⁵ ZYEP Co-director Joseph Claunch’s own Native background—as a member of the Puyallup Tribe—had given him a first-hand understanding of comparable trauma and the conditions for resilience. However, it wasn’t until he was immersed in the process of designing the park that he fully realized and embraced the power of the arts in transmitting cultural tradition and what it could mean for young people. For a self-described football jock and coach, albeit one with a doctorate in psychology, the process was revelatory and changed the way he approaches youth development. He reflected on it in February 2019:

The CDI process helped deepen my understanding of youth development in a tribal community. The artists we were working with helped me understand how we could do youth development on a much deeper level and more contextually, in a way that was really culturally responsive. I don’t think I could’ve learned those things in the university. I couldn’t have learned them by reading a book. This project helped me create space to just sit and listen to community, what they have to say, what they want for their youth, and how they want to go about it. That has been an invaluable process for three years to make space for that.⁶

The learning that Claunch describes has become the basis for ongoing organizational practices within ZYEP. Creating the park and community center through collaborating with the artists, incorporating Zuni tradition, and generating community input based in a deep appreciation of trauma and resilience will guide their ongoing programs with young people and their relationships with other groups. ZYEP leaders and artists also suspect that the experience has raised expectations and changed the rules of the game for how other spaces in Zuni will be developed.

⁵ See, for example, the essay by Zuni artists’ committee member Daryl Shack in this volume

⁶ Joseph Claunch, in dialogue with the author in a session at CDI Research and Documentation convening, Los Angeles, February 21, 2019.

Conclusion

The anticipated role for arts-based strategy and expression in shaping future development in the Zuni Pueblo would be compelling testament to the power of art to change not only lives but also places. CIHA and JMMF each found, through arts and culture, their own versions of how to bring their organizational values outside their own properties and into their communities. This extension of these organizations' priorities beyond their own capital projects and into the broader social fabric and development trajectory of the towns and neighborhoods where they work was common to all six CDI sites. It represented the full realization of what it meant to incorporate arts into their vision and their way of working.

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Arts and Culture from the Inside, Not Just on the Outside

daniel johnson
Significant Developments

Mrs. Louise Woodruff was born on Wood Street 80 years ago, less than a mile from the current location of the Jackson Medical Mall, a community-based medical and retail facility. She attended school, married, and bought a home in the area along what was then a gravel road. Mrs. Woodruff and her husband, Clarence, always worked nearby, including at the old furniture factory.

During segregation, black people had to work so hard there; they had all the hard jobs... All the businesses were owned by whites. For the most part, blacks in the area worked at the furniture plant, at the ice-house west of the mall, or at the industrial laundry just across the street. I worked sanding...I sanded right on out of there, though! They would work you like a slave.

When the Medical Mall was a retail mall, between 1970 and 1996, Mrs. Woodruff operated a snack shop inside. Now she and her friends take their morning walks in the Mall—an anchor for the community and historical memory.

This short narrative was gathered during a breakfast hosted by Significant Developments for mall walkers who daily lap the interior of the Mall. The effort was part of a creative process to deepen relationships between the Medical Mall and the surrounding community. It included the installation of thought bubbles over the walking route along the main corridor with such prompts as, “What brought you here?” and “What friendships have you made here?” These hung for just a few days while we invited mall walkers to a breakfast the following week where we facilitated conversations reflecting on memories of the mall and the neighborhood. The Mall believes that these types of intimate points of contact build trust and awareness between community members and the institution and lead to greater use of available services. Additionally, the Mall can reflect these community-based stories in its physical and brand identity.

Significant Developments is an artist-centered company that assists clients across sectors in centering their work and identity in community narratives. One important function of our work is to help individuals recognize that they are culture bearers; that the way they approach and interact with the world is a creative act that communicates their identity and the identity of a place. This activity that all humans share—expressing our culture through the ways we move in the world and the objects with which we surround ourselves—is what

we highlight with client communities. This recognition becomes an invitation to more intentionally consider culture and identity in their everyday activity.

From its inception, the Medical Mall articulated a strategic commitment to holistic, community-based approaches to wellness, including capacity-building and the arts. After 20 years of operation, the Mall serves thousands of patients daily through a sustainable set of long-term institutional partnerships, and yet it has struggled to define best practices for the capacity-building and arts-based aspects of its operations. Our work was to help shake up traditional notions of “art” as something outside of everyday activity and refocus “art” as something that emerges from the everyday interplay of culture. The addition of art to the Mall’s work shifted from imagining art as something new to be brought in to imagining art as a culture we already inhabit.

The Medical Mall staff was a key population we worked with, especially those working in public spaces. The creative process we employed was to inhabit the roles of maintenance, environmental services, and security; we shadowed and worked alongside staff in order to build relationships and discuss the cultural considerations they employ in their work. A striking discovery in these staff conversations was the existence of a broad working culture defined by patient support. Staff at all levels recognized that the public it served was not only navigating a building, but also dealing with difficult and personal health issues. Environmental Service Manager Barbara Thompson related a specific experience: “[A woman] came in the bathroom while I was cleaning and began to cry. She had just received a difficult diagnosis and just needed a hug and someone to talk to. It’s our job to be there when people need us.” Maintenance Supervisor Derell Tillman framed the work of all staff as “patient care.” “When we do our work well, we help the doctor concentrate on the patient and ease the patient’s discomfort in the ways we can,” he said.

This “patient care” culture was evident in an interaction we witnessed at the TB clinic. While repairing a thermostat, maintenance workers used elements of performance to ease their intrusion in the space and reassure nurses as to their progress. Following the interaction, we reflected our observations back to maintenance staff using the language of theater, highlighting how they used these techniques to navigate a sensitive space and make everyone feel comfortable—not just physically but emotionally. Despite the fact that recalibrating the thermostat was an inexact science requiring trial and error over time, the staff recognized that projecting/performing confidence about each adjustment psychologically comforted clinic staff and increased the length of time staff could tolerate fluctuating temperatures. This allowed enough time for maintenance staff to return and make adjustments without prompting from the clinic. Describing their roles through the language of theater offered another lens to guide their intention in the work.

As the Community Development Investments process unfolded, staff became active collaborators and participants. Some joined the quilting class, stopping by to work on projects at lunch and forming relationships with community participants. One staff member

shifted from in-house PR to opening her own firm; she contracted with the Mall while taking on local creative clients. Staff also began to show up in larger numbers to help shape developing cultural programs, offering community-based expertise. Our process invited staff members to bring more aspects of themselves to bear on their work and make a lasting mark on the new programs being developed.

Realizing and embracing the transformative impacts that arts and culture bring to the everyday work of society begin with realizing that the everyday work of society is performed by groups of people with their own creative culture. Every human is culturally expressive; we have simply developed a view of the arts that sets it outside of everyday life. Successfully incorporating the new methodologies that center arts and culture in our work begin by recognizing the culture that already exists and building with the community on that foundation.

daniel johnson is an artist working in the medium of social circumstance. Focused on agency, equity, and the formation of agreements, johnson roots the artistic process in framing everyday life as unfolding, intersecting stories. Through deep listening, reflections on belonging, and facilitated community storytelling, johnson works with groups of people to harness their unique cultural expressions in a co-design process to disrupt power dynamics and realize shared intentions. As the CEO of Significant Developments, johnson brings together teams of artists working across sectors to perform problem-solving, capacity-building, and full-scale strategic planning through creative play. Collaborators in his work have included the communities unfolding from the Jackson Medical Mall, Hinds County School District, Millsaps College, Hinds County Economic Development Authority, City of Jackson Mayor's Office, City of Jackson Planning Department, Mississippi Museum of Art, Mississippi Department of Transportation, and Midtown Partners CDC.

“The Way We Work”: Integrating Arts and Culture into an Organization

Ashley Hanson
Department of Public Transformation

“It’s not a thing we do; it’s the way we work.”

—In memory of former Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership CEO Rick Goodemann

As a rural artist, I am used to working with small communities; however, working with the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership (SWMHP)—a total of 25 individuals—was a completely new experience. SWMHP sought a resident artist (RA) to work with the staff on integrating arts and cultural strategies throughout the organization to enhance its mission of creating thriving places to live, grow, and work through partnerships with communities. SWMHP saw the value of opening itself up to new ways of working not only to produce better housing, but to be better equipped to engage the rapidly changing and increasingly diverse populations of the communities in its region. After spending one year in the RA position, I would like to offer a few “gold nuggets” (from an artist’s perspective) on what was successful about this initiative to help inform future community development RA programs.

I received the request for proposal (RFP) for the RA position after my theater company, PlaceBase Productions, worked with SWMHP on a project in Milan, MN.¹ There were two things I appreciated about the RFP: 1) It invited applicants to describe their creative *process*, not *product* (not to articulate *what I would do*, but rather *how I would work* with the staff); and 2) it allowed me to do my work in the region where I live and paid a living wage. The RFP introduced the first gold nugget: a willingness **to trust and value the creative process**.

My proposal outlined a similar creative practice to that which I employ when working with communities on theater productions: begin by listening, move on to creating together, and end with a performance/celebration. I was selected for the position and began by hosting a series of story circles, in which I invited the staff to share stories about what was working well and what was challenging about the organization—ranging from communication between departments, technology, staff capacity, file management, marketing, and more. It was here that I recognized the second gold nugget: a willingness **to take risks**. I witnessed the staff becoming more comfortable sharing their ideas as they began to trust me, the creative process, and each other.

¹ A brief presentation about the project “This Land Is Milan” can be found at <https://vimeo.com/271341277>. This site-specific theatrical production explores the concepts of home, immigration, fear, hope, and connection across cultures in a small, rural community that has experienced drastic demographic shifts in the past decade as Micronesian immigrants have joined this largely Norwegian community.

One of the challenges shared was that the staff felt disconnected from each other. This was partly due to the fact that SWMHP has two offices that are over 100 miles apart and serves a region of more than 30 counties, which results in a lot of windshield time. Recognizing these realities, I created a series of podcasts called “Off the Clock,”² with the primary goal of *strengthening connections* between staff members while they were on the road. I recorded one-hour interviews with every staff member following two simple guidelines: 1) meet me somewhere that makes you happy, and 2) we can talk about anything except work. This process gave me direct, one-on-one time with each person (in their homes, favorite bars, walking trails, man caves, shooting ranges, hunting lands, etc.) early on in the process, which built a strong foundation for our work together.

Working with artists was still a new concept for many of the staff members. To be successful at long-term integration of arts and culture into how the organization works, there needed to be inroads for each person to deeply engage with the creative process. I curated an event series called Southwest Minnesota Artist Residency Talks (SMART), which brought 10 different social-practice artists to the office for half-day workshops, in which the entire staff participated. This is where I witnessed a third gold nugget: a willingness to invest time, at all levels of the organization, for staff to participate in the work. This investment of time is a rare and precious gift that many organizations believe they cannot afford; however, the payoff is authentic relationships, meaningful ownership, and ongoing stewardship of creative projects.

After the SMART series, we divided the staff into six working groups that included a mix of departments, leadership levels, demographics, office locations, and newer or long-term staff members. Each group selected one organizational challenge (identified from the story circles) that members would address through a staff-led project (SLP) using their own creative process. These projects included creative solutions for:

- Increasing security on job sites
- Reminding staff to breathe, reflect, and move with intention
- Measuring organizational capacity
- Telling the story of the organization’s work
- Increasing morale
- Launching an artist residency program in a new supportive-housing development

Each group was paired with an “artist consultant,” whose role was to help the group articulate its ideas and to support any technical needs. After three months of working together, we organized a staff retreat where each group shared its SLPs through creative presentations, including videos, interactive surveys, toilet-paper mantras, and a drum circle. Each project employed a creative process—with staff working together across departments—to address challenges that the organization had been facing for many years. To honor these accomplish-

2 Listen to “Off the Clock” podcasts at <https://soundcloud.com/swmhp-offtheclock>.

ments, we celebrated (in the form of a p-ART-y!) to acknowledge the trust, risk-taking, and time each person put into the effort.

My time as an RA with SWMHP produced measurable, tangible outcomes,³ but what I found even more valuable were the *intangible* outcomes—the comfortable looseness of laughter; the uncrossed arms and sparkling eyes; the readiness to participate in silly theater games or songs; the willingness to show up, share, and create together. It’s only through the deep, intentional work of creating a culture within the organization—where we **trust and value the creative process, encourage risk taking**, and allow for a healthy **investment of time**—that these *intangibles* surface and transformation occurs.

The result is not a painting you hang on your wall, but rather a strengthening of your organization’s “creativity muscles,” which allow you to view challenges as opportunities to work with your colleagues on creative solutions. It’s embracing the possibility of a more healthy, efficient, and playful way of working in order to better meet the needs of the residents in the region you serve. It’s in this—the unleashing of our full creative potential—that we move from experiencing arts and culture as “a thing we do” to “the way we work.”

Ashtley Hanson is the founder of PlaceBase Productions, a theater company that creates original, site-specific musicals celebrating small-town life, and the founder of the [Department of Public Transformation](#), an artist-led organization that collaborates with local leaders in rural areas to develop creative strategies for community connection and civic participation. She is the director of the Small Town City Artist in Residence Program and The YES! House—a radically welcoming creative community gathering space—in Granite Falls, MN. She was recently named a 2018 Obama Foundation Fellow and a 2019 Bush Fellow for her work with rural communities. She spends most of her time on the road, visiting with people in rural places, and believes wholeheartedly in the power of play and exclamation points!

3 Results from SWMHP Resident Artist pre- and post-survey can be found at https://communitydevelopment.art/sites/default/files/SWMHP_AIR_survey_091918.pdf

Dialogue on Organizational Growth and Change

*Erica Reed and Mahalia Wright, Jackson Medical Mall Foundation
Chelsea Alger and Ashley Hanson, Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership
Facilitated by Victor Rubin, PolicyLink*

Victor Rubin of PolicyLink spoke in February 2019 with Erica Reed and Mahalia Wright, Chief of Staff and Vice President, Arts & Culture, respectively, at the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation (JMMF), and with Chelsea Alger and Ashley Hanson of the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership (SWMHP). Until recently, Alger had been a senior manager and the coordinator of Partnership Art, the CDI-supported initiative at SWMHP, and theater artist Hanson had worked both with the staff of the agency on internal issues and with the residents of rural communities. The essays by Hanson and by Daniel Johnson, an arts-based strategic planning consultant to JMMF, in this section of the *CDIR* special issue provide accounts of their activities with the staffs of the two agencies, which complement this dialogue. The conversation has been edited for clarity and length.

The subject of the dialogue was organizational growth and change, with three areas of interest, drawn from the research framework about CDI that PolicyLink generated with the site teams:

- *The internal restructuring that's required to deeply incorporate arts and cultural strategies.* Can this work thrive if it is done in just a single department? What are ways to spread involvement beyond a few staff members?
- *Changes in the overall culture and future direction of the organization.* How has working with artists materially altered how the organization sees its place in the community and the best way to advance its mission?
- *The relationships with community members, partners, and stakeholders.* Have new voices been heard as a result of the arts-based strategies, and has the organization strengthened its connection to its constituents?

Victor:

Let's start with the proposition that change has to be an organization-wide phenomenon in order for it to have the intended impact. What were the challenges to arts and culture becoming a vehicle for change, growth, and improvement of the whole organization, given how new this idea was and how decentralized the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership was?

Chelsea (SWMHP):

I think what we found in the journey is that it started and lived initially within a handful of people, which was fine with regard to how we got going with the work and learned to understand what it meant. But for the sustainability—how it lives on in the organization—it really needed to “infect” everyone else along with us. Unfortunately, James [Arentson] and I, who were fairly involved from the very beginning, were also not physically present where most of our staff was. [Staff of the agency work in several locations in different counties across a large region.] It was a challenge to learn about this and try to share the results with our staff members when we aren’t with them every day. And we know that the power and beauty of this work is about being present in a space. We had to wrestle with what that meant in an organization that’s spread out geographically. And also, over time, many of the people, myself included, who started on this journey have moved on or are moving on. So, the fact that we were able to bring the [arts and cultural strategies] across the organization rather than keeping it in a single staff person or department is so important. We know it will be a factor in the success of it living on beyond the work that we did in this program.

Similarly, we had a lot of discussion about the framework for this effort [that we created at the beginning of CDI] called Partnership Art. We created a website and branding, and we’ve talked a lot about whether that would live on or will it just confuse people, [indicating] that creative placemaking is this “other” thing that we do. We’ve decided that the brand is going to go away, and my hope would be that it would be integrated into our mission instead. I know that our organization, prior to my coming there, and James coming there four years ago, thought about the mission differently. We don’t just do affordable housing; our services are so much broader than that. And now we’ve gained these extra skills and tools in our work. It would be great to revisit the mission again, and I hope that the organization will do that once we get a new CEO.

One of the other efforts that I think helps is internalizing the resident artist work. Ashley will be wrapping up her second residency in April, but the intent is to have an ongoing artist residency to continue to strengthen the organization and keep the work and thought process at the forefront.

Victor:

Ashley, as the resident artist at the organization focused primarily on augmenting the capacity of the staff to work in new arts-based ways, how did you help the organization learn how to do this over time and make sure all staff were involved?

Ashley (SWMHP):

I used the same creative process that I use in working with communities. I’m used to working with small communities. I’m a rural theater artist, rural practitioner, and the smallest

community before working with the housing partnership was 368 people. But what a gift and an honor it was to work with a community of 25 [the staff of the SWMHP]. I was able to go through the same interviews in the story-circle process that I do in creating plays, to discover where the organization is at, and to highlight challenges that the individuals have, or where they're feeling underutilized or that the potential isn't fully there for them to step into their creativity. And that helped me to create a process by which to use the internal creativity of the individuals to address those challenges.... We also supported each staff member to have a direct interaction with an artist to work on a project that the staff member cared about, that they identified as a challenge in the organization that they wanted to face.

Then we held the artist residency talks—a total of nine of these. Many of these conversations have developed into longer-term relationships with those artists or projects that are addressing the larger mission of the organization. One of these, called “A Prairie Homeless Companion,” was intended to debunk the myth that homelessness doesn't exist in rural spaces. But the major shift I observed was in the staff retreat that we did at the end of my first phase, when the former CEO said we have to think of this “not as a thing we do but as a way we work.” It moved the work with arts and culture from this siloed project into a way of thinking about how the organization is integrating arts and culture strategies into every single aspect of the work. We're not there yet, but to have the leadership say that and then to have that language come out of other staff members' mouths, it's a great step in the right direction.

Victor:

Erica, since this began, I recall the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation being remarkable for how representatives of every department were sitting in on meetings with ArtPlace and technical advisors related to the grant and to arts and culture: the custodial staff, the security staff, the HR staff—not only the people who did programming. That presumably reflected a priority on the part of management and enthusiasm on the part of the staff. Please explain how that worked, why you undertook it that way, and what it has meant as it's evolved.

Erica (JMMF):

Through the check-in calls, the technical assistance visits, and the site visits, we had not only our CEO, Mr. Wheeler, but our whole staff involved in everything that we did. And [they learned over time that] if they didn't involve Mahalia [Wright] and the Arts & Culture Department, it wasn't [going to become] a project or an event. We have about 150 employees and various divisions of JMMF. And so [for] our staff, the community, our tenants, and the artists, everything had to have art related to every event. We still have our challenges, like any organization, where we have to remind individuals that if you don't include art in the programs, it won't be something that we will do.

Victor:

Mahalia, as the VP of Arts & Culture [a role created about a year into the grant], now that you've been engaged in this for a couple of years, give us some examples about getting the whole staff involved in arts and cultural strategies that have been particularly moving for you or impactful for the community.

Mahalia (JMMF):

We were aware that we had silos already internally. One of our first projects was to look at the community meeting rooms where our employees gather and where our tenants and visitors gather. One of the things that we realized was that some people are always going to say this [decision or this aspect of the Mall is] “mine” to control or program, so we, as an arts and culture team, had to meet them where they were. At first, when we invited artists to come and get involved, these same staff people assumed that they already knew everything that the place needed, but when the artist started making recommendations—and he was not shy at all—then staff responded like, “Oh, I haven’t thought about it that way.”

That right there, it was like an ice breaker for us to get started and to realize that we needed somebody other than our normal “A and B”; we need that “C,” too, to make our work the best it could be. It ended up where staff were not just tolerating the artists but asking for them to be involved: “Is daniel [johnson] going to be there?” and “Is Mr. Singleton gonna show up?” or “Is there anybody else that you think we can [invite]?” or “What did daniel suggest?” It became a lot easier because of breaking the ice right.

daniel [johnson, arts-based strategic planning consultant to JMMF] had a creative way of working with our employees in their particular departments. Once he spent a whole day with the Maintenance Department in his jumpsuit, working with them up on top of the building, just looking at different things. He couldn’t put on a uniform, but he also spent time with the Security [Department]. Then he spent time with Environmental Services, and they became more comfortable with him. Over time, it wasn’t just “Mahalia and Mr. Wheeler got a new project; how long is it going to last?” [The artists] didn’t just go sit in a corner; [they said]: “Look, I want to know what you’re doing because I’m going to be embedded.” I thought that was a very great way to entwine and create these new relationships.

Ashley (SWMHP):

I mentioned the [staff members’] body language earlier, being more closed off. This is one of those intangible soft things that’s really hard to measure, but I’m watching the body language shift in the spaces when we’re asked to participate. At the first staff meeting that I went to, a year ago this month, I asked the staff to go around and do [an improvisational exercise by stating your name and making one] movement, and everyone was totally freaked out. And then just a couple of staff meetings ago, one of the project managers in the Construction

Department [said]: “Let’s do ‘name and a movement’ to get an energizer in this space.” That is a really fun and tangible shift.

Victor:

Let’s move to the second part of the [research] framework: changes in the overall culture and future direction of the organization. It includes how you tell your own story, how you’ve expressed your core values. Do you take on a bigger capacity for risk or an experimentation? Do you define and measure success in different ways?

Let’s start with JMMF this time. You put out a new mission statement that is helping you move from seeing yourself as a place for medical transactions to a place where community happens. Please tell us about what that change means and how the new statement has been received.

Erica (JMMF):

The new statement has been very [well] received by our staff and the community. Our [prior] mission statement was just about providing health care for the underserved. Now our new mission statement talks about innovation and creativity as well. We have transformed our mission and vision so that everything that we do going forward is related to art and culture, technology, and innovation. Nobody in the community had expected that we were going to do this. They just thought, “Oh, that’s just the health care facility.” And now they see the summer camps and the programming that we have, and they’re wanting to get involved. The ArtPlace initiative has really revamped our thinking about the way that we were going versus our future plans.

Mahalia (JMMF):

Through all these new programs that we’ve been doing, we’ve found a way to tell our story, but we [also] have had the chance to hear new stories. We got a chance to learn [from] different people more about our history and other changes that are now happening at the Mall. We got the chance to meet aging artists, and they’re coming back. They’re now feeling like they have a purpose. We have 70-, 80-, and 90-year-old women who are driving to the Mall, walking to the Mall, using transportation to just come and share their experiences with the young people. We have college students that are coming in after five o’clock, learning how to do new artwork. We are elated by the fact that these changes are inviting people in who want to say, “Hey, I know how to do this thing” or “I know I have this story to tell” or “Why don’t you bring this person in to share what they knew about it before it was the Mall or during the time of Dr. Shirley [Aaron Shirley, MD, founder of the Medical Mall] or when Mr. Wheeler was in college himself.” We are learning all these stories, and it’s great to know that we are capturing it right now.

Victor:

SWMHP is a nonprofit housing provider. How did the arts and cultural work provide a way for the organization to get involved in a wider range of things? As SWMHP has evolved, what will it look like going forward to partners and community members as a result?

Ashley (SWMHP):

It's a challenging role to be in the artist's place, once you fully understand how overworked the staff is, to ask anybody to do anything else. It's been a great challenge to try to figure out the efficiency of integrating the work strategically into what's already happening rather than having it be an add-on. It takes time. I was only on for five months, and I just barely started to understand what the organization is going through. Then, my contract was extended for an additional seven months. I don't know how you would do the work otherwise.

In addition to doing affordable housing, a lot of these small towns are trying to figure out what to do with their main streets and vacant storefronts. We have started a project called "creative community design build." We're working on prototypes in two small towns to renovate vacant storefront buildings into creative community gathering spaces through an artist-led community engagement process. It's getting the community involved at every single level, including the building process. This is developing new skills for the local workforce and getting to see how SWMHP can use creative engagement as a contracted [approach] that they can do from now on, and as a revenue generator. So, there are tangible ways that it can impact the organization, but also the region overall, thinking differently about what we do with our vacant spaces and how we view our housing stock. What are alternative ways to address some of those challenges besides just tearing it down?

Victor:

This next aspect of organizational growth and change explores interactions with community. Residents, leaders in the community, clients, patients, people on the street who may not have had any previous interaction with your organizations: how they are working with you as a result of the arts and cultural strategies? How do they understand what you all are about, and what are the new ways in which your organization connects with different groups?

I want to give the SWMHP folks a chance to talk specifically about newcomers and immigrants. Because a lot of the motivation for your work came from the fact that previously homogeneous communities, mostly of longstanding Scandinavian or German descent, had been joined by large proportions of Latinx, Micronesian, or East African residents, and that the nature of civic life needed to be renegotiated and people needed to be included. How would you describe the ways in which the newcomers have become part of these communities' social fabric?

Chelsea (SWMHP):

Between September of 2015 and May of 2016, we spent a lot of time [asking ourselves] where we should focus this work in our region. We brainstormed about what it would look like to work in this capacity with the goals that we have around engaging New American and more marginalized communities, many of whom are utilizing our services and living in our housing. Diversity was one key, as was community readiness. By that I mean a community's willingness to acknowledge that this challenge to connect exists amongst their residents, and that they have diverse populations that they're not reaching.

Some of our communities really embraced the idea of this opportunity to see this as a creative process without predetermined outcomes, and some of our communities really just wanted to make art. Saint James is a great example. They were the first community we worked with, and their city manager sat down with us and said, "I think this is great, I understand this as an experiment, I understand you don't know how it's going to turn out, and we are on board." We had some really great outcomes with that community because they were willing to acknowledge all of that and go with us on the journey.

The example I would give is our healthy housing work, which is very intangible when it comes to art because it didn't involve art that we look at; it's art in the way that we invite people to the table—in this case, to tell us about their housing needs. The city was really challenged with housing rehab needs. They acknowledged that some of the homes in the worst condition were households that were Latinx and that they didn't have a good outreach mechanism to these households. We worked with an artist group who, through their creative engagement practice, built new relationships and established several local community Latinx leaders as partners in the design and implementation of the program. The artists involved our healthy housing assessor doing health and safety inspections, provided resources and information to households, and created this new network that helped contribute to understanding for the community and for us what the true needs were out there.

Results emerged that we could not have imagined sitting around the table as SWMHP employees and city leaders. One of the really great things that happened was that the local housing committee, which was entirely white when the effort started, now has a representative from the Latinx community who has emerged as this really great community advocate. She is now in these discussions from which she was entirely absent before.

Ashley (SWMHP):

Building on that, the second phase of that project in Saint James is called the Community Advocate Program. [It involves] the same group of artists and builds on the success in identifying leaders within the community who acted as language translators but also cultural translators and translators of the resources available. The artists have now created the Community Advocate Program, where the city will use this artist-led and artist-designed process to hire the

community advocates to do outreach as different projects come up. It's in brand-new prototype phase, but there's been lots of interest from other communities in our region saying, "How can we get that? How can we start our own Community Advocate Program here?" We're deeply place-based artists, so we know it's not like a framework we can just plug-and-play everywhere, but we can look at how to adapt the Community Advocate Program for different communities' needs, to make sure that there's representation at the table of new immigrant and New American communities in these traditionally pretty homogeneous places.

Victor:

As we wrap up, we'll ask our friends at JMMF what's changed about the relationship to the community? Are clients and patients thinking about the Mall in a new way? Are there new groups? Are there previously marginalized folks who are also becoming part of the community of JMMF?

Erica (JMMF):

Well, we're nothing without our community. Everything that we have is community-led: our community choir, our community meeting room space, our community kitchen, our community garden. Everything is community-related. We are very intentional about making sure that the community knows beforehand, in the planning process, before we've even started anything. We have about 5,000 people that come to the Mall per day. And with that, we are finding new partners in our relationships with the same Jackson groups. [For example], when they perform, they bring a crowd of people, their parents, friends, cousins, aunts. But again, with our community advisory board, and our art advisory board, we're always centered around the community.

Mahalia (JMMF):

The great thing about our community is that they share their likes and dislikes, so we really have learned to embrace that and make changes based on it. We want to hear the pros and the cons and make those cons into our strengths. One of the changes that we've been looking at is the fence around our property; it hasn't been physically torn down, but we ourselves, as staff, we're going outside the fence; we are building outside the fence; we are extending that hand outside the fence. We have intentionally gone out into our own neighborhoods so that the neighbors realize, "This is yours. You are here. We are here for you. What do you need?" And they are, in return, asking us, "What do you need?" When we bring the children to perform, they feel not only motivated, but most of them are getting self-motivated. We're mentally tearing that fence down even before it physically comes down.

Victor:

I want to thank all four of you for saying things that are going to stand [the] test of time [and] that are really heartfelt and insightful reflections of the work you've been doing.

Building Capacity for Creative Community Development

Paul Singh
NeighborWorks America

Every community in America can be a place of opportunity. NeighborWorks America is a congressionally chartered nonprofit that has worked for more than 40 years to make this vision a reality. We provide a range of capacity-building resources, including grants, technical assistance, and training, to a national network of nearly 250 community development organizations, in addition to strengthening the broader community development field.¹ NeighborWorks supports comprehensive community development: holistic strategies—driven by partnerships between residents and other stakeholders—that work across sectors to address the multiple factors that shape the lives of families and individuals. These comprehensive approaches often incorporate arts- and culture-based strategies to engage residents, build community, create awareness, forge partnerships, beautify public spaces, honor history and culture, revitalize neighborhoods, promote economic growth, and elevate marginalized voices. The NeighborWorks network has been undertaking these strategies for years, but as the creative placemaking field has grown and matured over the past decade, there has been new interest among network members in examining, deepening, and expanding this work.

NeighborWorks is building organizational capacity by expanding our training, outcome evaluation, and peer learning offerings to more fully support work at the intersection of arts and community development. We recognize the organizational evolution that this work necessitates, so we are adapting our own approaches and resources to help accelerate this change. We also acknowledge that there is a robust and growing ecosystem of intermediaries and other national, regional, and local organizations focused on building capacity for creative placemaking. In sharing our own evolution and lessons learned, we hope to contribute to a field-wide effort that supports organizations in using the arts to achieve positive community outcomes.

An Evolving Approach

In 2017, NeighborWorks surveyed our network regarding their creative placemaking experience and activities. With nearly a third of the network responding, a strong majority (75 percent) reported that they already strategically incorporate arts and culture into their work

¹ Two of the Community Development Investments (CDI) participants featured in this journal are also NeighborWorks network organizations (Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership and Little Tokyo Service Center).

and expressed interest in doing even more. Mirroring the evolution in the broader field, the organizations also reported that they use arts and culture to advance several comprehensive community development goals beyond economic revitalization. In-depth case studies also revealed that incorporating the arts leads community development organizations to adapt both internal practices and the ways they engage with residents, partners, and the communities they serve.

An example of this evolution comes from Pathfinder Services, a NeighborWorks network member that provides housing and supportive services in Huntington, IN, a rural town of 17,000 people. Pathfinder's first foray into arts and culture began in 2012 when it introduced painting into a course for developmentally disabled adults. After witnessing how the arts helped to foster independence and inclusion, Pathfinder soon expanded the program into the Creative Abilities Studio, which teaches clients a wide range of studio arts. Creative Abilities Studio enables the participants to learn new skills, socialize with one another, and, in some cases, earn revenue from the art they produce.

As Pathfinder CEO John Niederman witnessed the transformative role that art played in helping its clients, he wondered if Pathfinder also could use arts and culture to help the wider community of Huntington. If the studio could unleash creativity in its clients, what untapped talent might be identified in other residents? If clients could make an income from their artwork, could other Huntington residents as well? Like many rural communities, Huntington has experienced population decline; if people discovered the city's assets, would they move there?

This questioning led Pathfinder to pursue new partnerships and a broader creative placemaking strategy. It began by collaborating with the LaFontaine Arts Council on plans for an Arts and Entrepreneurial Center, which is slated to open in 2020. Pathfinder and the Council developed the design and programming for the center based on input from artists from across the region who articulated the supports needed to establish and grow their businesses. Pathfinder has worked with the city and a private developer to incorporate the center into an \$8 million mixed-use rehabilitation project. Using Success Measures tools, Pathfinder is also conducting a resident survey to identify individuals with artistic talents who may benefit from and contribute to the center's planned entrepreneurship training.

At the same time, Pathfinder helped lead an inclusive process to create a citywide arts plan for Huntington. Released in 2018, the plan calls for a range of strategies to advance livability, opportunity, vitality, and education, or LOVE, through the arts. As a result, Huntington artists have undertaken a number of projects, including activating an "Arts Alley," to highlight the city's recreational amenities and advance ongoing revitalization efforts.

Identifying Capacity-Building Challenges and Opportunities

Although NeighborWorks has supported creative placemaking efforts in our network with financial and other resources, this support lacked an intentional focus prior to 2017.

That year, we launched a planning process to better understand the role of arts, culture, and creativity in our work, and to identify ways to leverage our existing capacity-building resources to support the implementation of creative practices across our network and the broader field. Through our exploration, we observed numerous ways that community development and arts enhance one another. As a result, we affirmed and embraced “creative community development” as a key strategy for ensuring that every community in America is a place of opportunity.² In describing this work as “creative community development,” we sought a term that encompasses both creative placemaking and placekeeping. Creative community development occurs when residents, community development organizations, artists, culture bearers, and other partners harness the power of culture, art, and creativity to collectively catalyze social, physical, and economic transformation in their neighborhoods, towns, tribal lands, cities, or regions.

Our planning process also revealed that community development organizations face several key challenges in pursuing creative community development. These include:

- **Insufficient understanding** of the potential value of creativity, cultural expression, and artistic practice to community development
- **Difficulty demonstrating and articulating the impact** of creative community development
- **Struggle with identifying arts partners** and developing shared expectations and frameworks
- Need to avoid gentrification-led displacement and **promote inclusion**
- Difficulty in **securing financial resources**

Although each challenge is important to address, the issue of insufficient understanding merits added focus from a capacity-building perspective. Many network organizations that we spoke to shared that their early efforts were limited by preconceived notions of what constitutes “art” or “creative placemaking.” They initially tended to prioritize artistic products (e.g., the archetypal mural project) over partnerships with artists that could yield creative ways of addressing a range of problems. Community developers can also be risk-averse, which can limit receptivity to creative processes that delve into ambiguity or the unexpected. External models and examples that can expand the vision are often required, along with an internal champion who pushes boundaries, to introduce and keep creative community development at the forefront of an organization’s strategy.

² For more on the results from this planning process, see our “Creative Community Development Final Report” at http://neighborworks.org/Documents/Community_Docs/Revitalization_Docs/CreativeCommunityDevelopment_FinalReport2018.aspx.

Building Capacity for Creative Community Development

Addressing these challenges requires broadening exposure, cultivating imagination, supporting demonstrations, facilitating peer learning, and helping internal champions demonstrate the value of creative community development to internal decision-makers, as well as external partners and funders. In response to these needs, NeighborWorks has identified the following priorities to guide future capacity-building activities:

- Build network organizations' capacity to implement creative community development with a focus on advancing more equitable outcomes
- Raise visibility of arts- and culture-based strategies and creative expression to increase understanding of their value
- Provide the network and broader field with tools for and training in creative community development and outcome measurement
- Embed creative practices and collaboration within capacity-building efforts

We are particularly focused on embedding creative community development into our training, outcome evaluation, and peer learning offerings. By integrating this focus into our existing programs and resources, we hope to reach a broad cross section of the community development field—including those who may have minimal exposure to creative community development.

Training: Broadening Horizons and Building Core Capacities

Last year, we partnered with ArtPlace America to design a new training course as part of the NeighborWorks Training Institute, one of the premier and most comprehensive professional development opportunities for community developers. The new course, *Leveraging Arts and Culture for Affordable Housing and Equitable Community Development*, is based on findings from a series of six peer-led site visits sponsored by NeighborWorks and ArtPlace America in summer 2018. These visits explored promising models that integrate arts and affordable housing and engaged the hosts and visitors in learning from one another. The resulting course equips participants to partner with artists, conceptualize creative projects, and incorporate culturally relevant design into their projects. A simple four-point process outlined in the course provides practitioners with an accessible tool for planning effective creative community development projects. The steps in this process include:

1. Understand the community
2. Identify community development issues
3. Work with artists and culture bearers
4. Assess the impact

Going forward, NeighborWorks will continue to partner with ArtPlace America and others to infuse our training curriculum with creative community development examples and tailored content.

Implications for Capacity Builders: Robust participation in our initial training offering demonstrates demand for frameworks and tools that equip community developers to move beyond preconceived notions of creative placemaking, design new projects or initiatives, and partner with artists to advance community development goals. By embedding creative community development into existing training platforms and integrating it among diverse subject areas, capacity builders can extend their reach and build a broader constituency for creative community development.

Outcome Evaluation: Linking Arts and Culture to Community Development Goals

Success Measures, a participatory outcome evaluation group within NeighborWorks, offers consulting, technical assistance, data collection tools, and technology to help organizations plan and conduct evaluations. Based on our key finding that assessing and communicating impact is a challenge for practitioners, Success Measures is working to adapt and test a suite of data collection tools that will measure aspects of creative community development. This work includes engaging with other evaluators, researchers, and experts in creative community development to inform the tool-revision, development, and field-testing process. Some of the outcomes that Success Measures has identified as priorities for tool refinement and development include resident engagement; physical changes; social outcomes, such as health and well-being; cultural preservation; and the social practice of art. In addition, Success Measures will be developing a pair of new tools that capture impacts using creative methods, potentially including photography, video, storytelling, performance, and other audio/visual methods.

Implications for Capacity Builders: When we asked our network organizations how NeighborWorks can help address the most frequently cited challenge of securing financial resources, we heard that assisting organizations to demonstrate, quantify, and communicate the impact of creative community development is essential. This speaks to the need for continued work by capacity builders to create rigorous evaluation tools that can use multiple methods to demonstrate how arts-based strategies contribute to community development outcomes.

Peer Learning: Elevating Models of Equity and Inclusion

By facilitating peer-to-peer learning, NeighborWorks supports the dissemination of creative community development models across our network. In response to the expressed need for models that advance equity and counteract gentrification and displacement, NeighborWorks is launching a “learning community” that will engage five network organizations and their arts-based partners in designing and implementing strategies to raise awareness, engage stakeholders, and respond to these challenges in their communities. Working with

Springboard for the Arts, NeighborWorks will document and share the lessons and tools that emerge from the learning community and disseminate the findings broadly.

Implications for Capacity Builders: The expansion of the creative placemaking field over the past decade has led to a lot of innovation at the local level. Increasingly, community developers are interested in models that not only result in economic or neighborhood revitalization but ensure benefits for existing low-income residents and people of color. Capacity builders can help to elevate and spread these promising models—especially those that are focused on promoting the essential community development goals of inclusion and equity.

Layering Resources to Achieve Results

Foundation Communities owns and operates 24 residential developments across central and north Texas and provides a range of education, financial stability, and health services to its residents. Although some staff members had interest in creative placemaking, they did not formally incorporate it into their programming until after engaging in the NeighborWorks planning process in 2017. As part of that process, Foundation Communities participated in some of our initial training and peer learning, and consequently began to envision arts and culture as part of its holistic strategy.

Foundation Communities is currently undertaking three creative placemaking pilots to engage residents in the design of healthy residential communities. The organization is partnering with artists and using creative methods to better articulate resident needs, improve new building design, and inform ongoing programming to advance equity and health outcomes. In launching the pilots, Foundation Communities developed new partnerships and secured new funding sources. It was also recently awarded an arts fellow as part of Enterprise’s Rose Fellowship program. Beginning in late 2019, the fellow will further incorporate creative placemaking into Foundation Communities’ way of working. Although advancing this initiative has required patience and learning at every step—and sustaining bandwidth remains an ongoing challenge—Asset Project Manager Paula Suchland and Director of Institution Giving Julie Candoli report that staff across the organization are enthused and seeing the benefits from this inclusive approach.

Suchland and Candoli said they struggled at first to build the case internally within Foundation Communities—largely due to a lack of understanding of what creative placemaking entailed. By framing it as part of a comprehensive approach to community development, NeighborWorks helped bring legitimacy and credibility to their education effort. The expansive view of arts and culture embodied by NeighborWorks’ definition of “creative community development” also helped them to articulate its value to leadership. Case studies produced by NeighborWorks equipped them with examples of how arts and culture can help achieve community development goals. Last year, a team from Foundation Communities also participated in a peer-learning site visit hosted by ArtPlace America and NeighborWorks, where they received constructive feedback on their initial plans and referrals to additional resources.

Cross-Cutting Lessons for Building Capacity

Creative community development is still an emerging focus area for NeighborWorks America, but even over the past two years, we have learned several lessons that will inform our own efforts and may contribute to other capacity-building initiatives in the creative placemaking field.

Expanding imagination requires demonstrating the value of creative placemaking to community development goals.

NeighborWorks America's commitment to creative community development is grounded in our core values of equity, inclusion, resident engagement, and supporting strategies that best fit local conditions. We also recognize it as one of several components of comprehensive community development. By elevating and supporting models that align with these strategic priorities, capacity builders can help organizations move beyond preconceived notions by demonstrating how creative placemaking can advance a wide range of community development objectives. Further work across the field to equip internal champions with frameworks and tools to measure, assess, and communicate impact will also help to build support for efforts that are seen as innovative or risky.

Support is required for small-scale projects that can serve as learning opportunities and catalysts for future activities.

Creative placemaking success stories that feature large-scale, transformative efforts often gloss over the growing pains, setbacks, and incremental, small victories that characterize this work. In describing their experience growing a small, resident-led effort to activate community voices through photography into a full range of arts-related activities designed to build social cohesion, network member NeighborWorks of Western Vermont (NWWVT) admitted it "bit off more than it could chew." Despite widespread enthusiasm and support from leadership, challenges sustaining funding, volunteers, and partner engagement forced NWWVT to recalibrate plans and focus on smaller-scale projects that could build momentum over time. This experience is common—assembling adequate funding and ensuring long-term sustainability were the most commonly cited challenges reported by the NeighborWorks network organization in response to our 2017 survey. There is further need for flexible funding, training, peer learning, case studies, and other resources to help organizations navigate this nonlinear process and sustain/grow the effort through the startup or retrenchment phases.

Partnering with artists can improve the design and delivery of capacity-building resources.

As we support creative community development efforts in our network and beyond, NeighborWorks is learning how the creative process can benefit our own programs and services. We have taken initial steps to partner with artists in the planning and implementation of peer learning and training opportunities. This has revealed new ways of surfacing issues, elevating voices, and bringing new perspectives and alternative approaches to solving

problems. Like NeighborWorks, many organizations may find it challenging to embrace new ways of doing things, but partnering with socially minded artists can expand and enhance the impact of our capacity-building resources.

Conclusion

The growth of the creative placemaking field has already been accelerated by intermediaries and other capacity-building organizations that have realized the potential of arts and culture to advance community development goals. Still, there is additional opportunity to learn from what has worked, highlight emerging models, push boundaries, build core competencies, advance partnerships, and demonstrate the value of creative placemaking. In sharing lessons from NeighborWorks' efforts to develop a suite of tools and resources to support creative community development, we hope to contribute to a collective, field-wide capacity-building effort that can support the continued evolution of the practice.

Paul Singh, Vice President of Community Initiatives, leads NeighborWorks America's support for comprehensive community development efforts to build vibrant local communities that provide equitable opportunities for people to thrive. Singh oversees the Stable Communities, Community Building and Engagement, Rural and Healthy Homes and Communities Initiatives and the work of these teams to elevate and strengthen local practice through grantmaking, technical assistance, capacity building, peer-to-peer learning, demonstration projects, stakeholder convenings, and research. Prior to joining NeighborWorks in 2012, Singh was a Program Officer at LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation), where he managed multiple programs that deliver technical assistance and training to nonprofits. Singh got his start in community development at Historic Saint Paul, a nonprofit dedicated to preserving the historic character of his hometown of St. Paul, MN. He has a master's degree in urban and regional planning from the University of Minnesota and an undergraduate degree from Macalester College.

Lessons on Collaborative Practice between Artists and Community Developers

Alexis Stephens
PolicyLink

During the Community Development Investments program, when the six participating community development organizations embarked on a journey of co-creation with artists, their experiences had a steep learning curve. As participants leveraged their early experiments into more ambitious projects, they were compelled to address unforeseen friction with new arts partners, accept critique from many sides, and learn from periodic failures. They were rewarded for taking on these challenges by eventually putting in place a wide, colorful, and effective array of arts-based projects that advanced their mission and expanded organizational knowledge and relationships

This essay examines how these community-based organizations designed collaborative practices between their organizations and artists, and how these efforts have significantly changed the ways by which community preservation and revitalization can take place. The artists took on a broad range of roles: not only bringing creative expressions of local history to new audiences, energizing and activating public spaces, and organizing innovative performances and exhibits, but also facilitating internal strategic planning and ways of working.

This article describes cross-cutting themes across all six sites as context for detailed perspectives in the articles that follow in this issue of *CDIR*, including essays by six of the participating artists and dialogues among the CDI leaders.¹ Specifically, it provides insights on:

- how the CDI leaders matched their priorities with the expertise and artistic practice of collaborators;
- how they identified arts partners and built relationships;
- the process of creating guidelines, structuring relationships, and establishing roles and responsibilities; and
- how, through these experiences, the organizations became more transparent, nimble, and reflective.

¹ The themes of this essay are expanded upon, with many examples drawn from the CDI communities, in the May 2019 PolicyLink brief, *Working with Artists to Deepen Impact*, May 2019. Accessible at www.communitydevelopment.art

Lesson 1: Expanding Knowledge about Artistic Practice

An important first step for most of the CDI organizations was to expand their understanding and imagination around how artistic practice might be deployed in service of specific community challenges. As the organizations got more comfortable with how artists work, the artists often became not only hired talent but also thought partners in the design and execution of the projects, a deeper relationship which worked to the community's benefit. Moreover, learning more about common relationship structures with artists – elements as basic but important as pay scales for different artistic forms – enhanced the capacity of community development organizations to deploy experimental projects.

These organizations varied in their prior experience working with artists when the program was launched in fall 2015, but they nonetheless considered themselves novices and frequently expressed trepidation about the perceived 'black box' of how artists work. Over the course of three years, all six organizations embarked on learning more about the wide typology of artistic practice and increasing their understanding about how different methods and approaches might match each organization's community development goals.

The Center for Performance and Civic Practice coached, trained, and guided processes at the six sites throughout the course of the program. Their role as a key technical assistance provider was to help the organizations consider their own partnership practices, identify opportunities where an artist might be of service, and engage in productive co-design processes with artists interested in pursuing community development goals. Through this partnership, and as a result of the opportunity to learn more about the arts, many of the projects that the organizations undertook were with social or civic practice artists (Box 1). That is, artists whose artistic practice functioned in service of an aspiration, challenge, or vision defined by the organizations and their community partners.

Box 1

Types of Artistic Practice

Studio practice: Artists create their own work and engage with neighbors/residents as audience.

Social practice: Artists work with neighbors/residents on an artist-led vision that involves some level of community participation and an intention of social impact outside traditional audience experience.

Civic practice: Artists co-design a project with neighbors and residents; the spoken intention is to serve a community's/public partner's self-defined needs.²

² All three definitions are from Center for Performance and Civic Practice, *Effective Partnering: Starting with Values, Goals and Vision*, May 17, 2017, https://www.artplaceamerica.org/view/pdf?f=/sites/default/files/public/pictures/cpcp_low.pdf.

As the organizations worked with more artists, they also began to see that different kinds of practices could be applied in creative ways to their priorities – theater practice might help facilitate a community meeting and explore scenarios; photography might help illuminate what a community loves and hates; storytelling might help provide a new insight that data alone could not. With each relationship, the organizations had to adapt to different pay scales, requirements around material resources, and the languages artists use. One consequence of this adaptation was to learn to approach artists with more humility. Instead of approaching them with fully-conceived ideas about how an artist might develop a project, they began to treat artists as thought partners at the outset or design phase of projects.

Lesson 2: Seeking Out Arts Partners

There are many proven avenues to seeking out local art, artists, and arts organizations. When the groups began, many felt as though they were not sure where to find artists. Cultural asset mapping, issuing calls, and forming rosters, directories, and committees were all ways they looked to form new relationships. The groups became facile with these techniques and chose or adapted them to their circumstances.

Cultural Asset Mapping

Cultural asset mapping is an exploratory process of identifying the cultural and artistic skills, talents, networks, and histories of an area—including people, spaces, and businesses—to acknowledge and integrate them into planning and development efforts. It provides documentation for visioning and planning that focuses on community-identified strengths, rather than their deficiencies, and provides a new lens through which to understand those communities.³

Many of the organizations conducted asset mapping at the beginning of the CDI program in order to uncover local artists, cultural centers, and art forms. Some chose to conduct asset mapping later in the program to fit a specific community development or relationship-building goal. For example, Fairmount Park Conservancy completed their cultural asset mapping project in the final year of the program. Their collaborators, Amber Art & Design and Ethnologica, encouraged them to focus on the *process of listening* over predetermining what the ultimate *product of asset mapping* would be. The partners conducted life history interviews in people’s homes, on street corners, and via public events, including a barber-shop on the porch of a historic house in the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood.⁴ They then compiled residents’ stories and memories of the neighborhood into a deck of playing cards featuring current and historic figures and landmarks. The cards have been distributed to residents as a fun, educational, and culturally evocative way to continue a dialogue about

3 Kofi Boone, “Disembodied Voices, Embodied Places: Mobile Technology, Enabling Discourse, and Interpreting Place,” *Landscapes and Urban Planning* 142 (2015): 217-226, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282487456_Disembodied_voices_embodied_places_Mobile_technology_enabling_discourse_and_interpreting_place.

4 Amber Art & Design, *Strawberry Mansion Community Engagement: Cultural Asset Mapping and Gateway Conceptual Planning 2017-2018*, October 15, 2018.



Residents participating in programs at the Hatfield House in the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood of Philadelphia, PA. Photo credit: Albert Yee

how these people, places, and memories might fit into future planning and development projects for the neighborhood. Ellen Ryan and Adela Park from the Fairmount Park Conservancy discuss their collaborative process with Amber Art and Design in the site dialogue that follows while Keir Johnston, Ernel Martinez and Martha O’Connell give their perspective in the adjoining mini-essay.

Issuing a Call for Artists, and Forming Rosters, Directories, and Advisory Committees

Issuing a call for artists, similar to a request for proposals, is a common way to find an artist collaborator. The organizations experimented with different methods of issuing calls and learned that defining the parameters of the call wasn’t as simple as they expected, and that they had to be thoughtful about how open or defined the opportunity was.⁵

In 2017, Cook Inlet Housing Authority (CIHA) issued a call for artists to “advance the design of a small plaza as a permanent enhancement” in front of one of their mixed-use development projects in the Spenard neighborhood. Their call included: guidelines for working with artists; the project’s details, including the building architect’s plans; and very detailed guidance with respect to how artists were to approach the purpose, functionality, and design of the plaza. It was a learning experience for the organization—one artist responded that they were invited too late in the process, after the planning and permitting were already underway.

5 Americans for the Arts, *Abridged Call for Artists Guidelines*, 2009, https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2013/by_program/networks_and_councils/public_art_network/CallforArtistsGuideAbridged.pdf.



Performer Brian Hutton as a part of the #MIMESPENARD project in the Spenard neighborhood of Anchorage, AK. Photo credit: Brandon McElroy

If the artist had been engaged at an earlier stage, they would have suggested reorienting the plaza in relationship to the surrounding landscape, because the architect had oriented it toward being able to look at the building rather than the surrounding mountains. Sezy Gerow-Hanson and Candace Blas of CIHA also discuss how their approach to working with artists changed over time in the following site dialogue, while artist Enzina Marrari reflects on working with the organization in her mini-essay.

All of the organizations used the call for artists mechanism to invite artists for specific projects and to cultivate their arts advisory committees and rosters. While individual artists and arts groups were being identified as potential collaborators via cultural asset mapping, calls for artists, or through direct contact by interested artists, the organizations also created new structures for communicating with them, sharing opportunities, and consulting with them as a group. Establishing artist rosters, artist directories, and arts advisory committee all became ways that the organizations moved from engaging with artists on a project basis to building long-term relationships that covered multiple opportunities.

An artist directory can be as simple as a record of information about artists and arts groups. An artist roster is more formal; it includes people who are engaged regularly in these formal engagements, are likely to be compensated for their collaboration.⁶ Artist Carlton Turner advised the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation that these are artists who “you don’t just call when you need them, *they show up* when you need them.” An arts advisory committee is a group that is convened early and often for their input on the range of arts and culture

⁶ Compensating artists and arts groups was a key value of the CDI program and an important best practice that affirms the importance of their contributions.

work of an organization. Jackson Medical Mall Foundation, Little Tokyo Service Center, and the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project all formed arts advisory committees and paid members from \$30 per session to between \$40 and \$60 an hour for their participation.

Whatever the method by which the artists are brought into the work, what matters is the depth of the relationships that are formed and the utility of the guidance provided. Many of the groups discovered that it wasn't enough to get singular input from artists along the way, but that they could actually learn more when through a sustained body of artists invested in their mission and the work being done. Of the three sites with artist committees, the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project's seven-member advisory committee had the most profound impact on their project and on the sponsoring organization. That committee helped to culturally ground and foster community ownership over the design, construction, and placement of public art within H'on A:wan ("of the people") Park. Initially, artists were skeptical about the park because of historical experiences where development projects proposed by outsiders equipped with significant financial resources failed to deliver on their promised outcomes. The organization successfully countered skepticism from artists and built trust through frequent communication with the committee, especially when the construction progress was periodically stalled. Members of the committee have reflected that this is the first project where they have felt "heard" and that their input was acted upon.⁷

Consulting with Intermediaries

Some of the groups enlisted experts from the arts sector to support them in identifying artists and incubating relationships. Those professionals were available for brainstorming, confidence-building, and connecting the groups to other regional and national creative place-making leaders. Consulting with arts intermediaries saved these groups time and outreach effort, both valuable during the defined three-year period. The Center for Performance and Civic Practice played this role for many of the groups, with ArtPlace America providing supplementary technical assistance and matchmaking.

Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership sought out Intermedia Arts, a Minneapolis-based multidisciplinary, multicultural arts organization, to hold their first Creative Community Leadership Institute in rural Minnesota in early 2017. The institute engaged cross-sector leadership (community developers and artists) to address community issues with arts-based strategies. This series assembled groups in each of the three target communities (Milan, St. James, and Worthington). They also added a fourth group to focus on their organization itself as they worked for three weekends on a series of trainings to ideate, research, and develop a logic model for a project addressing community issues. This process generated the initial projects for the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership, creating momentum for at least 15 projects by the end of 2018.

⁷ Susan Carter, memorandum to PolicyLink, December 2018.

Lesson 3: Defining Relationships

Leading with shared values can amplify the mutual benefits for both sides of an artist-community development collaboration. Some of the sites developed internal guidelines for their arts work that detailed their values and criteria and engaged artists as thought partners in developing new project ideas, not just responding to existing project ideas. These were both a revelation and a release, providing an opportunity for new ways of expression, resident engagement, and problem solving that were much different from their usual rule-driven playbook.

With their project frameworks in mind, the groups had to make decisions about when and where to deploy artists, and had to create the structural openings for any processes that engaged artists. Hiring an artist may sound like a good idea, but these groups learned that to engage with artists on a long-term basis meant developing specific internal structures and adopting common procedures within the arts world.

The different types of projects and initiatives deployed by the six organizations required distinct relationship structures:

- shorter-term collaborations, often categorized as commissions;
- open/responsive collaborations, often considered partnerships as formalized through memorandums of understanding; and
- major design and planning undertakings, carried out through artist residencies and designs for capital projects with contracts which address in greater detail the expectations for each partner's contributions.

To collaborate successfully, the organizations had to demonstrate their respect for the artists' and arts groups' skills and expertise, educate themselves about integrating these structures into their programming, institute fair-wage pay scales, and assign—and more critically, have a dialogue with artists about—shared language and expectations. Above all, they had to lead with their values, vision for the work, and open minds.

Artist Residencies

Through artist-in-residence programs, host organizations can provide artists with time, space, and other supports to engage in community-based work.⁸ Five of the six organizations ended up considering, and then, pursuing formal residency programs, in order to anchor and situate their artist collaborators within their place-based community development work. Different models of artist residencies were engaged, but primarily these programs had artists playing a curatorial role in public programming and community engagement.

Residencies can bring new perspectives to either external or internal opportunities in this kind of initiative. Some of the artists, such as those working with Little Tokyo Service

8 Maria Rosario Jackson, "Brief Reflections on Artist Residencies in Community Contexts," *CONSUMPTION* (project), Asian Arts Initiative, accessed March 19, 2019, <http://asianartsinitiative.org/consumption/essay-by-maria-rosario-jackson-ph-d>.

Center and its partners described below, created new pieces or performances that extended the reach, impact and insights of their hosts' political and cultural strategy. But other artists turned their attention to the host organizations. Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership hired Ashley Hanson as an in-house artist-in-residence to integrate arts and culture into the DNA of the organization, promoting collaborative practice across teams and departments.

Partnerships with Arts Institutions

Beyond relationships with individual artists, the sites also formed, or strengthened, more informal but critical partnerships with major arts institutions and cultural organizations.

Aligning with local museums and cultural centers can lend community developers credibility and expertise, boost their visibility, connect them to new artists, and generate new audiences for creative placemaking endeavors. Little Tokyo Service Center had prior experience working with local institutions dating back to the late 1990s when they renovated a former church building, transforming it into the Union Center for the Arts. In 2018, they ran a residency program in Little Tokyo on the theme of “community control and self-determination” with four of their longstanding partners—Japanese American National Museum, the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, Visual Communications (a media arts company), and Sustainable Little Tokyo. Each partner group served as a primary host for one of the selected artists. Leaning into their role as a convener, Little Tokyo Service Center helped to increase cohesiveness among these arts institutions by circumventing competitive barriers, deepening present and future collaborations, and normalizing the practice of sharing expertise, contacts, and resources.

Lesson 4: Overcoming Challenges

At the outset, the community developers did not necessarily know what they wanted out of the partnership with artists or how to seek it, and the artists did not know how to work in this environment. **Failing early made the collaborative work more powerful later on.** This openness and experimental mindset may be familiar advice for social change agents and entrepreneurial nonprofit leaders, but it only becomes real through new, shared experiences.

The multiyear interventions pursued by the selected community development organizations were not without friction and periodic roadblocks. Participants in the arts and community development sectors brought their own styles of working, priorities with respect to project outcomes, and approaches to conflict resolution. Throughout the program, all six organizations had to accept feedback, learn from missteps and blind spots, and establish best practices for working with artists moving forward. Early failures were often stepping stones toward meeting more ambitious objectives.

CDI participants often reflected on how important it was to:

- Identify a common language and shared goals with artists
- Work to increase transparency and consistency in communication

- Demonstrate more patience during the initial pilot phase of the program (a precursor to deeper and longer-term partnerships)
- Test internal boundaries and flexibility with respect to deadlines and deliverables
- View partnership as mutually beneficial with both sides sharing their creativity and resources

Friction should be expected. Being transparent, flexible, and patient helps to mitigate conflict; mediation from an outside arts intermediary can also bridge perceived gaps.

Lesson 5: Sustaining the Work

Sustaining arts and culture work over the long term is a different challenge from embarking upon it, but the learned ability through experimentation to translate the outcomes of their work and maintain a wide net of partners has helped.

All participants report that the challenges of sustaining this work are different from the ones they faced as implementers. The CDI award was a one-time opportunity, so the maintenance of a strong arts and culture presence will require consistent commitment and creativity as well as new fundraising. The groups have been able to transfer their recently honed best practices and their expanded networks in the arts sector to support the development of new arts partners, projects, and communities, in many instances raising new resources and keeping a wide range of their staff members engaged. The fundraising was successful when they were able to demonstrate that they were equipped and committed to use cultural strategies to become more effective anchor institutions for their communities. They have come away with a more sophisticated and reflective understanding of the potential of arts and culture to amplify their mission-driven community development work.

Alexis Stephens, Senior Communications Associate, delivers messages about racial and economic equity to advocates, policymakers, and media members within the PolicyLink network and beyond. She provides strategic communications support to the All-In Cities, National Equity Atlas, and Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development teams. She also contributes writing and research to a research and documentation project about integrating arts and culture strategies into community development practices, in partnership with ArtPlace America. Alexis was a 2019 Next City Vanguard and prior to joining PolicyLink, was Next City's 2014-2015 equitable cities fellow. She holds a master's degree in historic preservation from the University of Pennsylvania.

The Connection between Public Space and Cultural Resources: Reflections on Our Work in Strawberry Mansion

*Martha O'Connell, Keir Johnston, Ernel Martinez, and Linda Fernandez
Amber Art & Design*

As public artists with a focus on engaging the communities we are working in and with, we highly value *process* in community development, with the belief that neighbor-informed community development comes from building relationships, sharing stories, and investing financial resources over time. Single arts-based projects do little to transform relationships between community organizations and residents and rarely impact community development efforts over the long term. Instead, a process-based approach requires substantial commitment from partnering organizations because it prioritizes neighbors' interests, rather than predetermining which investment or project should take place. It can be a challenge for community development organizations to have the flexibility of funding, staffing, and decision-making to respond in authentic ways to community priorities. We believe an approach rooted in the arts can help address some of these challenges.

Our community development partner, Fairmount Park Conservancy (FPC), began to envision an arts-based approach to public park improvements through an ArtPlace grant in 2015. We were thrilled to join FPC at Place Lab in Chicago with artist Theaster Gates. The sessions focused on Ethical Redevelopment Principles, a formalized approach for using artistic processes to drive investment in neighborhood needs. Creating the space for community members to truly lead a decision-making process when resources are at stake *can be possible* through arts-based approaches; ethical redevelopment principles are grounded in the notion that *"resource inequity can be reduced with imagination."*¹

From 2017 to 2018, we partnered with FPC on a cultural asset mapping project and public programs residency in Strawberry Mansion, one of the most segregated black neighborhoods in Philadelphia. Strawberry Mansion has a long history of artists, civic leaders, and local influencers whose legacies live on. At the same time, the neighborhood has historically been cut off from access to resources for public education, infrastructure, and healthy foods and has endured strategic local disinvestment for decades. However, rapid growth and encroaching real estate developments are creeping into Strawberry Mansion, as is happening all over the city. Although FPC has always had a relationship with Strawberry Mansion, it

1 Place Lab, "Ethical Redevelopment Manual" (Chicago, IL: Place Lab, University of Chicago, 2016), <https://placelab.uchicago.edu/ethical-redevelopment>.

serves many neighborhoods, and the staff has often not had the ability to get to know or work with those residents.

Within this context, we partnered with FPC to open the Hatfield House, a historic mansion on the edge of Fairmount Park in Strawberry Mansion. This effort repurposed an existing but previously inaccessible space in the park into a place for interviewing neighbors, hosting free arts-based events, and hosting public discussions about development, the arts, and neighborhood history. We aimed to capture neighbors' input on new investments in the park, as well as inform the relationship-building between the neighborhood and FPC. We also aimed to create programming alongside residents at the House in order to provide the opportunity for further relationship-building between FPC and neighbors in fun, organic ways.

Reflections on Organizational Evolution and Community Development

Throughout our year-long process of gathering data and curating events, we shifted our approach to collaboration with FPC and neighborhood leadership to conceptualize ourselves not as *makers* in the neighborhood but as *facilitators*. We wanted to focus on an arts- and culture-based *process*, rather than working toward a predetermined goal of art production, to unearth neighbors' personal histories, expertise, and interests for the park and the neighborhood. As part of this process, we met people for conversations in local spaces such as homes, barbershops, and the recreation center. We engaged neighbors at celebratory, free, public arts events at the Hatfield House and built relationships with local artists and makers through the community-based organizations working within Strawberry Mansion.

Over the course of five months, we worked with Beth Uzwiak, a community-based ethnographer at Ethnologica, to conduct 25 life-history interviews and 50 informal interviews. We met over 20 neighborhood-based painters, dancers, musicians, herbalists, and makers. We hosted eight public events, during which three painters and a photographer exhibited and sold art; five neighborhood-based caterers provided food; and eight neighborhood-based musicians, singers, a dancer, and three barbers showcased their work at the House.

The data we collected with Ethnologica through interviews in Strawberry Mansion pointed to very specific priorities for park improvements, such as better lighting, better access to picnic permits, hiring locals to run programming, and more bathrooms in the park. We also collected data on the main concerns of neighbors, which focused on such themes as retaining home ownership, healthy food, lack of employment opportunities, addressing trauma, high incarceration rates, and decreased funding for public schools. Through this process, we discovered the ways in which one community development “focus”—in this case, park improvements—intersects with all aspects of civic life.

Because of its specific mission, in many ways FPC was restricted to address park-based needs only, which limited our ability to respond to neighbors' requests or to provide a timeline on their requests moving forward. However, this experience made clear to us that community organizations, ourselves included, need to develop and foster new partnerships

to be able to deliver more holistic outcomes. Additionally, we hope that funders can break down silos across priorities or programs to allow greater flexibility in targeting funds where they are needed most and on creating more immediate timelines. (For instance, ensuring that neighbors have access to picnic permits as regulations shift in the park was a simple, early request we received.) More flexible funding could support community development organizations to foster new partnerships, allowing for more integration across arts and community development efforts. As artist-partners, we know that arts processes often make space for myriad needs to arise and be addressed in the short term. Through our cultural asset mapping, we met individuals and organizations that spanned a range of services, such as healthy food, youth recreation, herbalism, and foraging. This kind of cross-service partnering can begin to address neighbor needs in creative collaborations.

Defining ourselves as facilitators, translators, and bridge-builders, *rather than as public artists*, revealed that such an approach can:

- Expand the capacity and reach of external community development organizations to engage neighborhood members in new relationships and services;
- Strengthen the capacity of neighborhood-based community development organizations to build on existing relationships with residents by engaging in ongoing follow-up;
- Create a process of discovery and self-determination alongside neighbors;
- Place neighborhood-based artists, who may otherwise have been unknown by the outside community development partner, at the forefront of community cultural celebration.

When community-engaged artists and community development organizations commit to raising up local designers, performers, cooks, and caterers, they create new opportunities for valuable activities that benefit the community, such as festivals, youth programming, and more. This kind of bridge-building can create a long-lasting, more equitable distribution of community resources.

Amber Art & Design is an art collective of six Philadelphia- and New York based artists: Ernel Martinez, Keir Johnston, Charles Barbin, Linda Fernandez, Siddhartha Joag, and Martha O'Connell. We have a collective 20 years of experience partnering with local communities, NGOs, museums, and academic and cultural institutions to realize transformative projects. We have a longstanding portfolio of public mural projects and regularly advise on art-driven processes between institutions and communities. Our work engages with concepts of restricted movement, public space accessibility, and deep, hyper-local, community-based engagement with a commitment to prioritizing a community's existing expertise and intergenerational knowledge. Through our collaborations with social researchers, community organizers, and community institutions, we work to bring institutional resources into neighborhoods that have seen decades of resource depletion. We currently have projects in development in Philadelphia; New York City; San Juan, Puerto Rico; Newfoundland; and São Paulo, Brazil.

Mimes and Road Construction: An Unlikely Partnership for Community Investment

*Enzina Marrari
Kendall|Marrari*

In summer 2017, a frequently traveled area in Anchorage was undergoing major road reconstruction to improve traffic patterns and safety. Spenard, one of Anchorage's oldest neighborhoods and a bohemian part of town, is home to artists, musicians, and colorful establishments. However, the seven-block reconstruction project along Spenard Road would last the full length of the summer—Alaska's most profitable tourist season—and would significantly disrupt multiple restaurants, local businesses, cultural amenities, and residences.

Cook Inlet Housing Authority (CIHA), a catalyst for affordable housing development and neighborhood revitalization throughout Anchorage, is based in Spenard and decided to focus its community development investment (CDI) work through ArtPlace America in this neighborhood. At the start, many local artists approached CIHA with ideas for community projects. Kendall|Marrari, an art team focused on social impact that I co-lead with Becky Kendall, proposed the concept of “Spenard Art Fest,” which involved cross-sector partnerships, professional development for artists, and community-wide events. But CIHA didn't buy in. Through an iterative process, we presented multiple versions of a concept and became increasingly discouraged.

We expressed frustration to Asia Freeman, an artist and executive director of the Bunnell Street Arts Center, with whom CIHA had contracted to provide guidance on developing successful relationships with artists. She encouraged us to stay the course, and we decided to have one more meeting. However, this time we would not present a concept—just a blank page. When CIHA leaders asked, “What do you have for us?” we instead asked what challenge they were facing and what they were trying to achieve through art. In this moment, our art practice shifted. We moved from a *Social Practice* approach—artists identifying a social problem and designing work around it—to a *Civic Practice* approach—artists responding to problems identified by the community and designing work to address them.

Through this shift, we began a robust conversation about the Spenard Road reconstruction and CIHA's concern about the potential negative impact to business owners and constituents, as well as the risk of an unfavorable outcome that could tarnish future road projects. Together we outlined the problem and discussed how other cities have used art to address similar issues. One example was a city that placed red balloons to indicate new crosswalk patterns. The vision of this red balloon triggered a thought, and I wrote it down. We left that meeting more informed about CIHA's needs but without clear direction on how

to move forward. I thought about what I wrote down: *mimes*. I turned to Becky and said, “I have an idea. Let’s fill Spenard with 100 mimes!” She looked wide-eyed, and her frustration turned to joy. After some laughter, Becky said, “But let’s start with one mime and end with 100, a slow build.” And so, we began to design MimeSpenard.

As artists, we find inspiration everywhere. A question I’ve heard since the inception of this project is, “But why mimes?!” Becky and I are both performance artists, but neither of us had experience with pantomime. I remembered seeing a local mime performer and how much joy and laughter he brought to the observers, how he invited participation and sparked curiosity. I knew that same wonder could be felt by a broader audience. How can I describe the cognitive process that went from the image of a red balloon to a group of mimes? It is the creative process, the act of artistic problem-solving. This example demonstrates the challenge of partnership across a non-arts organization with creatives. Sometimes the path from A to B has no clear route. It is a mixture of feeling and memory, object and reference, vision and experiment. It is a process that can be difficult to trust, but when given the chance, it can execute astounding results.

MimeSpenard used consistent and exponential growth of visual stimuli on Spenard Road to retain commerce and build enthusiasm and curiosity during the road project. MimeSpenard had three main goals: (1) pique the interest of residents and draw attention to Spenard; (2) support local businesses impacted by the road reconstruction; and (3) create positive experiences and opportunities for community engagement. Collaterally, we reinvested in our community by hiring artists, made purchases from local businesses, and collaborated with entrepreneurs.

MimeSpenard had four major components:

1. *Performance-based*—Mimes staged on the road, inside local businesses, in performances and skits, and in public interaction;
2. *Key anchor events*—A pop-up mime mural, a mime bike ride, a pop-up mime parade and concert, pop-up mime makeup booths, a community wishes-and-woes well, and Mime Day;
3. *Community and business involvement*—Developing a relationship with the construction company and partnering with over 20 local businesses in the corridor, local artists, and local media via engagement events;
4. *Maintaining the identity and integrity of place*—Celebrating the uniqueness of Spenard: bohemian roots, sometimes-seedy atmosphere, grassroots mom-and-pop feel, quirkiness.

MimeSpenard mirrored our relationship with CIHA in that it was a slow progress spread over three summer months—or construction season, as it’s called in Alaska. We started with one mime at a community event announcing the road reconstruction and ended with 131 mimes on Mime Day—a community celebration that involved 13 businesses, local artists,

art activities, music, and over 100 community members. This event marked the culmination of MimeSpenard and the coming end of the construction season. MimeSpenard was itself a mixture of feeling and memory, object and reference, vision and experiment. When we proposed this concept to CIHA, we had no idea if it would accept it—or if the concept would succeed. We had to be ready to fail, and CIHA had to be ready with us. This is the challenge of working across sectors: we may be uncomfortable with how new partners approach a problem. We may not see the direct route from A to B, but if we trust in each person’s strengths and allow room for failure, experimentation, and joy, the results just might be astounding.

Enzina Marrari is a visual and performance artist, educator, and community organizer. She believes that art is a tool for communication and connection and strives to create intimate and shared experiences through her work. Enzina is deeply impassioned by her community and is part of the artist team KendallMarrari, which addresses social or civic issues with the intention of effecting positive community change. Enzina is currently living and working in Anchorage, AK, where she finds inspiration in her surrounding environment, in the confrontation of the hard stuff, and in the stories of her peers. She lives by the belief that each person has the power to positively impact the world. She received a BA in Sculpture and Figure Drawing from the University of Alaska, Anchorage and an MA in Installation and Environmental Art from New York University. She is a 2017 Rasmuson Foundation Artist Fellow and a 2018 recipient of the Alaska Journal of Commerce’s 40 under 40 award.

Dialogue on Working with Artists

Alexis Stephens of PolicyLink spoke in February 2019 with four leaders of the Community Development Investments (CDI) activities at their agencies. Ellen Ryan is Senior Director of Strategy and Planning for the Fairmount Park Conservancy (FPC) in Philadelphia, and Adela Park is Special Projects Coordinator for FPC. Sezy Gerow-Hanson is Director of Public and Resident Relations at the Cook Inlet Housing Authority (CIHA) of Anchorage, AK, and Candace Blas was Manager of the Church of Love at CIHA. They spoke about their organizations' collaborations with artists throughout the three years of the CDI initiative. This discussion refers to activities that participating artists Enzina Marrari of Anchorage and the members of the Amber Art and Design collective of Philadelphia describe in their essays in this section of the volume.

Alexis:

This conversation will be about collaborative practice, the nuts and bolts of the work that you have done over the past three years—the structures that you've built, the daily emails and conversations, and the relationships that you've cultivated.

I want to start at the beginning with Ellen and Sezy, who have been thinking about how to originate work with artists to meet the goals of their respective organizations. What was your institution's prior knowledge about different forms of artistic practice? And are there any particular projects you pursued that helped you to better understand how they might match with your community development priorities?

Sezy (CIHA):

We had zero knowledge that there were different forms of artistic practice. We were familiar with public art as community developers, so this was quite a journey.

Ellen (FPC):

As a parks organization, we have a lot of familiarity with visual artists, particularly mural artists. But the Conservancy's partnership with artists had really been restricted to art as decoration and art as entertainment. For our annual friend-raiser, Glow in the Park, we would find fire dancers or somebody who could scale a monument with hula hoops of different colors, something like that to entertain at a benefit. But what we hadn't done was ask an artist to partner with us and be a thought partner. And we certainly hadn't worked with any kind of social or civic practice artists, so that was completely new territory. The way, the duration, the extent, and the depth were all completely different. The first way was contractual; the second way was a partnership.

Sezy (CIHA):

We had to quickly learn through our early technical assistance visits what this could translate to and then take a big leap of faith. For example, we worked with a set designer to design a model of a micro-apartment unit so we could play with configurations in that space in a three-dimensional way because there were concerns from developers, policymakers, and residents about whether they could actually be livable. This was brand-new territory for us that we thought was going to be a discussion about design layout for the apartments. It ended up being a discussion about community and the things that you need in your community, particularly if you're going to live in a small apartment. It was a much broader dialogue with some really big takeaways and "aha" moments for the private developers who came through that set and played with us. Even the architects, who had been supporting the move to micro-units, seemed surprised at how well it could work.

We had our board president walk through a micro-unit with us. He's a big man who lives in a big house in Texas. For him to stand in one of these units and remark, "People could live in this," changes the discussion that you have later when you go to the board and tell them we're going to develop micro-units. They have a different buy-in now; they have a different understanding. That would have never happened on paper, two-dimensionally. Collaborating with the set designer to make this temporary set we could play with changed our organization. Having a set designer apply her practice in this way was something that we had never thought about.

Alexis:

[Ellen, how did you learn to deploy different artistic forms and match them with the different community development priorities you had set?](#)

Ellen (FPC):

I think we're still learning. Amber Art and Design, the collective that we ended up partnering with, helped us to start to shift the way we work in the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood. It was through a conversation with them that we recalibrated and figured out a new way of working together.

Generally, we are still figuring out who is the right person for the right job. Sometimes we do a call-to-artists, and that's been successful; sometimes we rely on referrals of artists. We want to do an artist roster. We have talked about doing mixers, where we invite artists in and have a conversation so that we can tell them who we are and they can tell us who they are. This pool and ability to have these conversations will be especially important for our new program, which is a staff "Yes Lab." The idea is that we're saying "yes" to giving small project resources to our staff for trying new approaches to support their work in partnership with artists. We want to make sure that we have a great selection of artists for staff to work with.

Alexis:

Sezy's description of the set-design project reminded me of something that you've said, Candace, which is that artists have unique ways of seeing the world and solving problems. Candace and Adela, as the folks doing a lot of the project management directly with artists, how have you also seen that play out?

Candace (CIHA):

I'll use an example of one of the projects that we've done, which was called MIMESPENARD. It was a collaboration with two artists who had originally approached us with an idea they had when they first heard that we had received this grant. They were approaching us with ideas for how we could use the money, and we countered with our goals of community development. We explained there was this corridor in Spenard where part of the road was going to be under construction for the entire summer. And we knew that that road construction would negatively affect small businesses in the area. We posed this concern to the artists to see if they had a unique solution to that problem.

The artists thought about it, and we scheduled a follow-up meeting with them. When we were gathering to meet with them, we noticed that there was a mime outside in front of the Church of Love [the community arts center run by CIHA] and we said, "Whoa, that's so cool. There's a mime outside!" We asked the artists, "Did you guys see that there's a mime outside? How cool would it be to do something with mimes?"

And lo and behold, they had planted that mime there for us to notice the effect of how energized and engaged we felt by spotting and interacting with the mime. I had gone up to him and asked, "Why are you here?" and of course, mimes don't talk; he did a good job of not saying anything.

So, before they'd even pitched the idea to us, we were sold. Then over the course of the summer, these two artists trained an army of mimes who would pop up throughout the area that was under construction. And it engaged the community; community members then became mimes; kids and their parents became mimes, and they would take shifts and wander and just hang out along the corridor. It culminated with a big huge community event where there were musicians and community members all in mime regalia marching around this stretch of Spenard. MIMESPENARD not only succeeded in bringing people into this area and its businesses, but it had a lasting community impact and was certainly a unique way of addressing the challenge we were concerned about.

Adela (FPC):

In the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood, a big part of our work and partnership with Amber Art and Design was about first accepting and embracing their perspective as artists. Doing so expanded our idea of what art even was. It sounds simple, but within our organization

you think of an art piece or a product or a visual work. And throughout their residency, they really drilled down and focused on the social practice aspects of art and pushed us to think outside of those traditional forms and focus on the goals of our work together, which were to help change our relationship with the community to get more input into what we were doing in the park. I remember when we were still in the negotiation phase of the contract, we had a disagreement about what we wanted to call the residency. We really wanted to call it an artist residency, and they really pushed back on that.

They wanted it to be more focused on community. We eventually settled on calling it a “community catalyst residency.” That term reflects the approach that they were bringing. One of the things that they did at the Hatfield House was build and create a team of artists and collaborators from the immediate neighborhood—photographers, graphic designers, painters, event planners—who all contributed to each event that was held. The creation of that network was a really powerful way of not just breaking down the perceived barriers between artists and community, but really deepening relationships in the neighborhood, creating energy around the Hatfield House, and providing real opportunities for people to be engaged with it and to be a part of it. They were able to unlock the creative potential that is in every community.

Alexis:

Both organizations had many different types of relationships with artists—whether it was a one-time collaboration for specific events, or longer-term partnerships or residencies. How do you approach these types of relationships differently? How do you navigate them?

Ellen (FPC):

I was joking with Adela before I got here that I should just show a graphic of me complaining about the challenges between Fairmount Park Conservancy and Amber Art and Design. We were constantly butting heads; I just want to be frank about that. It was for the right reasons, and even though we had agreed on the goals together, I don’t think we always put our values to the fore.

Values become important, because as social practice artists, they had their own questions and their own line of inquiry. As an organization, we have our own mission and way of working. Finding that happy balance in a year’s work is really tricky, and we had all-out arguments sometimes. But one example of a great outcome was the deck of cards that we did together, which is actually the cultural asset map of Strawberry Mansion—and which I’m super proud of. It was a tough project, but it’s made us smarter about how to enter those kinds of partnerships. I’d like to think that Amber Art and Design learned, too. We’re still talking about a second phase with them. I think that says something; we were able to find our way.

I'm trained as a planner, so I see things a certain way, but you have to allow yourself to open up; so that was my challenge. Other projects have been much easier, but the work we did in Strawberry Mansion is still unfolding—it's still resonating.

Sezy (CIHA):

We worked really diligently, and the secret sauce is to be transparent. Those are the words that would run through my mind as we would go into meetings. I've been known to be inflexible, so I would just have to remind myself, "Be flexible and transparent." Creating a framework of guiding principles that describe our goals and way of working in Spenard to help us with our transparency was a key to managing relationships long- and short-term. We have a certain capacity and skill set, and we learned to try to meet the artists where they were at with their capacity.

Having had a lot of success as a developer, we've had to acknowledge the challenging moments. We had ArtPlace tell our CEO that failure was part of the journey; that gave us the opportunity to make bold statements and go forth and stumble. The idea that something "was a failure, but not a failure" was new for the organization. We did a call-to-artists that failed. They presented, nobody liked any of the proposals, so we had to go back and kind of eat a little humble pie and say, "Obviously our call was flawed, not your ideas, in that we didn't put forth what we needed." I think learning all of those things helps to manage the long-term relationships that we have with our whole arts community.

Alexis:

[Sezy, could you tell us about Cook Inlet Housing Authority's guiding principles for arts-engaged work? How has your approach to the principles changed over time?](#)

Sezy (CIHA):

I think many of us in community development organizations in the CDI program had those moments where we met with a room full of artists and stakeholders and they just didn't understand us and we didn't understand them. We learned along the way. We started working with a local artist, Asia Freeman. She became our arts midwife. She taught us the right terms. She translated for us. We developed a framework of principles and goals out of that work and the project in Spenard, and it became a filter for decision-making about what projects to work on. As we look forward, we want to take the framework and broaden it, so that it applies

across the region that we work in and has loftier and bigger goals.¹

The framework worked in two ways. It was how we communicated externally about what we were looking to do, but it also became really important to how we were communicating internally. It helped our organization understand beyond just what those of us directly involved were doing. It served a lot of purposes, and I think it's a great base foundation for us to continue to tweak.

Alexis:

Did Fairmount Park Conservancy have an “arts midwife”? What was the learning curve like as far as details like pay scales, structuring payments, or putting out RFPs, for example?

Ellen (FPC):

Some artists brought their own contracts. They gave us a draft, and we ran it by our lawyers if need be. We had other artists, like Amber Art and Design, who asked us to do the contract. We ended up working with a few curators, midwives of a different stripe, who brought some of that expertise to us. And we began to adapt that expertise to the situation. I'd say we are 75 percent there in getting that process down, but it took time.

We're just about to do a children's activity book for LOVE Park, which is a beloved park in Center City. It's right next to a family court building. We wanted to make an activity book that welcomed the children of those families waiting for their appointments. We intend to give it for free to the nonprofits that serve the family court families. But this experience has put us into a new level of learning; we have to get permission to have an image of Robert Indiana's LOVE sculpture and think about copyrights.

So, with each project there's new learning, but we have a comfort level now that we've got our basics down. And, we've finally gotten to a point with our attorneys where they're ready for these projects. It's the accumulation of the different helpers that we've had along the way, but I only wish we had reached out for more support sooner. I think there was a certain hubris on our part initially: “Oh, we can do this, we can do that,” but we finally have a good base now.

1 The framework reads, in part: “Any artist we work with must demonstrate their capacity for listening to community residents/stakeholders and the Cook Inlet Housing Authority. They must be committed to outcomes which address the needs, values, and priorities expressed by other stakeholders and a process that is mutually iterative, amidst whatever artistic process and output they devise and execute.” For a longer discussion of this and other sets of principles for working with artists in the CDI initiative, see the PolicyLink brief by Alexis Stephens, *Working with Artists to Deepen Impact* (May 2019), available at <https://communitydevelopment.art/resources-tools/working-with-artists>.

Alexis:

Candace and Adela, you have had to take on a lot of boring, but necessary, project management tasks. How did you approach your work, from within the organization?

Candace (CIHA):

I will just start by saying it's not boring. It's really fun work. Maybe not the logistics and the repetition, but the projects are so fascinating and so are the people that you're getting to work with. I have found it very energizing, and every experience was new, even though I use a similar framework or forms to fill out. Some of it can be repetitive, but I think that means that it's a success if you have a system that you've created to interact with artists to achieve these projects and to create these events. To me that's successful project management. That's how I approach it: seeking that formula and hoping not to recreate a wheel that's already been created.

I have some practical pointers and advice for the project managers who are working at the intersection of artists and community development organizations. I would say budget for time for the contract phase with an artist. Say you've identified an artist you want to work with; the artist does not begin for two weeks after that because, at least with Cook Inlet Housing, our organization is quite large and there needs to be some bureaucratic process in order for a large organization like that to function. There has to be some system. When you introduce a new element into that system, like an artist wanting to have an art camp, for example, it can throw a wrench into the machine. I would say, practically speaking, budget for four to six weeks to even complete a contract, which would include deliverables and a timeline.

And it's important to communicate to the artists throughout that contracting process why it's taking so long, so that they don't get frustrated. There might be moments where the community development organization might feel frustrated with the artist because they are having trouble understanding why we require insurance. And the artists might feel alienated and want to walk away from a project because there are too many hurdles for them to overcome. It is so important to communicate, especially if your organization is new to using artistic strategies in your work, so that both you and the artists can have some patience and humor.

Adela (FPC):

I've learned that it's important to have a clear set of goals from the outset. Not just because it's helpful from a planning perspective, but it's so important in making sure that there's a clarity in terms of what you're trying to achieve together and what one party's values are versus another party's. It's also important to balance that with a certain amount of flexibility. You never really know what's going to happen in a project, and we're not doing any of these projects in a vacuum, so you have to be able to let the project evolve and to be able to incorporate and respond to the feedback that you're getting from your partners and your

stakeholders. It's really important to set out what you need at the beginning and listen to what your partners need, not just what you hope to hear.

Alexis:

My final questions are about moving forward and continuing with arts and culture work and making it sustainable. What is working and what has been tougher with respect to collaborative practice? How are you starting to move forward with some of these relationships and partnerships?

Sezy (CIHA):

We've committed to creating a community and cultural hub at the Church of Love that gives a physical place for this work to live. Also, we created a new community development department outside of our standard housing pipeline, so this practice has a home on the organizational chart. Our storytelling that we worked on with Ping Chong + Company really signified to the entire organization that we were making a serious commitment to the Dena'ina oral tradition of storytelling and the importance of that in the culture of Anchorage and Alaska. CIHA is taking responsibility as an organization that can help perpetuate Dena'ina storytelling in a different way. All those things together are what continue us to move forward with the practice that we've worked really hard to understand and get our arms around in the past three-and-a-half years.

Ellen (FPC):

The Conservancy did a strategic plan this past year, and it really helped our organization—which has been very opportunistic and growing very fast—to understand how we might reach maturity. How do we begin to say no to some projects? We're often pulled into things that might not be our core mission. Rebranding our mission statement and describing our values in plain language has also given us the opportunity to ensure that arts and culture are a bedrock—just as community engagement is—to our mission and the way we work.

With the staff “Yes Lab” described earlier, we're really trying our best to infiltrate and make sure the staff is really incentivized to do this work and to learn from the projects that Adela and I have been engaged in over the past two years. The strategic plan is really going to help us straddle a change of leadership now that our former executive director, Jamie Gauthier, has stepped down to serve on city council. I have faith that we will get there and that with a strong strategic plan, and one with arts and culture at the core, this work will be sustainable and continue to be important to the organization.

Culture and Creativity Are Fundamental to Resilient Communities

*Laurel Blatchford and Nella Young
Enterprise Community Partners*

Natural disasters test the resilience of vulnerable communities because they exacerbate both the already high barriers to social, economic, political, and environmental resources, as well as individual limitations due to illness or disability.¹ As a national intermediary with local insights and connections, Enterprise Community Partners has helped community development stakeholders that are facing the effects of climate change to think one step ahead, secure their physical assets, and meet the needs of residents. Through Enterprise’s investments in long-term recovery and rebuilding post-Katrina in the Gulf Coast and post-Sandy in New York, as well as more recently in Houston, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Northern California, we have learned that surviving—and thriving—often comes down to people’s ability to support each other and seek out help in moments of need.

At the same time, the national dialogue about “creative placemaking” has expanded beyond an economic development framing to recognize that culture and creativity, artists and designers, can play a significant role in building community resilience. This raises such questions as: What helps communities survive, withstand, and even thrive in the face of chronic and acute threats? How might people and institutions strengthen their capacity to adapt? Can community development strategies that honor culture and activate creativity increase social cohesion and resilience in measurable, long-term ways? If “research reveals that arts, culture, and creative expression are important determinants of how communities fare and that, by extension, a full understanding of U.S. communities is not possible without their inclusion,”² what would it look like if they were integrated as essential components of a resilience strategy for all communities?

Through our partnerships, we have found that investments in climate and cultural resilience need to focus on community-defined vision and goals, address needs specific to the context and population, employ healing-centered processes, and prioritize vulnerable communities.³ With these guiding tenets, collaboration between creative practitioners and community developers can amplify community resilience outcomes. This article shares the

1 National Collaborating Center for Determinants of Health, <http://nccdh.ca/glossary/entry/vulnerable-populations>.

2 M. R. Jackson, “Measuring Cultural Vitality in Communities,” *Communities & Banking* (Federal Reserve Bank of Boston) Spring (2008): 16-19.

3 Meghan Venable-Thomas, “Can Creative Placemaking Be a Tool for Building Community Resilience?” (DELTA Doctoral Project, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, 2018).

evolution of Enterprise’s thinking and programs, highlights lessons learned through collaboration, and surfaces questions for research and practice.

Why Resilience?

Evidence has shown that vulnerable communities “experience disproportionate, multiple, and complex risks to their health and well-being in response to climate change.”⁴ These climate-related stressors also exacerbate racial inequities that have been embedded in our country’s fabric since its beginning, contributing to the outsized impact on people of color.⁵

Research on resilience and survival after natural disasters increasingly validates the importance of social cohesion—the sense of belonging and voluntary social participation of the members of society, and the bonds and trust between individuals, communities, and institutions⁶—in a community’s response and recovery process. Research also shows that the daily stressors vulnerable communities face—from job loss to health issues to public safety concerns—test their resilience in similar ways to disasters.⁷ Therefore, culture and creativity are not only forms of identity and expression; they are survival strategies and should be considered a vital part any community’s resilience toolkit.

Some community development tools address short-term, more visible, and often more acute needs for recovery, while others support long-term recovery and rebuilding and, perhaps more important, help build adaptive capacity that reduces the trauma associated with chronic and acute stressors. Over the past 30 years, a comprehensive approach blending access to capital and programmatic innovations, along with policy advocacy, has proven essential to Enterprise’s work in distressed communities across the United States. The community development field can expand its existing set of tools by working in partnership with artists, community-engaged designers, and culture bearers to build the resilience of vulnerable populations.

4 J. L. Gamble et al., “Populations of Concern.” In *The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment* (Washington, DC: U.S. Global Change Research Program, 2016), <http://dx.doi.org/10.7930/J0Q81B0T>.

5 Carmen Gonzalez et al., “Climate Change, Resilience, and Fairness: How Nonstructural Adaptation Can Protect and Empower Socially Vulnerable Communities on the Gulf Coast” (Washington, DC: Center for Progressive Reform, 2016).

6 Xavier Fonseca, Stephan Lukosch, and Frances Brazier, “Social Cohesion Revisited: A New Definition and How to Characterize It,” *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research* 32 (2) (2019): 231-53, www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13511610.2018.1497480.

7 Daniel P. Aldrich, “Urban Resilience and Implementation: A Policy Challenge and Research Agenda for the 21st Century,” *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 26 (2018): 403-10, http://daldrich.weebly.com/uploads/1/5/5/0/15507740/aldrich_et_al-2018-journal_of_contingencies_and_crisis_management.pdf. Georgia State University, “Fort McPherson Rapid Health Impact Assessment: Zoning for Health Benefit to Surrounding Communities during Interim Use” (Atlanta, GA: Georgia State University, June 2010), www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2010/06/fortmcpherson_at_ays_129.pdf.

Collaboration as a Tool for Learning

Collaboration strengthens social cohesion and builds resilience because it requires groups with different strengths and assets to form bonds.⁸ Since 2000, Enterprise has created programs that explicitly leverage design, cultural expression, and participatory process as essential tools for collaboration that can address the challenges of community development. From partnering architectural designers with community development organizations through our Rose Fellowship program, to empowering developers to be leaders in design excellence through our Affordable Housing Design Leadership Institute, to launching our nationally recognized Green Communities Criteria, we have seen how infusing collaboration across disciplines, partners, and scales of practice can improve community development outcomes.

In 2016, with support from The Kresge Foundation, Enterprise began to envision how a creative placemaking strategy might fit into our larger body of work across the country. We hypothesized that creative placemaking could be especially effective at building social cohesion—an essential component of resilience—and that the words “culture and creativity” represented the process and intention behind how this would happen. We launched the Climate & Cultural Resilience (C&CR) grants for community development groups to strengthen the connection between building climate resilience infrastructure and social cohesion.⁹

The selected organizations in Atlanta, Chicago, San Francisco, Duluth, MN, and Mingo County, WV, framed a local climate resilience challenge in terms of human impact, such as heatstroke, asthma, expensive flood damage remediation, and extended power outages. Through collaboration with residents, artists, and other creative and cultural practitioners, their projects built local partnerships and made buildings and systems more resilient.

The organizations also expanded economic opportunities; they hired artists as full-time staff or for specific commissions and contracts, developed new businesses, created jobs, and offered paid job training. These tactics allowed them to explore new ways of working, tap into the cultural identity and narrative of the community, and reframe what resilience meant in each place. In turn, this deeper understanding led to more relevant and sustainable projects.

The relationships that formed between residents, developers, artists and designers, policymakers, funders, and investors over the course of this work affirmed that all communities and sectors can deploy culture and creativity as meaningful tools for change. *Uplifting local culture*—as the American Indian Community Housing Organization (AICHO) in Duluth did with a series of events on its roof garden featuring indigenous artists, performers, and educators—and *engaging in a creative process*—like making paper together, as Enterprise did with C&CR grantee groups—can put stakeholders in a position of common ground, reducing hierarchy and establishing a more level place from which to collaborate. These practices can create a foundation for new systems to emerge that support more equitable outcomes and, eventually, a new balance of power for previously disenfranchised communities.

⁸ Aldrich, “Urban Resilience and Implementation.”

⁹ For more on the Climate & Cultural Resilience program and case studies, see “Made to Last: A Field Guide to Community Resilience,” www.enterprisecommunity.org/resources/made-last-field-guide-community-resilience-vol-1-8271.

This Belongs to Us: Oakland City's Participatory Process

The Oakland City neighborhood in Atlanta is bounded by Lee Street, Interstates 85 and 20, and the Beltline Westside Trail. A MARTA public transit station is within walking distance. The Utoy Creek Watershed provides the neighborhood with lush greenspace and an expansive tree canopy. Oakland City residents describe with pride their homegrown economy that includes open-air markets, neighborhood gardens, and community daycares. However, Oakland City is on the precipice of change.

Rapid regional growth has impacted nearly every neighborhood in central Atlanta. Increased demand for housing, coupled with the transformation of the Atlanta BeltLine from an abandoned railroad corridor to a multi-use trail with planned light rail transit, means this neighborhood is now experiencing intense development pressure. Local residents, over 90 percent of whom are African American, are feeling the threat of gentrification and displacement.

Enter the TransFormation Alliance, a group of collaborators leading Atlanta's response to the Strong, Prosperous, and Resilient Communities Challenge (SPARCC),¹⁰ which operates at a systems level to promote racial equity, health, and climate resilience in six U.S. regions. Through a grant from Enterprise, the TransFormation Alliance implemented *This Belongs to Us*, a C&CR project in Oakland City to advance SPARCC's resilience and equity goals.

Among many stressors facing the community, recurrent basement flooding from the Utoy Creek Watershed often occurs during heavy rains, leading to structural damage plus financial and health impacts on homeowners. The city was planning needed sewer and sidewalk upgrades in the neighborhood. This presented an opportunity to build green infrastructure that addressed both climate and cultural resilience through public art that would integrate community stories, environmental education, and local history into the built environment. The context of development pressure, serious watershed and safety issues, a desire for commercial development, and increasing concerns about displacement set the stage for a culturally responsive participatory process.

Brandon Jones, a local researcher, theater artist, and anthropologist working as an arts organizer with arts and social justice organization WonderRoot, mobilized the community to have a voice in the development of the neighborhood, building on recent momentum from a community-engaged art project that resulted in a mural at the Oakland City transit station. The *This Belongs to Us* project was a collaboration with WonderRoot, along with Southface—an organization with expertise in sustainability technology, research, and workforce training—and West Atlanta Watershed Alliance (WAWA)—which represents African American neighborhoods in West Atlanta that are most inundated with environmental stressors but least represented at environmental decision-making tables. The project team held six public meetings in the elementary school and other community spaces, identified community champions for a C&CR Advisory Committee, and held one-on-one conversa-

10 For more information about the SPARCC Initiative, see www.sparcchub.org/about/.

tions with community residents. They asked such questions as: “How would you describe your community? What makes this community distinct that you would like for people to know? What does home mean to you? What about your community should never be lost?”

Along with the community engagement and listening process, the project team supported the development of a local Climate Resiliency Plan to identify climate-related risks and opportunities and help build resilience in ways that addressed specific priorities of Oakland City’s residents. *This Belongs to Us* celebrated history and current culture, built shared identity, and marked this identity in the built environment. The collaborators reported that the project has illustrated immense community buy-in for climate-related training and artistic green infrastructure solutions.

This Belongs to Us grew new connections and organizing muscle that have prepared the community to bring its power to the negotiating table going forward. WonderRoot, Southface, and WAWA have earned the trust of community members and the city, enabling them to act as a liaison across local government departments. In this role, they are empowered to co-create solutions for Southwest Atlanta and Oakland City that align with resident needs and values and elevate those priorities to city leaders.

Lessons for Research and Practice

Over many years of collaboration with community-based nonprofits, combined with recent investments in understanding the role of artists, designers, and culture bearers in community development, several lessons have emerged about what is needed to make progress toward a more resilient and equitable society.

Artists Can Help Reimagine the Process of Community Participation

In expanding the Rose Fellowship to include artists, Enterprise has begun to more explicitly investigate the roles community-engaged artists take and the processes they use. Arts-based activities—such as creating a theater piece, building a sculpture, or writing a song—can be effective for involving community members in a process that is not traditional or formulaic. Artists can engage the community in new ways and introduce partnership dynamics that can shift the balance of power and ideally lead to more equitable outcomes.

One such example is theater artist Ashley Hanson’s work with the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership, where she invited residents in the town of Milan, MN, to participate in story circles that led to *This Land is Milan*, a musical about the town’s history and future. The musical was written, produced, and performed by over 40 local residents, or 11 percent of the town’s population. It helped to bridge connections and understanding between longtime residents and new immigrant populations, unifying instead of dividing residents.¹¹

11 This Land is Milan, <http://placebaseproductions.com/>.

Artists Can Play a Range of Roles—from Fulfilling a Commission to Advising on a project to Managing a Program Strategy

As with *This Land is Milan*, community developers can commission artists to produce a project in collaboration with the community. AICHO in Duluth took a different approach, using an advisory group to provide guidance and cultural grounding for projects. In Atlanta, the *This Belongs to Us* team benefited from the leadership and project management of Brandon Jones, who helped map cultural assets, convene an advisory council, and commission artists.

Creative and Culturally Responsive Community Process Requires Time and Flexibility

Our partners often articulate the need for creative financing tools that provide capital while also allowing for the unpredictability inherent in the planning and pre-development phases. This includes support for community-engaged processes that lead to better-designed buildings. Although this takes time, investment in an engaged process helps reduce opposition and streamline approvals across multiple levels—from residents to city permitting offices.

Flexible financing also impacts how buildings are operated and programmed. For Hirabayashi Place in Seattle, a temporary origami graffiti installation on a building slated for demolition was intended to draw positive attention to the future of the site. The development team was able to budget for a series of art installations throughout the building—ensuring that what was conceived as a temporary participatory art project became integrated permanently throughout the design and life of the building.

The Arts Provide a Means for Communities to Shape Their Own Narratives

Culture and creativity are powerful tools for communities to create a positive narrative about who they are and what they want their futures to look like. AICHO in Duluth hosted cultural events for the public that included a moonlight drum circle and the unveiling of a mural that was the city's first representation of Native American imagery created by an Indigenous artist. By telling their own stories, communities gain the power to define their current reality and build agency, as opposed to carrying forward lingering narratives from others in the past. Collaboration that honors cultural identity and creative expression is a particularly effective strategy to build bonds and bridges between people and groups, which are key elements of social cohesion that have been shown to impact survival.¹²

12 Daniel P. Aldrich, "The Importance of Social Capital in Building Resilience." In *Rethinking Resilience, Adaptation and Transformation in a Time of Change*, edited by Wanglin Yan and William Galloway (New York: Springer International Publishing, 2017).

Community Developers Can Partner with Artists to Build the Evidence Base on Social Cohesion

Organizations across the community development field are hungry for indicators and measures of impact, especially related to social cohesion. Researchers in other fields have identified many of these indicators, but it takes time and expertise to evaluate impact in community contexts and on organizational practices. Although Enterprise has data on how the collaborative process influences and changes projects in the short and medium term, we need more research on impact over time in order to more tangibly demonstrate the value for projects across the country. Stronger evidence of impact would allow investors to factor this “double bottom line” into the calculation of their desired returns, which could broaden the set of interested financial players.

Conclusion

A dynamic tension exists between the pace of investment, financing, development, and construction, and the process of a community’s evolution from disenfranchisement to healing, belonging, and ownership. Grounding community development in local culture, creativity, and resident leadership can ease this tension and increase community resilience in the face of climate change and other risks. To get there, collaboration across sectors and with residents is essential. The increasing evidence that equitable creative placemaking strategies can build resilience validates and expands the potential role of cultural and creative practitioners in community development.

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Nella Young is a senior program director at Enterprise Community Partners, where she brings insights into how to build the cultural fabric of our communities—especially those struggling with disinvestment—and how to harness creativity as a force for greater social cohesion, resilience, and equity. Nella holds a master’s degree in urban and environmental policy and planning from Tufts University and a bachelor’s degree from Wesleyan University, where she majored in studio arts. After graduate school, Nella spent a year as a German Chancellor Fellow, studying asset-based planning strategies focused on local art and culture. She is a 2019 Practices for Change Fellow at Arizona State University.

Outcomes in Communities of Arts and Cultural Strategies: The Role of Organizing and Engagement

*Jeremy Liu and Lorrie Chang
PolicyLink*

The ArtPlace Community Development Investments (CDI) initiative was designed to support the integration of arts and cultural strategies into community development in its “natural” setting. The goal was to integrate arts and cultural strategies into projects and efforts as they are typically planned and implemented through the work of six organizations. This approach to integrating arts and cultural strategies was intended to provide useful information about adopting this practice for other community development organizations and the community development field well after ArtPlace’s significant funding was completed.

The initiative presented the opportunity to learn from the experiences of these organizations over three years as they incorporated arts and cultural strategies in new or different ways to achieve their community development goals. The outcomes of this work are the subject of this section of the journal. The CDI initiative brought rigor to understanding the relationship between action and outcome in a field where outcomes measurement and evaluation is often fraught with the tension of organizations trying to balance funder interests and priorities against the thoughtful exploration of new practices and approaches. We employed a participatory and iterative approach to documenting the community development outcomes that each organization achieved.

This essay also provides an overarching description of two aspects of the community development process that changed through the integration of arts and culture and, as a result, transformed the scope of community development outcomes of all the organizations participating in CDI:

- **Moving from engaging to organizing:** Using arts and cultural strategies that gave authority and responsibility to artists and community members, these organizations turned the process of community engagement into a form of community organizing.
- **Achieving mission-aligned outcomes and strengthening the social fabric:** These organizations were able to take concrete steps toward accomplishing mission-aligned goals while also deepening the impact of their work overall through new kinds of activities that have ultimately strengthened the community’s social fabric.

What Are Community Development Outcomes?

The organizations highlighted in this section reflect a substantial breadth of the community development field and respective outcomes—from affordable housing to social services, from elders to youth development, from site-specific to narrative change. At PolicyLink, we consider community development to have both a social- or human-focused aspect and a physical or place-based dimension, with community development outcomes sitting at the intersection of these two. The highest aspirations of community development, where places and people’s lives improve in a sustained and self-directed manner, require that the people of a place are leaders in its improvement.

Arts and Culture Enhancing Community Development

The CDI initiative did not ask organizations to suggest specific activities in their proposal. Instead, they were asked to describe their organization, their work, their goals and vision for the community, and how they believed incorporating arts and cultural strategies might improve that work. In this way, each organization’s existing work was used as a “baseline” condition to anchor the “experimental” application of arts and culture. The outcomes described in this issue hold real promise for adoption and adaptation by other community development organizations, who should be able to see the relevance of these six cases to their own “normal” processes.

The community development field, already at the confluence of human and real estate development, is grounded in balancing how one achieves a goal and the goal itself. Frameworks such as equitable development, comprehensive community development, asset-based community development, and the social determinants of health have helped the field understand the complex interaction of people in places and how to measure outcomes for both humans and real estate.

Community development organizations of all kinds need to interact constructively and purposefully with their constituents, neighbors, clients, tenants, business partners, fellow nonprofit leaders, and people with whom they have a range of other working relationships. The ways in which community developers build and manage these relationships depends on their goals. Sometimes it is as seemingly simple and limited in scope as inviting comments on a proposed new project. At the other end of the spectrum, community developers can become organizers, in that they actively inform, train, and mobilize local residents and other groups to build power and influence to affect critical planning and policy decisions and bring about significant change.

Arts, cultural, and creative placemaking strategies have helped these six organizations to find a suitable balance between the differing levels of authority and responsibility that they and their community stakeholders experience. We identified two ways that arts and cultural strategies served community development outcomes by increasing community members’ sense of agency:

1. Artists and arts collaborations created more meaningful forms of community engagement that influenced the trajectory of these organizations and their projects and disrupted unequal power dynamics in significant ways. The CDI organizations, like all community development organizations, constantly have to adapt to changing demographics, market forces, and other factors in order to remain relevant and responsible; indeed, an increased adaptivity of the organizations and their partners to evolving roles in the community development ecosystem is one of the most tangible outcomes of these six cases.
2. The creative process of arts and culture has served as a road map for using engagement activities to build community agency and strengthen the social fabric while advancing transactional housing, real estate, project development, and property management goals—otherwise known as “output.” In essence, arts and cultural strategies created a human-development through line from activity to output to community development outcomes of these organizations that merge people- and place-based goals.

Improving Community Engagement and Organizing Through Arts and Culture

The CDI organizations experimented with some completely new approaches to engagement and organizing, with the results sometimes surprising even themselves. Their approaches were greatly enhanced and fundamentally changed by virtue of employing various arts and cultural strategies.

If these groups had limited themselves to holding hearings in the conventional way or running planning sessions with familiar facilitation exercises—such as “dot voting” to solicit priorities or visualizations of scenarios—or had even conducted one-on-one conversations to build relationships in the style of grass-roots, base-building organizers, they would have made some progress but would not have broken new ground. Instead, the creativity and imagination unleashed through the arts and cultural strategies pushed the organizations in new ways and helped them achieve a stronger connection with those they sought to engage or organize.

For instance, in Anchorage, the Cook Inlet Housing Authority (CIHA) partnered with a theater set designer to create an interactive space for exploring microunit design and quality of life with local residents, policymakers, and partners, which substantially improved the input, engagement, and buy-in of their stakeholders to support the move to smaller living. The CIHA program represented a tactical approach that began with attempting to engage stakeholders to obtain input.

Over time, many of the organizations have found that arts-based engagement tactics are also helping to substantially advance community control and self-determination. For example:

- The Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) is a community development corporation that started as a response by activists for linguistically and culturally competent social services for the Japanese American communities of Little Tokyo and Southern California. It



Zuni youth celebrate the groundbreaking of the Ho'n A:wani Community Park in Zuni, NM.

Photo Credit: Zuni Youth Enrichment Project

sought both a site-specific outcome—the right to control the redevelopment of a publicly owned site in the neighborhood—and a narrative-change outcome in popularizing the story of the site's and neighborhood's history as a means of justifying this right. Working with artists to increase the community's sense of power and agency and enhancing the social fabric of the neighborhood were strategies for achieving both of these outcomes. And just as the outcomes were intertwined, these strategies were interrelated; arts and culture helped LTSC work with and through this complexity. LTSC and one of its arts and cultural partners discuss their work together later in this section.

- The Zuni Youth Enrichment Project (ZYEP), a youth development organization that was founded to provide recreational activities and programs for youth on the Zuni Pueblo, sought to create a permanent space for its rapidly growing programs as an approach to addressing persistent health issues among the Zuni community. Along the way, it realized that empowering artists as leaders in the planning and design of the Ho'n A:wani Community Park was not only an effective and efficient way of developing, but it was also the way ZYEP itself would become more deeply rooted than it already was in the future of the Pueblo. The arts and cultural engagement helped ZYEP turn a park project into a health and wellness resource by creating persistent cultural resonance with the facilities for programs, but it also turned it into a beacon for making the process of physical development on the Pueblo more responsive to the community. ZYEP staff and one of its Artist Committee leaders discuss their work later in this section.

Community Engagement and Community Organizing

Development of affordable housing, parks, and other types of facilities requires community development organizations to adhere to public processes pertaining to building and zoning approvals and allocation of public subsidies. Engagement processes can be used to shape the project, as well as inform the public and fulfill public notice requirements; they can also be used to enlist support or address and defuse opposition. But not all participation is intended to value the community's voice authentically—especially when participation, outreach, and public involvement processes are also used by government agencies, for-profit real estate developers, and even other businesses to conduct or dress up community engagement without any intentions to adapt or change projects in response to the feedback. Engagement can sometimes lead to partnership, delegated power, and community control, but it is insufficient by itself.

To attain more, an organizing framework is also needed. Community organizing usually arises from contested terrain. Issue-based organizing in the United States was born in the 1940s out of a turbulent and potent mix of working-class frustration, labor movement activism, and discontent over racial inequity. Early targets were corrupt city governments, predatory banking practices, environmental pollution, and institutionalized forms of discrimination, such as redlining.

This type of organizing centers the leadership of community members so that they can define their self-interest, map the local power and influence, and translate that into political goals and strategies for collective action. Community organizing is most often based in the residents of a town, neighborhood, church parish, or cultural or racial enclave, but it can also enable those who receive services or benefits to develop their power—such as clients of financial literacy training or residents of affordable housing—or those who are most disenfranchised or lack voice and agency—such as youth or limited-English-speaking immigrants. The point of such voice, agency, and power is for residents to gain a measure of control over their lives, their neighborhoods, the fate of their community, and sometimes over the community development organizations themselves.

Arts and Cultural Strategies in Engagement and Organizing Lead to Improved Community Development Outcomes

Artists, and arts and cultural strategies, can be valuable assets and leaders of community engagement in ways that fulfill the promise of authentic participation. In addition to making the process of community development more responsive and building more power within communities, the documentation and research of the ArtPlace CDI initiative indicates that integrating arts and cultural strategies enables community-based organizations to more effectively advance their mission goals. This is evident by the early indicators of long-term outcomes in these community development areas, such as:

Health equity

The Jackson Medical Mall Foundation (JMMF), Fairmount Park Conservancy (FPC), and ZYEP were all able to create culturally resonant spaces that help community members to feel connected to health-enhancing resources, such as parks and open spaces, recreation and cultural opportunities, and health services. In Zuni, community members are experiencing a reduction in crime and an increased sense of safety. The Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership (SWMHP) addressed housing determinants of health through assessment and rehabilitation service in an underserved Latinx community.

Housing

The SWMHP Healthy Housing program, led by artist-organizers, resulted in housing rehabilitation funds and resources to the Latinx community. LTSC grew the base of community members who were mobilized to advocate for affordable housing on a key parcel of publicly owned land. CIHA enlisted likely and unlikely allies in support of microunits as a new affordable-housing typology for Anchorage.

Economic development

JMMF supported arts, culture, and creative-economy small businesses by providing retail and business space as a way to attract more and diverse clientele to the Mall. ZYEP directly contracted with Zuni artist-entrepreneurs for arts, cultural, and design services in developing the Ho'n A:wán Community Park; the opportunity and completed park are now a showcase, as well as a business incubator space for these Zuni artists. SWMHP created an artist roster that enables local artists to provide arts, cultural, and creative placemaking services across the region.

By leveraging the talents of artists and arts partners, organizations were able to more effectively achieve outcomes by adapting their processes and approaches to be more connected, relevant, and responsive to—and shared with—communities.

In the process, organizations are also simultaneously strengthening communities' social fabric and setting up conditions that allow them to, as sociologist Robert Sampson describes it, be more "collectively effective" in advocating for the long-term change they wish to see. These conditions for long-term change have been described as nearer-term outcomes, such as increased

Social cohesion

In the Spenard corridor of Anchorage, CIHA was able to bring together previously unconnected community members and social groups to create a vision for transforming the area with new affordable housing, a community center, and streetscape improvements. Through the process of exploring the redevelopment of the Church of Love property, and ultimately changing development plans, CIHA, artists, and other community members feel more connected to one another and the future of Spenard.

Social agency

On the Zuni Pueblo, the success of the artist-led process for engaging with the community to guide the development of the Ho'n A:wán Community Park has established a precedent for the Zuni Tribal Council to apply to all other real estate development. Artists and community members, who feel a sense of agency and community ownership over the park now that it is completed, are approaching ZYEP with programming ideas.



Little Tokyo Service Center staff activate the vacant VIDA building to prepare the community for changes in Los Angeles, CA. Photo credit: Rudy Espinoza

Civic and political leadership

Beyond providing practical resources for healthy housing renovations, the SWMHP initiative resulted in the first person of color, a Latina, being identified and supported to serve on a partner city's housing committee. LTSC staff note in the Dialogue that follows in this issue of CDIR that their longtime arts and cultural partner organizations have taken on heightened leadership roles in community development as the First Street North campaign evolved over three years.

Narrative control

LTSC and the First Street North campaign used arts and cultural activation and awareness strategies to reframe the value of a parcel of publicly owned land from simply an economic "highest and best use" to one having a keystone cultural and historic value for multiple communities of color. JMMF leveraged arts and culture to flip its own narrative as an organization from focusing on the medical needs of the underserved to the cultural assets of the community.

Civic knowledge and know-how

Working with its arts and cultural partner, FPC developed an approach to building relationships with communities near their parks based on a reciprocity of authority and responsibility; community leadership was supported to influence the design of a planned public recreation center, and FPC reciprocated by issuing an RFP for an African American landscape architect for the project. This reciprocity was based on an earlier prototype of this relationship-building strategy, where FPC delegated the authority for the programming of a historic house to the community as a means of developing FPC's comfort with a sense of responsibility for the community.

There is a risk, borne out by hard experience, that policies, planning, and programming officially intended to improve conditions can damage a community's social fabric. This is evident from past planning practices, such as urban renewal, which sought to wipe out "blight" and revitalize places anew, often uprooting their history and relocating their residents. This applies for all settings—from urban to rural. Developing public spaces, businesses, and housing without regard for cultural relevance can displace vulnerable residents or perpetuate feelings of not belonging.

In contrast, these six community organizations' journeys have shown that arts and cultural strategies can strengthen the expressions and physical presence of a community's social ties and cultural roots. Emerging results indicate that organizations that consciously and carefully embed their work in a community's social system can help shape more culturally relevant, responsive, and fully utilized spaces and programming. In the process, residents are activated to exercise their own power to shape their future, thus increasing the likelihood for more cycles of effective development and improved economic and social outcomes.

Connecting into these systems, particularly those of marginalized communities, can be difficult for outside investors, planners, or policymakers, given the historical threats that such interventions have often brought. Also, the seams that bind communities may be invisible, uncommon in dominant narratives, and largely unknown to those outside of it. This is why arts and cultural strategies—which often help "make the invisible, visible"—may be uniquely suited to uncover, strengthen, and weave a community's social fabric into future development.

The organizations were able to use a variety of arts and cultural strategies to improve communities' position despite the varying economic, demographic, and social challenges. Therefore, no matter what pressures and challenges cities and towns are facing, community-based organizations across the country can benefit from turning to the arts and cultural sector for a more effective, resilient-based way to achieve their community development goals.

*Jeremy Liu works to advance healthy, just, and sustainable communities through strategic engagements in art, public policy, real estate, sustainable business, and impact investing. As a Senior Fellow at PolicyLink, he is shaping and guiding a national initiative to integrate arts and culture into equitable development; he co-authored *Creative Change: Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development – A Policy and Practice Primer*, essays in the *National Endowment for the Arts’ How to Do Creative Placemaking* book, and a chapter in the forthcoming *Placemaking Handbook* to be published by Routledge. As an award-winning artist whose work has been exhibited in museums, art centers and at the country’s oldest county fair, he invents, samples, and remixes creative practices for equitable community development. He co-founded *Creative Ecology Partners*, an art and design studio incubating economic and community development innovation, which developed the *Creative Determinants of Health* framework and created the *National Bitter Melon Council*, winner of the 2005 *Artadia Award*, to address social bitterness.*

Lorrie Chang, Associate for Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development at PolicyLink, works to advance an arts and cultural approach to policies and practices for more equitable, resilient communities across the country. In partnership and with support from The Kresge Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, and ArtPlace America, she helped design and assess a Creative Placemaking Technical Assistance Pilot, served as the research and documentation partner for a three year program to integrate arts and culture into community organizations, and supported arts and cultural organizations to advance equitable policies across sectors including economic development, community safety, and housing. She was also a 2017-2018 Truth Fellow at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts focused on fostering a culture of vulnerability to expand common truths and ignite collective action. She holds a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning from Portland State University.

Ibasho: A Place of Belonging¹

Scott Oshima

Japanese American Cultural & Community Center

Little Tokyo is a 135-year-old community that recognizes arts and culture as an integral part of its growth—and a critical strategy in the fight for its future. One of three remaining historic Japantowns left in the nation, Little Tokyo survived three waves of displacement because of decades of community organizing;² it has been and continues to be the cultural home to Japanese Americans in Southern California and our historically multiethnic community.

In 2009, plans for the Metro Regional Connector transit hub³ sparked speculative development and rising property values. Faced with what could become another wave of displacement, Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC), Japanese American Cultural & Community Center (JACCC), and Little Tokyo Community Council (LTCC) partnered to develop the Sustainable Little Tokyo (SLT) Community Vision with over 200 stakeholders.⁴ The vision focuses on the equitable development of three remaining pieces of public land in Little Tokyo and prioritizes affordable housing and commercial space, cultural space, and green space. It also advocates for cultural, economic, and environmental sustainability, rooted in the Japanese principle of *mottainai* (“do not waste”). SLT then evolved into community-driven projects that strengthen the neighborhood and support the longer-term community vision—with a focus on arts-based strategies. Through the ArtPlace Community Development Investments (CDI) program, LTSC developed the +LAB project, which leveraged the existing SLT partnership and increased capacity in our creative placekeeping work.

JACCC is SLT’s arts organization partner and one of the largest ethnic and community centers of its kind in the nation. As a hub for Japanese and Japanese American arts, culture, and community, JACCC exemplifies Little Tokyo’s longstanding commitment to the arts and creative placekeeping. Amid rampant redevelopment and the displacement of important cultural spaces in the 1970s, community leaders fought for the construction of JACCC as a permanent institution for Japanese American culture. JACCC continues this work, in part, through SLT by advocating for the development of new, permanent cultural spaces and integrating artists into our community organizing. LTSC +LAB and a Surdna Foundation

1 The Japanese word *ibasho* roughly translates to a place where one exists, expresses one’s abilities, and feels at home. I am borrowing this title from the ART@341FSN exhibition *Ibasho: Arts Activism in Little Tokyo*, curated by Jonathan Crisman and designed by Yuji Sakuma.

2 Kelly Simpson, “Three Waves of Little Tokyo Redevelopment,” *KCET Departures*, July 31, 2012, www.kcet.org/shows/departures/three-waves-of-little-tokyo-redevelopment.

3 For more on Metro Regional Connector and its impacts on Little Tokyo, see Gwen Muranaka, “Metro Breaks Ground on Rail Project,” *Rafu Shimpo*, October 2, 2014, www.rafu.com/2014/10/metro-breaks-ground-on-rail-project/.

4 For more on the development of SLT, see Chris Komai, “Introducing Sustainable Little Tokyo,” *Rafu Shimpo*, July 5, 2015, www.rafu.com/2015/07/introducing-sustainable-little-tokyo/.

grant allowed the creation of my position as JACCC's Lead Community Organizer. In this role, I act as a creative strategist in SLT's advocacy work, leading our community-driven arts programs and organizing artists of all disciplines to become advocates. Simultaneously, I am a community organizer, more traditionally a role within CDCs, embedding LTSC's and LTCC's development and planning expertise into our arts organization.

In 2017, the City of Los Angeles began implementing plans to dispose the First Street North (FSN) block, one of the land parcels in the SLT vision. In response, SLT and FSN block stakeholders launched the first formal campaign and petition.⁵ With JACCC's existing arts community and LTSC's expertise in planning, SLT began by hosting a series of artist convenings to integrate artists and arts-based strategies into the campaign and educate artists about FSN-related civic processes, such as city land disposition. Artists from these convenings formed the Arts Action committee: an intergenerational, multidisciplinary group of 13 artists of color—a majority Nikkei (Japanese American) and new to Little Tokyo organizing. At the same time, LTSC +LAB converted a vacant storefront on the FSN block into an experimental community space and invited SLT to use it. The Arts Action committee renamed the storefront 341 FSN to identify it within the FSN block and advocacy campaign.

The Arts Action committee developed ART@341FSN, a two-month takeover of 341 FSN with art programs that temporarily realized the vision for FSN. The artists organized 23 programs, three pop-up stores, and an exhibition and showcased over 70 local artists. Programs included intergenerational Nikkei music performances; a night of newly commissioned South Asian American mini-plays about displacement and solidarity; and art workshops for low-income residents. The project was bookended by two revivals of the Atomic Café—a beloved Japanese American diner-turned-infamous punk-rock venue, whose historic site was demolished for Metro Regional Connector. The programs attracted over 2,100 people, and 341 FSN became one of the neighborhood's most popular destinations.

ART@341FSN was transformative in ways that we could have never anticipated. The Arts Action committee set a goal to support artists, build awareness, and collect petition signatures, yet we had not expected that the most powerful impact was inspiring a broader community to care about Little Tokyo. When the activist coalition Nikkei Progressives organized a First Street North group in the Nisei Week parade, more than 75 supporters participated, including residents, youth, elders, artists, and even puppeteers—many of whom learned about the campaign from ART@341FSN. Care and personal investment are necessary for advocacy and mobilization, and we had achieved these by creating inclusive, engaging community art—and a space to house it. These artists expanded and strengthened the SLT movement with a vital new base of advocates and incredible new art works. They also re-energized a community exhausted by the endless issues and work by reminding us of the future we are fighting for. As Tomi Kunisaki, one of the Arts Action artists, explained:

5 For more on the FSN campaign, see Kenji Liu, "Fate of Little Tokyo's First Street North to Be Determined This Year," *Rafu Shimpo*, March 4, 2019, www.rafu.com/2019/03/fate-of-little-tokyos-first-street-north-to-be-determined-this-year/.

For me, working with our committee members [...] and learning alongside my peers and elders gave a sense of belonging and connectedness to my heritage—and our responsibility to continue its legacy—that I understand now more than ever before. As someone who has always been fairly disconnected from the Japanese American community, being a part of this project felt like an important first step into efforts to reclaim our cultural identity and physical creative space.

ART@341FSN and the Arts Action committee exemplify SLT’s strength as a cross-sector and, of course, creative approach to community development—one that harnesses the diverse expertise of our artists, LTSC as a community developer, JACCC as an arts organization, and LTCC as a community coalition to further a shared goal for community and cultural sustainability. Perhaps more important, ART@341FSN reminds our community that, more than a campaign for land and development, we are fighting for the unpredictable, ever-expansive possibilities for Little Tokyo as *ibasho*—a place to hold our joy, our memories, our art, our culture, and our future.

Scott Oshima is the Lead Community Organizer at Japanese American Cultural & Community Center and project manager for the Sustainable Little Tokyo creative placekeeping initiative since 2017. Scott is an artist, arts organizer, and community activist who has been working in community arts nonprofits for over 10 years. As an administrator and artist, they use art to re-center the voices of marginalized communities and advocate for the cultural sustainability of our communities of color. Their writing and reviews have been published in X-TRA Contemporary Art Quarterly, Capital & Main, Entropy, and Orlando. Scott holds a BFA from the California Institute of the Arts.

From Zuni Art to the Sky Is the Limit!

Daryl Shack, Sr.

Kessbi. Hello, my name is Daryl Shack, and I am a proud member of the Zuni Pueblo tribe from western New Mexico. I am honored to share the story of the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project (ZYEP) and *Ho'n A:wan* (for everyone) Park.

As part of our history, the Zuni people settled here in what we call the Middle Place. We were more isolated than other Pueblos, which helped us to practice our customs and traditions. Zuni culture and religion often influence Zuni artists like me. I have been a fetish carver for over 17 years.

Even though art is a driver of the Zuni economy (80 percent of households have at least one artist), artists have rarely been a part of the conversations to shape the future of our community. So, when ZYEP first came to us a few years ago about forming an artists' committee for the creation of a park, we bet that it was because a grant said they needed to include us. However, Dr. Joseph Claunch, of ZYEP, really made time to listen to us and made it clear that this was about doing something positive for the kids. I'm a father, and we all care a lot about our kids. Many of our kids don't have mentors because so many adults struggle with social issues, like alcoholism, domestic abuse, and suicide. We kept this at the top of our minds while we were planning the park, asking, "How do we curb these weaknesses?"

Social problems can be curbed when a person is dedicated to making art. Before I begin working with mother earth, carving, my mind needs to be clear to see what animals will come and plan out where this creation is going. This is what we are trying to teach our children and families—clear intentions, commitment, and follow-through for themselves, the youth, and our culture.

One goal we had as the artists' committee was to help give the community a sense of ownership of the park. The Zuni religious community had concerns before we even started because the park area is very close to our sacred Zuni riverbed. The space was also a favorite hangout spot for drinking and vandalism. Neighbors were afraid the park would encourage more loitering and negative activity. The artists' committee met with the community to try to understand and address their concerns. Since some of the artists (including myself) are also religious leaders, we helped build trust to reassure the community that we wouldn't let anything culturally inappropriate happen. We reflected upon our own upbringing when we had the Zuni River to play in and around, in contrast with many kids today, who are mostly inside playing on their iPads and not learning cultural traditions. In our efforts to engage everyone, we involved 700 elementary school children in one of our art projects to make symbolic pieces honoring their clan. We also worked with the Department of Corrections, high school kids, and other community members in building parts of the park to increase ownership and reduce chances of vandalism.

Furthermore, the artists' committee worked very closely with the architecture firm, ZYEP, and other artists to design many parts of the park. Dr. Claunch and Dr. Tom Faber really encouraged us to try out our ideas. ZYEP let me activate the varied experiences I had gathered from my past, share my knowledge with the group, and take leadership. Instead of what the architects usually did—plain walls and chain-link fences—we helped design and build traditional *vegas* (wooden posts), coyote fencing, and native plants as a perimeter for the park. Through the creation of our request for proposals (RFPs), artists made some amazing murals telling the Zuni origin story at the park to help keep the youth connected to their history. Our committee took on many roles, including personally letting artists know about opportunities and visiting them to check in once they were selected.

All of this work has paid off. The grand opening was such a blessing because the park is so different from everything else we have in Zuni. The kids are used to playing on uneven ground with dirt and litter everywhere and no outdoor art. Our community now has a beautifully designed building, full-sized soccer field, basketball courts, multipurpose room, commercial kitchen, two classrooms, and an amphitheater. Best of all, the park itself is art. I've seen kids staring up at the murals and sharing what they know about these stories and where they come from. The local police have commented that the area has become much safer.

ZYEP has helped bring recognition to Zuni artists. We had tried to organize to better sell our art in the past, but ZYEP has helped catalyze us to meet and talk about our ideas. We now have the potential to provide trainings for other artists and the community. Dr. Claunch is the soul behind the park. He has helped build artists' confidence, even recommending me to a panel for the Zuni Governor Candidate Forum.

And now? The sky is the limit. Last winter, my son was part of a play to tell old Zuni stories at the park. They were trying to do this quickly because winter time is for *Belap'na:kweah*, when the community gathers around the fire to tell stories from generation to generation to teach the moral values and lessons of Zuni. It was very important for us to make this a multi-generational space to be able to pass on our principles. The children have a place where they can learn from mentors, which they don't always have at home. I'm thinking about teaching social dance here, too. This park has given the children a place to call home.

Elabwka. Thank you so much to ZYEP, ArtPlace, and everyone who contributed to helping us make Zuni dreams come true.

Daryl Shack, Sr. is a proud member of the Zuni Pueblo Nation from the western part of New Mexico. He belongs to the Corn Clan and was born for the Raven Clan. Aside from being an artist, he is a cultural interpreter who has various religious leadership roles in his community, which has a population of about 10,000. Daryl's background includes public service work and human service work for the Zuni Senior Center; he has also served as an activity director for Little Sister of the Poor and a program director for the Zuni tribe's Senior Companions and Foster Grandparent Program. Daryl has been making traditional Zuni fetishes for over 17 years. Most recently, he was elected as the first-ever president of the Zuni Pueblo ArtWalk (zunipuebloart.org). He brings a vision of forward progress and an even larger recognition for the undoubtedly fine art that comes from the hands of his people.

Dialogue on Organizing and Strengthening Social Fabric

*Grant Sunoo and Dominique Miller, Little Tokyo Service Center
Tom Faber and Joseph Claunch, Zuni Youth Enrichment Project
Facilitated by Lorrie Chang, PolicyLink*

Lorrie Chang of PolicyLink spoke in February 2019 with Grant Sunoo, Director of Planning for the Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) in Los Angeles, CA; Dominique Miller, Creative Strategies Producer for LTSC; and Tom Faber and Joseph Claunch, co-directors of the Zuni Youth Enrichment Project (ZYEP) in Zuni, NM. They discussed the ways in which strengthening the social fabric and promoting the cultural identity of their communities has advanced progress toward their goals for youth development and neighborhood preservation. Although their contexts are very different, both organizations discovered how the expression of traditions and the sharing of local history could guide the development of their communities. In Zuni, that guidance faced mainly inward, to shape and design a remarkable new park in an ancient place. In Little Tokyo, it was critically important to not only revive the community’s culture and history for its residents, but to express it for the larger city, to exercise “moral site control” over the contested terrain of a neighborhood at risk of rapid change.

Lorrie:

Welcome to our dialogue on promoting community identity and strengthening social and cultural fabric. Our discussion will focus on what’s possible in community development through the integration of arts and culture: the outcomes so far and where you see it heading.

What were your organization’s community development goals that you set out to tackle through arts and culture? How do you think you did?

Tom (ZYEP):

My goal was a personal one—to transform what it means to grow up in Zuni so kids grow up doing exciting, enriching, challenging things, and also grow up with the sense that they’re somehow very special because they’re Zuni. When I moved to Zuni—I’m a physician and a pediatrician—the thing that really bothered me was the fact that so many kids didn’t have much to do. They seemed kind of lost to me.

When I would ask, “What are you into? What are your hopes and dreams?” there really wasn’t much that I could draw out of them. That was ultimately what we wanted to change.

The thing that arts and culture, particularly this whole process, has informed and really rejuvenated my faith in is that kids grow up believing that they're special because they're Zuni. I think that's the part that Zuni art and culture—but in particular, the artists—played because it's all integrated. That's the piece that's just been amazing to see. And the more that we incorporate that into every aspect of what we do, the more positive outcomes we see. I really believe that's the foundation for everything going forward.

Joe (ZYEP):

Like Tom, this work is very personal for me. I come from a long line of trauma. I remember being a young Native American male, living on the reservation and experiencing a lot of challenges in navigating those things. I also recognize that for a lot of my family and even my ancestors, it was no easy task. I found myself lucky enough to be at Haskell Indian Nations University, an amazing tribal college, having positive Native American male role models for the very first time who are PhDs and bumping up against Native American literature and having a fuller sense of why things were the way they were, why things were so hard.

At that same time, I met my first group of Zuni kids at a football camp. I really identified with that young group of males, and it planted the seeds of what I wanted to do with my life. I was lucky enough to get a teaching and coaching job in Zuni. Early in that process, I met Tom and became familiar with what he was trying to build there for the community's youth and started working [at ZYEP].

The process of learning about arts and culture helped deepen my understanding of youth development in a tribal community. The artists we were working with helped me understand how we could do youth development on a much deeper level and more contextually, in a way that was really culturally responsive. I don't think I could've learned those things in the university [or] by reading a book. This project helped create space to just sit and listen to community, what they have to say, what they want for their youth, and how they want to go about it. That has been an invaluable process for three years to make space for that.

Grant (LTSC):

The history of Little Tokyo is one that has been shaped by [the] push and pull of a community that's fighting for its own self-determination and being acted upon by outside forces, not unlike many communities of color throughout the country. Our community development work is pointed at ending the cycle of displacement and building power within the community, so that folks can push for their vision and actualize the community's vision of what this neighborhood should and can be. Our goal with regards to the CDI work was exploring how creative strategy, arts, and culture can have an impact on that work of building power within the community.

Dominique (LTSC):

In addition, I [would add the goal of] utilizing creative strategies to create more cohesion amongst staff and to explore how we can do our work more effectively and more collaboratively across departments. We also hoped to increase our collaboration with other organizations and artists in Little Tokyo and to look at how we connect with other communities in Los Angeles that are experiencing and fighting against the same [displacement pressures].

Lorrie:

Compared with three years ago, what is different about Little Tokyo now that may be attributable to LTSC's increase in involvement with arts and cultural strategies?

Grant (LTSC):

I think at a certain point in the journey, I started thinking about arts and culture and creative placekeeping efforts as an “ecosystem” within our community. We have been able to focus much more intently on what LTSC's role is within that ecosystem, particularly given that this is a community with a really rich history of artists and cultural institutions that are doing great work in that space.

The ecosystem includes artists who are willing to integrate a focus on community as part of their practice, and organizations that might not see community development as part of their mission. There are many organizations who have always been really great neighbors but hadn't necessarily seen their role as community developers in the way that I think they have now evolved to, through our more recent partnerships.

The long-term impact is hard to measure. It's a continuum, but if you think about the strength of that ecosystem to collectively act, people are starting to see artistic strategies and engagements as a really viable, important way to build community.

Beyond that, we've also expanded the reach of whom we're engaging through community planning and organizing activities. A lot of our work is centered around community control, particularly over this parcel. Through engaging people differently with arts and cultural strategies, we've really expanded the reach of that campaign, the people involved, and the ways in which they're involved. [The campaign focuses on the large parcel known as First Street North, a developable site adjacent to the main corridor of Little Tokyo.]

Dominique (LTSC):

Now our arts partners are actually asking for our input when it comes to arts and culture around gentrification and displacement. They'll ask us what we think or what do you think we should do? How can we work together on this? So being more woven into those discus-

sions [is progress], instead of solely being viewed as [an add-on for] community development advice or building housing has been a significant shift.

Little Tokyo has a history of pushing back against displacement for decades. I think a lot of this, even with the integration of arts and culture, is more so reminding ourselves of who we are and who we've been. I think it's reminding people who may not have been here or might be new or just might be unaware: this is what we do; this is who we are. In that way, we're certainly poised to—and have been—fighting back against displacement and gentrification.

I think now we're in a position where we understand the importance of really pulling in our residents—particularly our Latino and African American residents, who may not be as engaged—or further engaging our seniors in conversations about community change. People see what's going on, but I don't know if they understand or contextualize it as gentrification or displacement. They are experiencing some of the stress of wondering if they're going to have housing next year. That's what we were doing with this work—explaining community planning or development in a way where they understand what's going on and what role they can play or how they can be involved in combating those decisions.

Lorrie:

For ZYEP, how do you think the work you have done to incorporate arts and cultural strategies will impact future community work in Zuni? What are some of the outcomes (health-based or otherwise) that you are seeing or anticipating for Zuni youth and families?

Joe (ZYEP):

I think it's probably too soon to tell, [but] we've come a long way and we have this amazing facility [Ho'n A:wan Community Park] that we hope will reflect the wants, desires, and identities of the community members that we're aiming to serve, to do this health-promoting type of work for youth and families. We're in a much better position today than we were three years ago to do that work. If you look at ZYEP's history, it is a history of success in learning from the community, but the community engagement processes are still evolving to put us in a better position to meet those health needs. We've made space to listen to artists and then realized that they're much more than just artists—they're parents, grandparents, teachers, cultural leaders. They have all these different roles they bring to inform our work.

Tom (ZYEP):

There are several things that come to mind. One is just a palpable sense of optimism and hope that I didn't feel a few years ago. The opening of this park and the keeping of the promise to do something great like this in Zuni is a big part of that. There's such a long history, in Zuni in particular, of projects being done TO the community based on funding

availability, whether it was a needed project or not, for which something's kind of plopped down or started and not finished. And there's obviously a long history of promises not kept. That was something we were really nervous about, honestly, while starting such a big project and making a really vocal, public promise to the community.

We really felt the moral obligation to see that through. And so, having done that in a way that was slow and consultative, where everyone had their say and artists were involved, it resulted in a product that people now come to. You can see in their eyes that the families and the kids are proud of this area. That's a really powerful momentum that I hope we can continue, and some of the things Joe mentioned are evidence of what's happened from the momentum. Now there are adults who are clearly more interested in taking part in kids' lives now, even if it's not their own kids. [Adults want to be part of] these advisory committees because they want to make a lasting impact in kids' lives. In my experience, it had been really hard to get people to come at seven o'clock at night to our advisory committee meetings years ago. But now it's easy. That's been amazing.

And then there's just the volume of activities that kids can do. [We] mentioned the goal was to transform what it meant to grow up in Zuni, [and] we [definitely] have a long way to go. But when I see kids now, they are doing things after school and play flag football, soccer, or basketball. Hopefully that's having a long-term impact, although we haven't been able to measure that yet.

Lorrie:

[How has ZYEP's overall relationship to arts and cultural values and practices changed over the past three years, and how is that affecting your approach to health?](#)

Tom (ZYEP):

Two things. One is going back to that fundamental connection between arts, culture, and health. The logic model that comes to my mind [is the] evolving field in medicine of trauma-informed care. There's some really compelling evidence that [shows] adverse childhood experiences—like abuse and neglect, exposure to substance abuse, mental illness—are a direct cause of adult disease. The connection has a lot to do with that fight-or-flight stress response that is normal and protective when you're being chased by a lion or something. But if it's there all the time throughout your childhood, it's called toxic stress and leads to a lot of adult health outcomes through biochemical changes. The way to address that is through resilience and healing from that underlying trauma. That's the piece that, at least in Zuni—that connecting kids to artists and art and their culture—provides that sense of identity, belonging, and purpose. And it really fosters that healing. From the organizational mission standpoint, that's the foundation we want to build up from.

Years ago, we would start by identifying a need in the community and recruit people to come in to provide a service and some sort of outreach. We [would] design a program that would hopefully keep the kids busy and engaged in doing meaningful work. Now because of that optimism and positive momentum I mentioned earlier, we're really seen as facilitators for artists and the community. People are [now] coming to us with ideas [like]: "We would like to put on a traditional storytelling production...But we need a space. We need funding. We need sets. We need someone who can teach all that. But we have the traditional knowledge. Can you help us with that?" There's actually a number of examples like that. That's a great long-term role for us, where we can really just facilitate, because we have organizational capacity and some funding and now a space. So hopefully we can just provide that infrastructure for the community and artists to be able to think of their own ideas for what to do with kids.

Joe (ZYEP):

With the artists' group, there was a lot more space for listening and understanding how those traditions were facilitating health. I pay attention in a different way now, having listened to artists and how they talk about youth development and what's good for families. It's more process-oriented.

The artists care about the community's youth and families. They wanted to do their very best in creating a space that would lead to these health outcomes. So for them, the art in the park had a specific purpose: to serve as a cultural resource so that kids would have a better sense of where they come from, who they are, and what makes them special. That was amazing [because] they have very creative ways [of] creating art that can provide that connection for kids.

Now we're in the park and we get to see these kids making those connections; they could be there for a play or flag football, but then they're looking at all [the symbols of] the clans in their community and they're excited. There are multiple needs that are being met all at the same time, which is incredible to witness.

When you're listening to artists talk about how they teach, bringing good intentions into any art project is the foundation. It's the starting place. If you come into an art project with bad feelings, then the tradition says that it's going to turn out bad. This whole process of being able to just make space to listen to artists and learn from them has enriched our approach 100-fold, and we're still only scratching the surface. We can go deeper and hopefully promote increased health for Zuni youth and families.

Based on the success of the artists' committee, we've formed an agricultural committee to help with our community garden projects. What we've learned from this agricultural

committee is that every prayer, every song in Zuni comes back to the seed in the ground and water. And that there's this organized process to planting that starts with these religious Kiva groups, who, when they're having their dances, bless these seeds, give them out, and do a ceremony to plant. That [kind of thing] could have real long-term impacts on health and be more culturally responsive in the course of it.

Lorrie:

Grant and Dominique, how has your use of arts and cultural strategies affected Little Tokyo's identity, either from the inside or from an outsider's perspective? And do you think that has impacted your capacity to control the land—the key sites?

Dominique (LTSC):

All the work that we do is in partnership with either another department or local organization. I would say that the arts and cultural strategies, along with those collaborations, are what's really impacted Little Tokyo's identity.

These strategies helped inform people of the fullness of our identity. Not just as a place to eat, but to engage in very significant cultural and traditional arts practices. Some outsiders don't know that people live, work, [and] have family legacies [here]—whether it be through longstanding small businesses or having parents, grandparents, great grandparents who have roots here. They don't know us as a place of activism, organizing, and historic significance—not just regionally, but nationally—as one of the only three remaining Japantowns in the country. Our work has helped renew that identity for people who may have been around for a long time by reminding us all of the various realms of significance of what exists here and what's continuing to grow. We've been able to strengthen that ecosystem and bolster each other's work to help amplify that even more. [This identity becomes] more visible to people who are maybe not coming here for that, but now can't help but see it.

It also has reminded some about Little Tokyo's identity as multicultural. We partnered with [Visual Communications] on a project that recreated the [Bronzeville] period during World War II. After Japanese and Japanese Americans were interned, there was a huge influx of African Americans and Latinos. One of our artists-in-residence, Tina Takemoto, did a research project that showed that once the war ended, a significant overlap of African Americans, Japanese, and Japanese Americans had businesses and were living amongst each other for quite a period of time. I think this enables us to garner support by reminding people of the significance of this community for other communities of color as well. Increasing that link, that cohesion, will help so that whatever we need to do to secure control of the land, we have that base of support established and ready to go.

Grant (LTSC):

We were also starting to shift toward thinking about what our vision for that [First Street North] site is and sharpening [it]. We've seen a new generation of artists that identify with that site and envision the potential. We've seen a new generation of entrepreneurs who see Little Tokyo as a viable place to do business, but also understand the importance of being a community-engaged business. As a community, the change in how we are identifying with that site and what we see as its identity in the future has also been an important outcome.

Lorrie:

Many community development organizations struggle with how to meaningfully engage residents in processes of change. How have these new ways of working helped you create pathways to bring more people into critical conversations for community change?

Joe (ZYEP):

I go back to this artists' committee that helped lead our CDI project. They frequent the park, have other organizations that they belong to, are part of this Art Walk group that has created a pathway for visitors to come see them work. They have their meetings at the park, so we get to interact with them a lot. Plus, we have our regular meetings with that artists' committee, and they have a lot of visitors, funders, and people that are really interested in the work that they do. They bring those visitors by the park to show the success of the CDI project and how artists can work together to create spaces that can promote health and can be good for kids and families. To listen to the visitors talk about how amazing this space is and how they need to bring their friends to show them this space has indicated to us that, absolutely, there are new pathways that are emerging.

Tom (ZYEP):

I totally agree. I think that if every community development project [in Zuni] could be planned by artists, it would be a good, successful project. There are so many examples of projects that were clearly not done that way. When we were first starting, someone had said, "You know, we really want this to be a model for how development can happen in indigenous communities—that is, listening first and engaging the arts and engaging religious and cultural leaders and just making sure that everyone's had input [on all that's agreed upon] before anything is done." We've worked with the Tribal Council pretty closely through this, and we're planning to meet with them again. Now that the project's been completed and there's a new Council, we would love to try to push that idea. Ultimately, it's going to be up to them, but we would really try to encourage them to make that a standard way of doing community development.

Grant (LTSC):

I think that so much of successful community development relates to language. I went to planning school, and I know that planners have a tradition of using really inaccessible language. In thinking about our arts and culture strategies, one of the things I think that we've been really successful at, I hope, is translating that and making that process accessible to more people within the neighborhood and community. And similar to what Joe and Tom were sharing, engagement and that level of authenticity lends itself to more successful projects and community development.

Dominique (LTSC):

Another thing, as far as pathways between our work and communities, is being clear about whom we're inviting to [participate]; if we're trying to engage seniors, then we have to be cognizant of where they're at, because they're going to be walking. If we're going to do something, being cognizant that every culture's languages are represented so anybody who comes can understand what we're sharing so that they can actually engage.

As far as creating pathways, particularly if we're trying to engage multiple demographics, what are some commonalities that we can use to create that foundation so that it is accessible to anyone and isn't inadvertently just geared toward a specific group? Using these strategies [enables us] to be that much more thoughtful and to be considerate about what we know about our communities. We understand that their time and their schedules are totally different. How do we design the strategy so that they can engage as well? Those are all the things that we're now really thinking about as we plan our work.

Lorrie:

[It sounds as though you all would share three general reflections about how promoting identity can impact community development outcomes:](#)

- Arts and culture-centered processes have helped your organizations ground their work in the richness and fullness of community identity.
- By centering arts and culture in a way that strengthens the social fabric, your organizations have improved the process of community development, even if many of the long-term outcomes for people and places have yet to emerge.
- This grounded approach has catalyzed residents and stakeholders so that they can be more cohesive, engaged, and empowered as they seek to influence community development.

[Thank you for thinking about this with us today!](#)

Integrating Arts and Culture into Community Development to Improve Outcomes

Maurice Jones
Local Initiatives Support Corporation

Working in historically marginalized communities requires commitment over the long term, forging partnerships with a range of organizations, digging into the root causes of poverty, and empowering residents and stakeholders to plan their own futures. The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is one of the country's largest organizations supporting efforts to revitalize communities and bring greater economic opportunity to residents. Together with residents and partners, LISC forges resilient and inclusive communities of opportunity across America—great places to live, work, visit, do business, and raise families. Over the past 40 years as a community development intermediary, LISC has deployed \$20 billion in community development resources, leveraging \$60.4 billion in investment. At our core, we are dedicated to a holistic approach to working with communities to improve quality of life, evaluate and address social determinants of health, and ensure economic opportunity for all.

Five years ago, LISC began to think more deeply about how artists and community developers might come together to solve problems and build new pathways for community growth. Although LISC has a long history of investing capital in the development of arts and cultural facilities, we were unfamiliar with the practice of creative placemaking. We were interested in exploring opportunities in this space, but we were unsure where the path would lead. Yet our hunch was that partnering artists with community developers might spark a new way of working that would inspire collaboration, improve economic and physical conditions in neighborhoods, create social cohesion, and eventually build deeper trust between people and organizations—the very outcomes that are central to achieving our mission.

Currently, LISC defines creative placemaking as “activities that connect art, culture, and community in order to create resident-driven solutions to neighborhood challenges.” This work includes an asset-based approach that invests in cultural resources, supports process-driven planning, and drives economic inclusion. This article describes the core values that drive our creative placemaking efforts, the outcomes we have seen as a result of them, and the lessons we have learned along the way.

Core Values of Creative Placemaking at LISC

We anchor our approach to creative placemaking with a set of clearly defined values¹:

- First, we regard *artists as community developers*. Artists play a variety of roles that are central to community development. For example, they can serve as building developers, core design-team members, or community design facilitators.
- Second, we employ a *racial equity* lens when evaluating and administering creative placemaking funds. We work to ensure that our creative placemaking investments promote outcomes in which all people can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.²
- Third, we invest in projects that will *develop communities without displacing* the current residents of those places. We encourage residents to co-create solutions to problems and actively participate in their implementation. Our creative placemaking investments are *community driven and comprehensive, and they emphasize the importance of collaborative change*.
- Finally, our creative placemaking investments *cultivate inherent community assets, build capacity, and cultivate agency*. Indeed, our hope is to support work that has been rooted in community for decades but will benefit from investment and technical assistance.

The Transformative Power of Arts and Culture to Drive New Outcomes

We have discovered that creative placemaking works best when embedded in a broader program of community development that addresses affordable housing, education, health, and safety. Accordingly, creative placemaking is a key pillar of our new economic development approach, which is called Catalyzing Opportunity. Our work in underinvested communities is based on the premise that opportunity is accessed based on the local environment one lives in, the education and skills one has, and the access to capital and economic choices one enjoys. Our Catalyzing Opportunity strategy empowers people so that more of us can contribute to and take advantage of economic growth, transforms places that are experiencing distress and underinvestment, supports enterprises in building robust economies and communities, and drives systems innovation by working to address institutional challenges.

The practice of creative placemaking helps us to catalyze opportunity because we have seen how it has disrupted standard operating procedure for community development organizations and created possibilities for new outcomes in communities.

1 LISC, “Creative Placemaking: Catalyzing Opportunity.” Interim report to the Kresge Foundation (New York: LISC, September 30, 2018).

2 https://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/The%20Competitive%20Advantage%20of%20Racial%20Equity-final_0.pdf

Outcome 1: Art Unleashes Community Power and Innovative Solutions That Drive Economic Prosperity

We often think of arts outcomes in creative placemaking: a beautiful mural depicting historic events, a piece of public art on a transit corridor, or a branding project in a commercial center. But we have found that the *process* of creative placemaking, and the level of inquiry artists bring to the work, also uncovers hidden opportunities. It is the process of including artists, early on, in the work of neighborhood building that produces innovative solutions, particularly in our most underinvested places.

In Philadelphia, our LISC office has a long partnership with the Village of Arts and Humanities (VOAH). The organization serves as both an arts and cultural provider, as well as a community developer, and has been our partner in neighborhood convening and planning. VOAH is embedded in the eastern North Philadelphia neighborhood, which includes Germantown Avenue, a mile-long strip saw-toothed with vacant and abandoned buildings and lots. For VOAH, forgotten urban spaces, such as Germantown Avenue, can become sites of community cultural renewal, ultimately laying the foundation for an economic agenda that enfranchises community residents in new ways. Indeed, this enfranchisement is the necessary condition for equitable economic growth. As Aviva Kapust, executive director of VOAH, says, “We needed to anchor the corridor in equity, and the only way to do that is to bring in art. Why art? Because art is the ability to ‘conjure’ something wholly new and to do so in service to, and with, others: with people you know, using the words they use.”

So, VOAH artists from North Philadelphia began the process of envisioning how to transform Germantown Avenue, and created art parks, murals, and urban gardens—projects that became highly visible expressions of community power. Add to this the Village’s arts residency program (devoted to social change), its youth arts program, and its nationally recognized and arts-centered citizen reentry program for women, and the result is a layering of new relationships across multiple communities within the community.

Outcome 2: Creative Placemaking Builds Community Identity, Ownership, and Agency

We believe that building and maintaining quality housing is the key to improving the quality of life for families and individuals in underinvested communities. We have also discovered that improving housing conditions does not necessarily lead to civic ownership of neighborhood assets. In the past five years, we have seen creative placemaking as a game changer for improving social connection that leads to deeper ownership of community assets.

Trinity Square is the gateway to South Providence, which, as Southside Cultural Center (SSCC)’s Richardson Ogidon often points out, is the most diverse neighborhood in Rhode Island. Although decades of disinvestment left behind a decayed housing stock and pockets of severe blight, community development organizations plowed some \$200 million into affordable housing, holding off—and, in some places, reversing—decline. However, this investment did not build a community identity that includes the various people who live there.

As a community cultural center, SSCC “connects, cultivates, and engages community through the arts.” Ogidon sees SSCC “as the anchor to a natural evolution of the community’s identity.” SSCC’s creative placemaking efforts in the Trinity Square neighborhood are tied to the Center’s location within the historic Trinity United Methodist Church. In 2015, SSCC, the City of Providence, and LISC Rhode Island were awarded an ArtPlace grant to produce a project that would serve as a gateway to the South Providence neighborhoods. A broad coalition was convened, and Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) partnered with the city and SSCC to design and build the work.

Over a series of months, LISC assisted SSCC in convening a broad-based coalition of community organizers, business owners, social service staff, homeless community members, and longtime residents who had often been left out of traditional community planning. This work was not straightforward or easy. Power dynamics between institutions and residents were initially fraught. The original RISD concepts were met with skepticism, and it became clear that the community needed to be the agents of self-determined identity formation. The process of creative placemaking, of involving artists in the collaborative process, helped illuminate the community’s priorities and desired identity. As we learned, it isn’t importing art into a community that catalyzes a neighborhood’s cohesion—it’s the far more unpredictable process of making art *as* a community.³ An outcome of this consideration was that a representative team of residents was paid as consultants to provide expertise in the needs of the neighborhood. Community members decided that they needed a flexible performance space that could be used in multiple ways. They determined that a decaying parking lot could be the site of such a space. In response, SSCC and its partners—LISC, the city, and RISD—working with the community created SouthLight, a beautifully designed and illuminated community performance space, lawn, and garden that offers programming throughout the warmer months.

Over the past four years, South Providence and the area around Trinity Square have become demonstrably more cohesive. Participation at SouthLight performances has been strong. The SSCC member organizations, such as the Rhode Island Black Storytellers, Rhode Island Latino Arts, and the Laotian Community Center, are active participants, while the building itself has become recognized as a community hub. Two newly energized neighborhood and business associations have mobilized community and business volunteers for block parties, events, and neighborhood cleanups. As community cohesion and activity continue to rise, new investment has begun to flow. For example, the Southside Community Land Trust acquired a building and large lot across from Trinity Church. Through the work of SSCC and its partners, community leaders expect to solidify and highlight the community’s cultural identity, stimulate foot traffic, animate community spaces, and create a node for new business formation and expansion in the district surrounding a newly illuminated Trinity Square.

3 Katharine Greider, “Shedding Light on a Community’s Creativity” (New York: LISC, August 25, 2017), <http://www.lisc.org/our-stories/story/shedding-light-community-creativity>.

Outcome 3: Creative Placemaking Drives Social Cohesion and Cultural Understanding into the Process of Community Development

We have found that this work helps build cultural bridges in neighborhoods and breaks down assumptions. As communities evolve, new and distinct communities often emerge within them. This often leads to one culture dominating or attempting to maintain its control. But what if these communities could begin to understand each other and work together on place-based initiatives for their neighborhoods?

Cincinnati's Price Hill neighborhood tells a story that is familiar to many American communities. The traditionally white German inhabitants of this community have been aging or migrating out for many years and have been slowly replaced by African American and Latinx families.

Leaders of the local community development corporation, Price Hill Will (PHW), had long pursued a fairly traditional program of housing rehabilitation, but they recognized they needed to do more to respond to the dynamics and stress of neighborhood change. Community members voiced strong support for more arts and cultural programming and for arts and cultural practices to be integrated into community development programs at PHW. In response, PHW sponsored an Arts Council to organize local artists and arts organizations and develop community events.

Yet the game-changing event that set PHW and all of Price Hill on a new course was the creation, in 2011, of a program called MYCincinnati as an operating entity within the organization. MYCincinnati is a "franchise" of the international music education program known as El Sistema, which uses music to transform children and families by emphasizing themes of dignity, inclusion, and social justice.

Over the course of eight years, and from a beginning class of 11 students to 60 today, MYCincinnati has become a fulcrum of community change, reaching hundreds of families directly and leading them to regard both each other, and Price Hill, as a true community. As former Director Laura Jekel said: "When the program is over, the relationships remain."

The old firehouse that's home to MYCincinnati has become a community center for the program itself and for other arts and community events. With support from LISC, PHW launched the Summer Creative Community Festival to showcase community talent in multiple community venues, including MYCincinnati students, as well as artists of color and LGBTQ artists. As current MYCincinnati Director Eddie Kwon noted, "Inclusivity is at the core of the festival."

Former director Jekel pointed out the next step in the sequence: "MYCincinnati led to creative placemaking, and now creative placemaking is leading to equitable economic development. In fact, the entire Price Hill Will real estate development portfolio is related to the arts. Working with LISC and PHW, we have been able to create a pathway for the arts to support community development outcomes—and not just social cohesion—but the work is now manifested into community gathering spaces and will continue to drive civic life."

And now under the leadership of PHW’s executive director, Rachel Hastings, renovation of a beautiful but abandoned Masonic Temple, built in 1912, will soon begin. The temple is expected to open in 2020. MYCincinnati will be among the new tenants, expanding its footprint in the city. This move will enable MYCincinnati to serve more families and to begin a Creative Action Residency, which will provide artists with an opportunity to investigate community challenges and work with residents on specific responses, culminating in a performance. The firehouse will anchor a new Creative Campus, consisting of eight buildings and two vacant lots. The Campus will house a variety of arts organizations committed to principles of inclusion, which, as Kwon puts it, will create a “density of opportunity” that will become an entry point to the community, generate foot traffic, solidify the neighborhood’s identity, and set the tone for further development.

Conclusion

LISC has dramatically expanded its arts and cultural work over time and has contributed significant funds and resources to communities around the country. Last year, we committed \$23.2 million in loans to 12 projects, with over \$32 million in the pipeline for 27 projects in 14 cities. We have also established a national creative placemaking infrastructure, supported hundreds of projects, and deepened the professional skills and capacities of our staff and our partners. In addition, since 2015, LISC—in partnership with PolicyLink—has leveraged support from the National Endowment for the Arts and The Kresge Foundation to provide grants and technical assistance to creative placemaking projects across the country.

And perhaps most important, we have worked to ensure that our creative placemaking efforts are integrated with the rest of the work we do at LISC, because we are seeing that the model works in helping us achieve our central goals for community revitalization. We understand that when arts and cultural partners are at the table, we are able to be more responsive to communities, build more effective coalitions, and, as a result, address critical needs in an even more comprehensive way. Our arts-related investments have transformed our practice and that of our community partners. These new practices and partnerships, all of them rooted in the arts, have helped us achieve our broader organizational outcomes: helping to catalyze opportunity in communities across America.

Maurice Jones is President and CEO of LISC. Prior to joining LISC, Maurice was the Secretary of Commerce for the Commonwealth of Virginia, where he managed 13 state agencies focused on the economic needs in his native state. Before that, he was second in command at the U.S. Department of HUD, serving as deputy secretary in charge of operations. He has also been commissioner of Virginia’s Department of Social Services and deputy chief of staff to then-Governor Mark Warner. At the U.S. Treasury Department during the Clinton administration, he managed the CDFI fund. His private-sector experience includes top positions at the Virginian-Pilot in Norfolk, a Richmond law firm, and a private philanthropy investing in community-based efforts to benefit children in Washington, DC.

Comparative Experience

SECTION TWO

Creating Process for Change

*Michael Robd with Rebecca Martínez, Soneela Nankani, Sara Sawicki, and Shannon Scrofano
Center for Performance and Civic Practice*

Act I: Who We Are

imagine each line as one of five voices

Center for Performance and Civic Practice (CPCP) is a team of five artists.

We believe

that with the right approach,

the same tools and capacities artists use to make art

can be utilized to transform systems

and improve the impacts of government and community-driven efforts and programs.

We commit to racial justice and to hosting and supporting practices of inclusion.

We commit to using the word “artist” expansively to include those who think of themselves as designers, culture makers, and heritage holders.

We commit to the collaborative act of field-building, cross-sector, arts-based, community-led transformation.

We commit to supporting the growth of local capacities to:

Grow circles of stakeholders through equitable engagement strategies;

Partner effectively across fields of experience and knowledge;

Tackle local challenges and imagine creative opportunities for change.

We co-design, facilitate, coach, and support

Process.

Our core principle:

If you are working for change,

*the people you hope will benefit
from that change*

must be the authors of the vision for change.

They must be co-designers and co-leaders of any strategies to accomplish that change.

Act II: Cultivating the Conditions for Discovery

Between 2016 and 2019, CPCP worked with the ArtPlace America Community Development Investments (CDI) sites virtually, at conferences, and on regular site visits. Our formal role was to provide technical assistance. Informally, we were privileged to play the role of partners, confidants, and supporters. At the different sites, we spent time facilitating staff and board meetings; designing and leading public engagement sessions with diverse local stakeholders; and helping local artists think about their partnership and creative practices with these community development partners. We co-wrote artist calls, helped refine new values and vision statements, and supported messaging strategies for internal and external communication. In addition, we spent lots of time coaching the process of building the necessary will among staff to shift organizational practices—the shifts that are necessary to make creative placemaking possible and sustainable.

We found that organizations new to working with artists often learn that their daily structures for doing business do not necessarily make for smooth collaborations when it comes to creative strategies. Many community development corporations and municipal agencies function in an environment where they need to specify their intended results from the outset. Collaborating with artists does not have to be, as one CDI site member said, “all loosey goosey,” but it does need to leave space for discovery. We often work with organizations to learn whether their practices support “discovery potential”—that is, whether they have the capacity and patience to sometimes start a process with the intention of addressing an aspiration or challenge, rather than starting with a designated singular output. Discovery potential can leave space for goals and strategies to evolve. Part of CPCP’s work in non-arts contexts is to explore what system or organizational culture issues might need to shift to allow maximum benefit from the collaborative work at the heart of creative placemaking.

For instance,

Some organizations find-

their current purchase-order system is not able to accommodate shifting project needs that develop over the course of a creative process;

Some find-

having been founded and operating within a dominant culture of whiteness, they normalize institutional habits and strategic approaches that collide with efforts to authentically engage and collaborate with historically oppressed and excluded communities;

Some find-

their various departments (marketing, facilities, program management, development) rarely discuss projects with each other, leaving staff members out of the loop and frustrated when last-minute requests come in for public engagement events.

What practices help develop discovery potential?

- Openness to re-imagining how set business systems could operate.
- Asking questions like, “How can organizational mechanisms align with values and purpose?”
- Committing to staff and board anti-racism training, so that when you engage with communities and talk about justice and change, you are doing that work internally.
- Setting aside time for share-outs and check-ins, so people across the organization know what’s going on, why and how it impacts their work.

How do we collaborate to find creative strategies that address community-defined aspirations and needs? Like anything that requires vast amounts of time, resources, and public will, it takes intention, and consistency—it takes a process.

Act II: The Power of Questions

In Anchorage?

Artists and Cook Inlet Housing Authority staff had to think through what outcomes they were aiming to accomplish, and what responsibility the artist’s creative output should have for legible impact on those outcomes.

In Philadelphia?

Artists and Fairmount Park Conservancy staff had to examine what leadership, decision-making, and ownership on a shared project look like amid the complex power dynamics of compensation and credit, as well as their co-location in a city (like many others) with a deep legacy of structural racism.

In rural Minnesota?

Artists and Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership staff had to co-imagine what strategies could bring geographically disparate employees into a shared understanding of and commitment to cultural organizing as a worthwhile investment of their limited time.

There are questions that are useful to ask at the start of any partnership. Often, collaborators think they’ve had the conversations without asking the questions out loud.

Ask the questions.

The benefits of making time and space to sit with the conversations they surface are varied and deep.

What values do we each bring to this collaboration?

What expectations do we bring?

What goals do we start with, individually, and what goals do we agree to pursue together?

What will success in our work together look like?

What does collaboration mean to us?

How do we want to communicate in moments of disagreement or tension?

Are we sharing leadership on project design?

Who is leading the actual conversation/meeting/session when we are in the room with other stakeholders?

How will we make decisions about the content of what we create, produce, communicate, and make public?

How will we build, reflect on, evolve, and evaluate process together?

In Zuni Pueblo, artists and Zuni Youth Enrichment Project staff had to determine what timeline and engagement activities could support a community's vision for a new park and community space.

In Los Angeles, artists and Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) staff had to help the LTSC Board see creative practice as an effective strategy that accomplishes visible, community-centered outcomes aligned with existing organizational goals.

In Jackson, artists and Jackson Medical Mall Foundation staff wanted to explore how a place with a significant history and immense physical scale could be activated to communicate new meanings and serve as a dynamic community resource.

Does your partnership serve a particular group of stakeholders or constituents?

If so, does your partnership not only represent but also include members of those groups?

How can you make certain that when you meet to design goals and processes, those stakeholders or constituents are with you in the room?

How can you ensure that you have made a space in which everyone can participate equitably?

Act IV: Artists Make Meaning

We have been in spaces where artists successfully aim public imagination and collaborative expression at equitable participation in the shaping of place.

If place is geography bound by shared meanings,
if place plus time equals change,
what does change do to meaning?

How is meaning shaped? By whom? For whom?

Artists keep, make, and transform meaning. It is what they do. Their relationship to place, in addition to inhabiting it, is to see it and listen to it. Whether intentionally or not, every creative act, every moment of imagination and expression in a place, contributes to that place's shape.

Which returns to the question-- by whom and for whom?

For artists, engaging in creative placemaking involves imagining their own artistic practices in service of collaborative community settings and moments.

In a traditional studio practice (making work solely from a core creative impulse of one's own), the artist creates meaning and shares it. In a civic practice (making work collaboratively in service to a community-defined outcome), the artist listens and co-creates meaning with an intentionality established by residents and community partners.

When artists new to civic practice, new to collaborative practice in and with community, engage in creative placemaking, they sometimes say:

Does being responsive to community mean I give up my own voice and expertise?

The answer is--no.

Your voice is your point of view and life experience, and you need these to be a strong collaborator.

Your expertise is your particular set of creative assets and aesthetic sensibility, and you need these to be a strong collaborator.

You also need curiosity, humility, the capacity to listen, and respect for the voice and expertise of your community collaborators, whether you are of that community or not.

The intelligence, lived experience, cultural practices, and local knowledge of your place-based community collaborators are assets as valuable as any you bring, no matter your discipline or training.

Creative placemaking centered in a civic-practice approach values discovery. It values co-design, and it demonstrates that the achieved outcomes and outputs would not have occurred if this group had not built a partnership and worked together.

We've seen print-makers build collaborative tools that residents use to imagine a vision for growth in their community; we've seen theatre directors aim their skills toward the facilitation of conversation between residents with different beliefs and opinions about public good; we've seen musicians deploy practices of ensemble in spaces where dialogue was tense and difficult; we've seen heritage holders use story to bring community together for problem-solving a local challenge; and we've seen writers collaborating with designers help local leaders make complex issues legible to local stakeholders.

These examples all have something in common--they each demanded the creation of a process where experience was centered on listening as a value, an action, and an outcome. Each demonstrated an understanding that if relationship is central to building community, then listening is the currency of making change.

Act V: Listening for Change

At an early meeting, we heard a staff member at one of the six CDI sites say something like:

The thing that makes me most uncomfortable about setting up moments to listen to community members about projects and plans is: What if they tell me what they want and I can't deliver? Isn't that a betrayal? Doesn't that prove I wasn't listening? I mean, we make the decisions. Sure, we base them on feedback, on research, on our own expertise in areas like construction and zoning and budgeting. But if we open the conversation up and people have an unrealistic wish list, or a batch of complaints, I know we can't address all those things within the parameters we have to make a project happen. Why set up false expectations? Why disappoint people? Why piss them off?

So.

The first time CPCP heard this, we felt lucky to be trusted with the candor it demonstrated. When we heard something like it at more than one site, we knew it represented an opportunity in the form of a challenge: How do we transform this wariness, based on legitimate experience and understandable risk aversion, into a strategy for redefining how exchange with residents and local stakeholders could occur? How do we help the sites leverage their growing relationships with artists into opportunities for that transformation?

We said something like:

What might listening, in an ideal world, provide you with? What are your goals?

And they said something like:

The opportunity to actually do what people want instead of what we think they need. The chance for people to invest energy in an idea because they feel some ownership. More ideas. Ideas we wouldn't come up with on our own.

We said:

*You are grappling with two very real questions:
What do you need to do to earn the right to listen?
And what promises do you make when you listen?*

They said:

See, this is our challenge. We thought we just wanted feedback, but that doesn't feel right, given our values and how we talk about community development.

We:

It doesn't sound like you just want feedback. Feedback suggests you did something, you want someone's opinion, and you'll decide whether that opinion warrants action on your part or not. Your goals imply a commitment to exchange.

They:

That's right.

We:

Exchange implies listening implies dialogue. In the case of your work with residents, you have to devise the right invitations to dialogue; you have to measure authentic listening by the duration of relationships you build, the quality of the process you shape, and the transparency you demonstrate around how you make decisions and how you hold yourselves accountable.

They:

That sounds good, but...that takes time and staff capacity. We barely get done what we need to do as it is.

We:

Process aimed at more transparent exchange doesn't have to overwhelm your capacity. You have already begun to engage local artists whose assets can be tremendously productive in service to outcomes you already prioritize.

They:

But what does that look like? What's an example you can imagine that would help me communicate the possibilities to the different stakeholders who are not in this conversation we're having right now?

Act VI: An Example

(Imagine a staff member at a mid-sized, place-based community development corporation speaking at a staff gathering.)

I went to a community meeting Saturday morning about the new housing development going up in the neighborhood.

There were residents, city employees, community organizers, even some of the developers.

It was led by a local artist. When we started, she taped a 20-foot piece of butcher paper across one wall in the room. Then she put out markers and invited us to draw a timeline of the neighborhood's history, starting as far back as we wanted, right up until today. She played music and gave us 15 minutes. When time was up, we stepped back and looked. What wasn't written was as interesting as what was. We spent another 30 minutes talking about history and place and change; about systemic inequity, institutional racism, gentrification, and displacement.

Then she told us about a project she had recently completed.

Four high school students and four elders, all living within a one-mile radius of the proposed development site, did the same exercise we just did. Following that, they participated in a two-hour arts workshop once a week for the next three months. Every week, they told stories to each other about people and places on or not on the timeline they had made; every week they interviewed one local resident the artist brought in as a guest; and every week, at the end of each session, they spent another 30 minutes refining their

collaborative timeline. Adding images, replacing or shifting text, stapling objects and maps. This involved some hard, deep conversations. By the end of two months, they had built—together—a multidisciplinary representation of meaning with commentary and first-person accounts knitted across centuries and locations.

They spent their third and final month of weekly sessions making a video that takes a viewer through not just the art but the process they went through to create it. One month after their last session, they hosted a community meeting. The eight original participants, the youth and elders, showed their video, and then they led the meeting participants in a dialogue that began with responses to the video and the timeline art, but moved on to a pretty energetic dialogue about what residents want this neighborhood to be 5, 10, 100 years from now.

After telling us this whole story, our artist/facilitator showed us the seven-minute video—it's amazing—and we had that same dialogue about the future, in the room, with her.

I have gone to a lot of meetings since I started work here.

At Saturday's meeting, after we made our own timeline, watched the video, and had that dialogue, I felt a level of connection and care that I've never felt before in a space like that. I learned about what matters to a group of strangers. The artist who led it, she had a clear commitment to process. And people, they really opened up.

I think we should be collaborating with artists not just on what they produce, but on processes they can help us design and lead. They could be working with us and the transit authority on issues of equity; they could be working with our housing coalition on community design; we could use support facilitating staff meetings and board meetings. Between their artistic skills and their knowledge and love for this neighborhood, I see a lot of possibility.

I don't know that our organization is 100 percent prepared for the kind of collaborations I believe we could imagine.

But I know we could be.

Epilogue: Moving Forward

(Imagine each line as one of five voices.)

What is the discovery potential at your organization/agency?

Is there opportunity to identify and explore what you intend to address before defining an outcome by which success will be measured?

Is there an appetite for outputs that can't be imagined at a project's start but rather will iterate across a process?

As you do the work of making public good, do you have a process for engaging in difficult conversations about:

Power and privilege?

Structural racism and economic inequities?

Whiteness and patriarchy?

Collaboration and conflict?

Who do you and your colleagues serve?

Who are your stakeholders?

In what ways do you listen?

Where? When? How?

In what ways is that listening visible and legible?

CPCP's core principle:

*If you are working for change,
the people you hope will benefit
from that change
must be the authors of the vision for change.*

They must be co-designers and co-leaders of any strategies to accomplish that change.

Artists, designers, culture makers, and heritage holders are a local resource in every place.

Listen. Collaborate. Build process together.

Create.

Soneela Nankani is executive director of CPCP. Prior to this, she served as managing director for six years. She leads CPCP's efforts toward impact-driven programming and sustainable organizational practices, as well as guides the organization's endeavors to articulate more clearly than ever before its commitment to racial equity and justice in its mission, values, and work. Soneela has over 25 years of experience as a community dialogue facilitator, co-creator, thought partner, and performer in capacity-building and place-based projects around the nation. She has done much of this work in collaboration with Sojourn Theatre, with which she has worked since its founding in 1999. She has also done this work in partnership with education departments at theaters. Additionally, Soneela works as a theater performer, writer, and producer. She is an award-winning audiobook narrator. Soneela has a BA in economics from the University of Pennsylvania and an MFA in acting from Columbia University.

*Michael Rohd is a cofounder of CPCP, where he holds the position of Lead Artist for Civic Imagination. He is also the founding artistic director of the 19-year-old national ensemble-based Sojourn Theatre. In 2015, he received an Otto Rene Castillo Award for Political Theater and the Robert E. Gard Foundation Award for Excellence. He is an Institute Professor at Arizona State University's Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts and is author of the widely translated book *Theatre for Community, Conflict, and Dialogue*. He was the 2013-2016 Doris Duke Artist-in-Residence at Lookingglass Theatre Company in Chicago. Recent and current projects include collaborations and productions with Goodman Theatre, Bush Foundation, Lincoln Center, Singapore Drama Educators Association, Americans for the Arts, Nashville's MetroArts, Cleveland Public Theatre, Catholic Charities USA, Cook Inlet Housing Authority Alaska, ASU/Gammage, and Steppenwolf Theatre Company.*

Shannon Scrofano is a Los Angeles-based designer whose work includes interdisciplinary performance, public space, exhibition, curation, and dial projects internationally and throughout the United States. She was a part of the founding team of artists who hatched CPCP, where she currently serves as Director of Design. She is a company member of Sojourn Theatre and is on the design faculty at California Institute of the Arts, where she works on new models for design education.

Rebecca Martínez is a Brooklyn-based artist with CPCP and the program director of Catalyst Initiative and Learning Lab, two core initiatives. As a member of Sojourn Theatre, she has worked as a director, choreographer, and facilitator for multiple national projects, including Don't Go, How to End Poverty in 90 Minutes, Finding Penelope, Islands of Milwaukee, On the Table, and the two-year Artist-in-Residence collaboration with Catholic Charities. At both CPCP and Sojourn Theatre, her work focuses on cross-disciplinary social and civic practice through co-designed, arts-based engagement and invitation strategies. She is a member of Sol Project Collective, New Georges Jam, Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab, INTAR's Unit52, SDCF Observership Class, Latinx Theatre Commons Steering Committee, and 2018-2020 Women's Project Lab. She was a 2017 Drama League Directing Fellow, a 2019 Audrey Resident, and an associate member of SDC.

Sara Sawicki is a Chicago-based theater artist. She is an ensemble member of Sojourn Theatre, where she also works as the project coordinator for the touring engagements of Sojourn's How to End Poverty in 90 Minutes. Sara joined CPCP in 2015. As CPCP's Partnership/Communications Manager, she supports CPCP partner relationship development, acts as project manager for the expanding Civic Body programming, and coordinates internal and external organization communications. Outside of CPCP and Sojourn Theatre, Sara works as an artist touring internationally as a performer/puppeteer with Manual Cinema; a company member of For Youth Inquiry; a recurring youth circus co-director and writer at Actors Gymnasium; a cinematic performance capture at NetherRealm Studios; and a freelance director and performer.

Leading Change: Reflections from Chief Executives of CDI Organizations

Carol Gore, Cook Inlet Housing Authority

Dean Matsubayashi, Little Tokyo Service Center

Primus Wheeler, Jackson Medical Mall Foundation

Joseph Claunch, Zuni Youth Enrichment Project

Jamie Gauthier, Fairmount Parks Conservancy

Kristie Blankenship, Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership

Facilitated by Jamie Bennett, ArtPlace America

In April 2019, Jamie Bennett, executive director of ArtPlace America, spoke with the current or former chief executives of the six Community Development Investments (CDI) grantee organizations to discuss what motivated them to incorporate arts and cultural strategies into their agencies, how this has changed their approach, and what differences it has made for their communities.¹ Jamie sought to draw out the deeper meaning of “why the work is important” to these organizations and how the various leaders—some of whom were in their role when the program began and others of whom joined midway—acclimated themselves and their staff to a new way of working.

Two things are very clear from this conversation. First, the CDI program offered an unprecedented opportunity to explore new ways of working by allowing the space for experimentation and growth in a sector that is often rigid in how funding can be used. Second, arts and cultural lenses and strategies have allowed these organizations to both better deliver on their organizational mandates and expand the nature of the outcomes they are able to achieve.

The participants in the dialogue included three leaders who were at the helm when the program began:

- Carol Gore, president and chief executive officer, Cook Inlet Housing Authority (CIHA), Anchorage, AK
- Dean Matsubayashi, executive director, Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC), Los Angeles, CA
- Primus Wheeler, executive director, Jackson Medical Mall Foundation (JMMF), Jackson, MS

¹ This conversation has been edited for length and clarity. The full conversation, which includes a collection of stories told by the participants, is available online at www.communitydevelopment.art.

And three leaders who joined or transitioned into their role during the program:

- Joseph Claunch, co-director, Zuni Youth Enrichment Project (ZYEP), Zuni, NM, who rejoined the organization partway through the CDI period
- Jamie Gauthier, former executive director, Fairmount Parks Conservancy (FPC), Philadelphia, PA
- Kristie Blankenship, interim chief operating officer, Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership (SWMHP), Slayton, MN

Jamie:

The context I'd like to suggest for the time we have together is this: I think a lot about philanthropy, and whether you're applying for a grant or you're analyzing something that philanthropy invested in, we spend a lot of time dicing up the work that we're doing so that it fits into the blanks, fits into the boxes. Oftentimes, I look back at that application or that evaluation, and I start to say, "Everything in it is factually true, but does this miss the point?" It actually missed the big picture. It missed why the work's important. It missed why the work feels the way it does. And this discussion is really the chance within this Community Development Innovation Review issue for all of us to talk about what's important. What is the real point?

Let's start with your own beginnings. How did you first come to work at your organizations, and how did you first understand the relevance of arts and culture to your work?

Carol (CIHA):

We have a population of almost 40,000 Alaska Natives who live in Anchorage within a total population of about 300,000. There is no other city in the country that has that high a Native population. But we [at Cook Inlet Housing Authority, a tribally designated housing authority] serve everyone, including non-natives and all tribes, we serve Navajos and Cherokees, people from Uganda and from all over the world, so that it literally looks like the United Nations in our office. When we got the call about ArtPlace, we said, "What does this have to do with housing?" We went because a local foundation told us we needed to be in the room. The lack of a prescriptive approach to a bundle of money was very interesting to us because we were used to figuring out anything that came in our door that had a prescriptive approach. We could fill in the blanks and we generally were successful, but to give us a big doughnut hole, if you will, to wander in and try to figure out how to "win" was mind-twisting for us. I would say that's how we came to ArtPlace as a housing entity, thinking about artists and scratching our heads and not even sure that we were supposed to be in the room.

Dean (LTSC):

From the outset, LTSC has always been at the forefront of playing the community development real estate game, playing it right, and playing it on the level. I've been at LTSC since

1996, though I spent some time in New York at Asian Americans for Equality, but for the most part I've been at LTSC. One thing the CDI experience has generated for me and for LTSC is learning that there's so much more to art and creative strategies than what we thought. We had the chance to really think about how we can use these creative strategies to generate empathy and to inspire action.

One of the first things I remember hearing [about the CDI opportunity] was to be experimental and try things out. And we were like, "What? What are you talking about?" A funder had never told us that before. But really, I think it has transformed how we thought about how and what we can do and the potential of the funds, versus just using it as another transactional piece to do what we were already trying to do.

Primus (JMMF):

I've had several great opportunities, great jobs over the years, but this is absolutely the best job, the best opportunity I've ever come across. It has been a real blessing to me and my career. The Jackson Medical Mall Foundation got involved in ArtPlace because we were starting to do some community development, and one of the things we found in the community was that most of the young African American men were struggling with identity, struggling with employment, struggling with all kinds of life issues. So, we were looking for funding to help support that work we were thinking about getting into. When we first got the support from ArtPlace, we had no intention of ever doing anything to totally reclaim this organization, to really restructure this organization. We never thought that would happen. We were just going to get the Boys-to-Men program going, and since that would be totally different from what we were doing, we would give it to somebody else to run and move on. But we found that the CDI opportunity was really different than what we expected. As we went through the process, we were guided away from that original idea, and we are a much better organization because we've been involved with ArtPlace.

Joe (ZYEP):

I had worked as a coach and a teacher in Zuni for a few years, and I had met the founder and director of ZYEP, Tom Faber. I can remember him calling me when I was toward the end of my graduate degree program and telling me that he was so excited that they had just received the CDI grant. Tom asked if I was interested in coming back to Zuni and working with him to help build this park that had been a long-term vision of the organization. He described that the funding was coming from ArtPlace. I'm the farthest thing from [being] an artist that there is, so I had some apprehension to think that I would be working in the arts. I started in June of 2016 working directly on this grant in the community with artists, and that was a whole new world to me. The one advantage that I did have is that I didn't know anything about art, so I could really take a beginner's mind to it. I didn't have a lot of opinions formulated at the time, and so I was just really wide open.

Jamie (FPC):

When I first joined the Conservancy, the arts and cultural work was not very apparent to me. We were consumed by Rebuild [a half-billion-dollar renovation of about 200 parks, recreation centers, and libraries across the city]; we were consumed by the thought of our place in this huge capital program that the city was launching. As it became evident that our role in Rebuild wasn't going to be what we thought it was, it allowed us to really refocus on our existing core work, of which arts and culture had become a piece. As the executive director of the Conservancy, I started to delve much more deeply into the arts and cultural work, and that was a great opportunity. The funding and support from ArtPlace helped us to build trust with communities, to engage with community in a very different way. It added layers to our work and made it better.

Kristie (SWMHP):

I came to the Housing Partnership in 1999, hired as their asset manager. At the time I was hired, we had about five properties, 124 Low-Income Housing Tax Credit units. When I left the role as director of property and asset management in February of 2018, we had about 50 properties, over 1,700 units. I transitioned into the role of the interim chief operating officer in February of 2018 after our former COO resigned. And, we are in a leadership transition, as our founding CEO retired at the beginning of January [2019] and then subsequently passed away in early March. So, there are lots of changes here for us.

As the staff person in charge of our multifamily portfolio, when we began the discussions about this ArtPlace grant, all of us were having a difficult time wrapping our heads around what it meant. You know, "Are we putting a statue in the front lawn? Are we hanging pictures on the wall?" Like Carol said, to have an opportunity where you're not quite sure what the outcome is going to be, it's daunting in a way. But seeing where we are now versus where we were four years ago, it's like, "Oh my goodness, I never would have thought the changes we've made were even possible!" And I really appreciate the way we look at things now, whom we engage, how we engage—it's transformational.

Jamie:

That perfectly tees up where I wanted to go. I'd love for all six of you to begin thinking about the question, "So what?" We describe this program as wanting to find six organizations that have an extraordinary commitment to the community of people that you all serve. Our investment was to help you figure out ways that you could work with artists, that you could work with the arts community to help achieve your existing mission more effectively, more efficiently, or for more of your population. But it's hard to "get" what we're talking about unless you experience it. Carol, why did it matter? Why did you need to bring in artists to help develop more housing for more people in Anchorage?

Carol (CIHA):

First of all, Kristie, we share a story; I really appreciate what you've said and the transformation that has occurred for you. I would start by saying it was important to me when I first came to Cook Inlet Housing that we reflected our Alaska Native values in the work that we do. By that I mean, our lens was that everyone is essential and everyone matters. We didn't want to put a totem pole in the front yard of every single housing development, but we wanted people to know that it was an Alaska Native organization that was bringing community to Anchorage.

Along the way, we're also dealing with Low-Income Housing Tax Credits and other sources of capital. It's very expensive to build here, so your capital stacks are very complex. They all have a bunch of rules, and we found ourselves just dragging along, almost as an anchor, all of these rules that really depressed our ability to innovate. Just before ArtPlace came along, we developed a senior housing property that, when I walked in the front door, it was lovely, but it said absolutely nothing about who we were, what our culture was. I realized that we had bent all of our innovation, our thinking, to that stupid rule book, and we met every single rule, but we didn't create the place! We didn't honor the place. We didn't respect really who we were. We didn't reflect our community.

And so that's really where ArtPlace walked in the door for us. Maybe I would add just one more story. Our developer said, "Oh my gosh, \$3 million in the box...oh, how can I use this? I'm having trouble getting this one development idea to pencil. Maybe they would put some money in, and I could just put some artist housing in there and away we go and that would pencil." We've moved from that idea to creating a new development in downtown that's named after Elizabeth Peratrovich, who is, first of all, not Dena'ina, which is our local culture. She's Tlingit, from another region. She, as a woman and an Alaska Native, fought for voting rights in Alaska. We wanted to honor that; I know her granddaughter. We got an extra grant to reflect the history of her family, not just her, but her husband and the family. But we also hired an Alaska Native artist to work with our architect to select paint colors in the building that would reflect the flora and fauna of the place, to bring a different perspective, and education and reflection of our culture throughout the building for the residents and their visitors. Our internal developer is now so damned excited that he's got this ArtPlace thing, and it's really cool, and he loves the outcome, and it means a lot to him. I will tell you, when you can convert a "numbers person" into someone that really gets it, that art matters, I think that's a huge win.

Kristie (SWMHP):

A couple of our projects come to mind, but what the artists assisted us in doing was really connecting with those folks who live in our housing. We had an artist [Nik Nerburn]—his art is through photography and telling stories—and we embedded him in one of our projects

in Worthington. He gave all the kids in the development these disposable cameras, told them what to take pictures of or not to and really got to know the kids, and by that we got to know the families. It helped us understand the things that we were missing in connecting with those that lived in our property. Where are the services lacking? How were they having a hard time connecting? Worthington is a community that is highly, highly diverse, and in one of our projects, not this one specifically, I believe there are about 13 different languages spoken in a single 60-unit development. Maybe we hadn't been able to understand where we were falling short in providing them a home, versus a unit to live in. Being able to connect with those residents in that way was amazing, and something that we'd never done before.

Jamie:

Joe, you've got a PhD in sport and exercise psychology, and you're working in an organization that grew out of a hospital. Why should a youth development organization care about artists? Why should they even think about it?

Joe (ZYEP):

Great question. My training is in youth development and also culturally responsive teaching and research methodologies. The creative placemaking approach is really consistent with culturally responsive teaching and research methodologies—doing a lot of listening up front and letting the community lead community development. Those principles are really built in to those fields. Something that I recognized really early in having conversations with Zuni artists is that they had their own sense of what Zuni youth needed to be healthy and to develop into strong adults. Being able to just listen and tap into that and then let that inform our approach for developing a park transformed the process. Coming into it, I thought, obviously a park is good for kids because it provides them access to physical activities and positive, caring mentors. But the artists did so much more with it: having the park serve as a cultural resource that could help Zuni youth develop a positive identity by learning more about who they are and where they come from. Adding those elements into a built environment space that was intending to benefit Zuni kids was amazing.

Jamie:

Primus, Jackson is an extraordinary place, right? When I think of Jackson, I think of music, I think of amazing food, I think of multi-generations of families who know each other and all of that. Jackson is also a community that's struggling with a lot of health issues at the population level, so you have important work to do with exercise, with food education, with educating people with diabetes, with addiction recovery. Why do you need artists as part of that? What's missing if you don't have the artists working with you?

Primus (JMMF):

When we started the Medical Mall in 1996, we had the attitude that the health care climate was in such need of physicians, clinics, and nurses and all those things that folks would come in for health care. We also had the idea that if we built it, they will come, and therefore we spent about 15 years talking about having enough capacity here to do 500,000 visits per year in health care and health-related visits. However, we are only averaging about 200,000. We didn't have a mechanism to go forward from where we were currently operating. But because we got involved with artists and research folks, and did our first cultural asset map piece, we learned a lot about our business.

The cultural asset mapping was an eye-opener for me when we got more hits on the question, "What do you think needs to happen most in this community?" and they started to ask for more health care. We thought we were already providing more health care, but as we drilled down deeper, we found that they were needing access to health in general, and not necessarily health care.

We started to diversify our programs and started talking to artists of all kinds, and we ran into a gentleman, Daniel Johnson, who is just a tremendous communicator. He helped us with the strategic plan by interviewing employees, everybody who would sit and talk to him, to drill down to find out more about what the folks were expecting. He was telling us things that we thought we already knew, and he was telling us things that we weren't ready to accept. We found that we were not engaging the community at a level where we were talking backward and forward. We were talking to them, and [our attitude was that] we were saving the community from itself. And so, because of how he guided our civic engagement process, we're thinking now that when we come to the table, we could actually be confident that we're going to work together with the community to get something done.

Jamie:

[Jamie, were artists able to help you understand who was there in the community, what it was they needed, and what it was that the park should be doing?](#)

Jamie (FPC):

Artists were able to help us do that after a time of some pretty tense relationships between that community and the Conservancy. We were working with the community of Strawberry Mansion, which borders East Fairmount Park. Previously, we had tried to carry out a project in that neighborhood called "Meander to the River," which was about creating a trail from the neighborhood recreation center down to the Schuylkill River. Gentrification is on the minds of lots of our residents, and Strawberry Mansion is a historically black neighborhood that is squeezed between two gentrifying neighborhoods, and there are development pressures spilling over into Strawberry Mansion. The community felt as though the trail project

that we were advocating for would add to that condition, and they started to not be for the project because of that.

The CDI program allowed us to pause on the project that we had envisioned and to work with artists to find out what was truly important to the community. It also allowed us, by focusing on art, to take ourselves away from this heated discussion that we were having that was really about the way that the community was changing and gentrification. It allowed us to listen to the community's thoughts on how they wanted to express themselves and how they wanted to connect that to the park.

Eventually, as we started to work on smaller projects together, there was a lot of trust and communication built. It allowed us to take on together a larger master plan for the park and the recreation center, but we would not have gotten to that point without this year-long process of taking a step back, listening, and working together on something that was really, really fun while still being meaningful to the community.

Jamie:

Dean, how do we identify what is important in the community so we can build on it? Little Tokyo worked with artists to undertake that in a very specific way—the Takachizu project. Related to that, you also talk about how you work with artists to build what you phrased as “moral site control.” Can you talk a little bit about specifically why artists could help you do that?

Dean (LTSC):

Takachizu is a Japanese kind of modern version of treasure mapping and really using the neighborhood to identify the treasures of our neighborhood that are worth preserving, that are worth fighting for, that are worth going to the end [for]. Because we may lose it—you know, L.A. has a history of redefining itself constantly. Before it's too late, [before we lose what we] already have, being able to tap into that is really important and being very clear on what these treasures are.

It's also critical for us executive directors to stay on board to really push the issues. I really think it's important that we, as an organization, take the lead in terms of what we can do. It really is about how we build thriving communities, how we work with these diverse groups. I think engaging artists at the outset has enabled us to do that because there's no hidden agenda, and it really is trying to get to that core issue.

Jamie:

Arts and culture are tied to many things, one of those being our racial or ethnic identities. When you think about race, ethnicity, and about arts and culture, what comes to mind about artists helping you guys navigate this?

Carol (CIHA):

I would start by saying this will be an authentic conversation coming from an Alaska Native with deep roots in my mom's culture and her village. She grew up in a time when the signs on the stores said, "No Natives, No Dogs." We embraced our culture, but we didn't really beat the drum very loud because we were afraid to, and I'm going to own that. I was afraid to be too out loud about that. At the same time, there are over 110 languages spoken in our schools, and the highest representation in every poverty measure are Alaska Native people, so you have these very interesting dynamics. I think for us, we were trying to navigate: how do we still be an Alaska Native organization that meets our mission of empowering our people and building community and providing housing opportunities, while at the same time lifting other cultures and honoring and respecting them but letting them know that people and place matter to us and they have a unique meaning. Can we share that together? I think ArtPlace has helped us on the courage side, to have those conversations, to look at all other diverse cultures in the eye and say, "We're so glad you're here. Welcome to our land. We want you to be able to celebrate your culture, too."

When we first began with ArtPlace, we had just purchased a church next door to our office that we were going to tear down and turn into a parking lot. Today, that church is undergoing a \$1.4 million renovation so then it can become the cultural hub permanently that it has become over the last three years, thanks to ArtPlace. We were uncomfortable letting anyone even use the place because we were going to tear it down, and we didn't want to provide all the insurance. So, we were in this practical place. But let me tell you, the richness of the sharing of cultures in that place has taught us so many lessons, has taught us that we are not "housers." We are community developers, and taking really who I am, who we are, who our community is, and respecting all of that has been this amazing emotional journey for me personally. But it has also brought my staff, who are as diverse as our community, so that we're in this together. And even though we're in this Alaska Native entity, we can balance that better now because we are not afraid to talk about it. We're not afraid to demonstrate it and actually put things on the ground that are out loud and in your face.

Joe (ZYEP):

Zuni is one of the most continuously inhabited places in all of the Americas. There's been a village there of people for thousands of years. And they've found a way to coalesce and coexist and thrive in a desert climate that's been dry and harsh in a lot of ways environmentally. More recently, there's been a lot of development, and that development typically happens from the government, like the hospitals and the schools. Meanwhile, 80 percent of the adults in Zuni self-identify as artists. These artists have been completely left out of the conversation of how to develop and what to lift up, what to celebrate.

Part of the early work was just to work through a lot of people's uncertainty and suspicions about whether this was real, that we were actually asking for the artist's voice and that it was important to us. Over time, through consistency, we were able to work through those challenges. And the thing that we really learned, that came up again and again, was that this was one of the community's greatest strengths. Their art and their cultural knowledge was one of the community's greatest assets, and there were very few opportunities to use that knowledge and wisdom in community development in a way that would benefit everybody.

Jamie:

In Southwest Minnesota, how does arts and culture work when you're thinking about demographic change, serving both the fifth generation of a family that's been in a place and a family that arrived yesterday? What is the role of arts and culture within that?

Kristie (SWMHP):

I think the role of arts and culture in that respect is in bringing the people together for common ground. I think about one of the projects that we did in Milan, an extremely small community that had a large influx of Micronesians. And there was really a divide between the Scandinavian Norwegian culture and the Micronesians. We did a project there that ended up being a play [produced by PlaceBase Productions] called "This Land is Milan." It brought together the population to really talk about what was common between their cultures.

Jamie:

Jamie, in many of the neighborhoods that Fairmount Park Conservancy serves, and certainly Strawberry Mansion, there are some racial and ethnic shifts that are happening. And there were also some socioeconomic ones, right? You talked about gentrification before. As we're thinking about equitable development and demographic shifts, is there a secret sauce that artists bring that helps make that work better, easier, more effective?

Jamie (FPC):

Yes. Absolutely, the artists helped us to have better conversations and to engage with the community around these demographic shifts. But the artists also helped us to address historic and long-standing tensions in Philadelphia that are not about gentrification or demographic shifts at all. For a long time, there's been this thought that Fairmount Park is for white people, and that improvement in Fairmount Park is for white people and not really for black people in the city. Part of the reason why our work was important was that we were working with the community to reflect what they wanted to see and what they found relevant in the Park, which had been thought of as this thing that's not for them.

Jamie:

As each of you think back over the journey of the past three years in a sentence, what is it that happened? You went from what to what? What is the thing that happened on the highest level that was able to happen [because of] working with ArtPlace? This overwhelming question is intentionally large. If it's easier, think about it as: what is the sentence you want to leave us with as we're coming out of this?

Kristie (SWMHP):

You know, it's been a great journey. I'm glad I was here for the ride, and I can't wait to see what comes next. But, so fortunate to have had the opportunity.

Joe (ZYEP):

The CDI project has changed the nature of our work; we have always strived to connect Zuni kids back to their traditions. And we've helped to facilitate that. What this project has taught us is how to let the community and the community's artists lead those initiatives to bring about better health outcomes for Zuni youth.

Jamie (FPC):

Our arts and culture work and the ArtPlace grant helped us to go from a parks organization—a great parks organization—to an organization that is a trusted community partner. That's how I see our journey over these past several years.

Carol (CIHA):

I would say this: we don't know what we know. We turned assumption to knowledge, and we've redefined what community engagement really means, and our primary plan is now focused on people and place, and we're so immensely grateful. I would add one sentence, which is: Tyler Robinson, who was our co-lead on ArtPlace, now is the VP of our Community Development Department, which did not exist before ArtPlace.

Primus (JMMF):

I can say with all confidence that we are much better positioned now to improve the health and wealth outcomes of the folks who live in our communities.

Dean (LTSC):

I think for us, the sentence has been that it has challenged us to be a better organization, to be a better community development corporation and not just an affordable-housing developer. And that it really has pushed us. Through arts and culture, we really think about what our communities need at this moment, rather than taking the easier route, the more efficient route.

Community History, Identity, and Social Change: Reflections from Researchers on the Potential of Arts and Culture

Chris Johnson, California College of the Arts

Tina Takemoto, California College of the Arts

Mindy Fullilove, The New School

Jennifer Scott, Jane Addams Hull-House Museum and University of Illinois, Chicago

Michael Rios, University of California, Davis

Facilitated by Victor Rubin and Jeremy Liu, PolicyLink

In April 2019, PolicyLink convened five researchers and faculty members¹ from diverse disciplinary backgrounds—psychiatry, landscape architecture, anthropology, photography, and visual arts—to take stock of how we could advance the systematic understanding of the role of arts and culture in community development and social movements through research. The participants have been “engaged scholars” in the best sense of that term: knowledgeable and respectful of the process of community change and sophisticated about how universities need to change to better support this type of research.

The participants were, in order of their first remarks:

Chris Johnson, Professor of Photography at the California College of the Arts and co-creator of the “Question Bridge: Black Males” project. Chris serves as the video documenter of the CDI initiative.

Tina Takemoto, Professor and Dean of Humanities and Sciences at the California College of the Arts. Tina, a visual studies scholar and artist, was a resident artist with the Little Tokyo Service Center.

Mindy Fullilove, Professor of Urban Policy and Health, The New School. Mindy, a psychiatrist and author of several books, including *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America and What We Can Do About It*, is leading the “400 Years of Inequality” project.

Jennifer Scott, Director and Chief Curator, Jane Addams Hull-House Museum and core faculty at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Jennifer is an anthropologist and ethnographer with a wide range of experience in community history and arts.

¹ Two of the participants have been directly involved with the ArtPlace America Community Development Investments (CDI) initiative, and the other three were familiar with it and had extensive experience with other relevant efforts. Some of their research has directly supported the local community groups with which they were in partnership, and in other instances, they have documented or analyzed those local experiences to inform broader audiences and strengthen fields of practice.

Michael Rios, Professor of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Design in the Department of Human Ecology and Vice Provost of Public Scholarship at the University of California, Davis.

The discussion brought out important points about how research on race, culture, neighborhood change, and the preservation of community identity can be shared and deployed to support social movements and grass-roots strategies for equitable development. A strong sense of the value of history as a tool for social change—particularly the often-overlooked histories of people of color and working-class communities—permeated the session. The panelists reinforced the practical uses of unearthing, transmitting, and learning from the record of communities and cultures. As Jennifer Scott put it, “Contemporary artists connect art and artifact, bridge past and present; [they] catalyze conversations and creative openings for people, help imagine what’s happening forward.” The conversation identified at least two ways that research can advance place-based arts and cultural strategies:

- *Research that provides a resource for projects and organizations.* The CDI endeavors were grounded in or informed by what historians, anthropologists, urban policy analysts, or other researchers learned from residents or about their communities.
- *Documentation and comparative analysis.* The field as a whole can benefit from rigorous and culturally sensitive research about innovative projects and strategies, presented in forms that a range of practitioners can use and appreciate.

Victor Rubin, along with Jeremy Liu, of PolicyLink moderated the following discussion, which has been edited for length and clarity.²

Victor:

Let’s start with reflections on your recent activities at the intersection of arts, culture, and community development. Chris, as the video documenter of the CDI initiative, can you share your observations from spending time at the sites? What kinds of inquiries did you think might substantively contribute to our understanding of this work that were not present in our research framework?

Chris:

I’ve been working on a project for a number of years, in collaboration with other artists, named “Question Bridge: Black Males.” That experience helped me see that one thing that I could add [to the CDI story] would be the human element of it. All of these activities [to integrate the arts] are driven by the motivations and aspirations of people. I didn’t see that there was any clear effort being made to talk to those people [carrying out the CDI projects] about why all of these complex collaborations and activities were meaningful to

² The full transcript is available at www.communitydevelopment.art

them on a personal level, because obviously, their personal involvement is what would make these activities sustainable. Their intuition would guide these activities, and they would have insights from their direct connections with the communities that they're engaged with. I spent two to three days at each of the six CDI sites, and I asked all of the stakeholders a range of questions to better understand their values and motivations.

They all shared in different ways that they saw the value of integrating the arts and found themselves doing their work differently because of the involvement of the artists. They also felt that the earlier they could bring artists into the planning processes, the better the outcomes would be. Everyone found the work to be personally fulfilling in different ways, and it opened them to intuitive and cultural opportunities that they hadn't seen before.

Victor:

[Tina, can you describe your work with the Little Tokyo Service Center \(LTSC\) in Los Angeles and your research into the multicultural history of this neighborhood, notably in the 1940s and 1950s? How is this largely unknown history relevant for today's efforts to build multicultural coalitions and preserve the identity of the community?](#)

Tina:

I spent last summer in Little Tokyo as part of the +Lab residency, organized with LTSC. There is an area in the neighborhood called First Street North, which is home to 13 historically designated buildings. A sidewalk monument runs along the street that designates the businesses from 1900 to 1940, organized by visual bands. Each one represents a decade and has the names of historical businesses inscribed in front of each storefront. The band that represents the 1940s is blacked out and mostly devoid of names to denote the time when Japanese Americans were forcibly removed from Little Tokyo and incarcerated by the U.S. government. During the war, this part of Little Tokyo became known as Bronzeville, where African Americans and other folks of color were able to move because the neighborhood didn't have race-restrictive covenants, which had enabled Japanese Americans to live there in the first place. For my project, I was interested in expanding the timeline to include the businesses that operated during the '40s up to the present. I often heard that Bronzeville ended abruptly right after the war when Japanese Americans returned to the neighborhood. But the reverse street directories showed that African Americans and Japanese Americans had lived on the same floors of the same hotels for a considerable period into the early 1960s. This research opens up questions about how these cross-racial negotiations and cohabitations took place and expands our understanding of the complex multicultural history of First Street North that continues to this day.

Victor:

Mindy, your work explores neighborhood change, dislocation, and disruption, as well as the efforts to maintain and build cultural continuity, particularly in African American communities. Why is an understanding of history so critical for people who seek to make change?

Mindy:

I'm working on a project called "400 Years of Inequality"; 2019 is the 400th anniversary of the first arrival of Africans in Jamestown, and our project is a call for a national observance. One of the things that I've referred to a lot is Howard Zinn and Anthony Arnove's *Voices of a People's History of the United States*, which is just full of stories of people's struggles. One part was the struggle to win industrial unions in the '30s. They're sort of a testimonial of what that was like. How did people come to feel it in their bodies that they could take over a factory? How'd they actually sit down to have a sit-down strike? One of the comments that Genora Dollinger makes in *Voices of a People's History* is that after the strike, the women were different; it changed who they were.

These larger movements have strong cultural components, but it's not just the arts and culture—it's also the context in which we're using these strategies and the many steps in the process. There's a role for arts and culture at each step. If we think about these common themes that emerged from CDI—gentrification and displacement, racial health inequities, the isolation of immigrant newcomers, and the historical trauma resulting from racism and oppression—that's quite a list of profound conflicts. I'm sure you could add climate change and a few other things and begin a pretty complete list of what we're up against. How do we [create a sense of urgency and] not act like we have a hundred years to figure this out?

Victor:

Jennifer, how does your approach to uncovering community history enable residents and agents of change to craft the identity of the places where they live?

Jennifer:

I'm an anthropologist by training, and my attention to place and space began with doing ethnographic work and being in the field. I work a lot with marginalized histories or histories that have been erased. Recently, I've been working a lot with historic house museums, but not in the traditional sense of what people usually think about, like George Washington slept here and celebrating very elite histories. At Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, we are uncovering this history of the social settlement, which wasn't the first social settlement, certainly, but the most impactful in that it catalyzed a movement. And it's interesting to look at their process because I think it mirrors what CDI is doing in some ways. They created a settlement landscape with 13 buildings eventually and were trying to follow an immersive

model. You had social reformers, mostly middle-class and upper-class, moving into an area that they identified as a slum and trying to be as close as possible, in order to figure out what was happening in those neighborhoods and to problem-solve. One of the first buildings they built was an art gallery, which became the first public art gallery in Chicago. So, they were offering social services, health care, language classes, skill building for the immigrant community, but they were also offering an extensive slate of art classes and at the same time advocating for policy changes and legislation change, fighting for the eight-hour workday.

We connect these histories to present-day social justice issues, which sounds great and simple, but it's also very challenging to do when people have been left out of the story. One of the good things about the social settlement history is that it lends [itself] to a kind of experimentation and trial and error that they were putting in place. They were originally thinking of arts and culture as a relief from factory work—the long, monotonous, brutal labor exploitation that a lot of the immigrants were experiencing. And, from the beginning, they were thinking about arts and culture as an embedded part of democratic practice and exchange and that everyone should have access to the arts. But I think they also were struggling with this question that we continue to struggle with, about different levels of need and how people need to care for each other or the role of the state in that care, and what that looks like.

Victor:

Michael, you've conducted community design projects of many kinds, seeing how such endeavors get underway, how they're structured, what's motivating them, and how they relate to social and political goals, and you've contributed significantly to a body of research on these topics. What makes for a valuable connection to arts and culture in those kinds of projects?

Michael:

The essential theme of my work, both as a practitioner as well as a researcher, has really been looking at place and placemaking as a way to reimagine a different world. What is the role of art, design, and culture in that reimagining of a different world?

In response to both Jennifer and Mindy, the struggle to survive and to basically just put up with the conditions that we are faced with every day is not enough. We really have to reimagine fundamentally a different world. Art and design can get to more of that presence of being, of belonging and trust building. Trust is really required to ultimately form the collective action that needs to happen in places where people can then form alliances at different scales of action. Obviously, the challenge to do that is a tall order. But I think that all of this work is ultimately about creating a different sense of politics and a vehicle to collectively act.

That's where it's important to bring in the conversation about the community building and community development components, beyond what CDCs [community development corporations] do in terms of professional services. We have to step back and think, where's the political action in all this work to create these sorts of transformative experiences? This perspective has come from my own work in the 1990s, working in the Bay Area, embedding myself as an urban designer in the Spanish Speaking Unity Council, a CDC, and organizing around parks equity and looking at the structural conditions that led to a community of over 50,000 individuals with the highest concentration of youth in the city, but having the least amount of parks and open space. How do we understand that structural injustice and what has led to that and be forward-thinking about what we can do to reimagine that place?

More recently, I've been thinking about creative placemaking as one of a number of methodologies for the types of transformations we want to see. And not just in place-based communities, but also beginning to infuse this thinking, this logic, into institutions, because it's our institutions that are failing us. Are there openings to apply these methods? There's a lot of critique of community development corporations for professionalization and getting away from their historical origins of building and local policy change. This might be one way to come back to the roots of community development corporations as community-based organizations.

Mindy:

I was really resonating with what Jennifer and Tina were saying. History has a lot to teach us about how we got to where we are, but it also holds perspectives on what the tasks are and then what we might do, all the things that we might do. I think that the role of the arts is in helping people see the history and connect to it, because people are very alienated from history. They don't read anything, and we're fed lies.

Chris:

The other thing that I heard from a lot of you, and that resonates a lot with my experience on the road, are the issues of building natural and effective coalitions. When Michael's talking about alliances at different scales of action, that really sums up the experience that I had [visiting the CDI sites]...that people who thought that they were in different spheres [of practice] understood that they had a lot in common: it simply hadn't occurred to them that they were within a paradigm that had something to share with community activists. They saw that that their work is more fulfilling and more effective, frankly, by virtue of the alliances that were being built.

In the Zuni case, they built alliances among artists who had been there in the community all along. Something like 80 percent of the residents of the Zuni Pueblo are creative activists of one kind or another, but they'd never been brought together toward a common issue until

the CDI initiative gave them an incentive to do that. What we see is a natural, organic coalition-building process that's being instigated by the [arts and cultural efforts]. The challenge is to keep it going and to make the logic of these alliances—and the new paradigms that are emerging—clear to everybody so that it can spread throughout the industries, because there are artists who are looking for more ways to get involved with creative placemaking. There are businesses that are trying to figure out how to relate more effectively to their communities.

Jennifer:

I wanted to react to some of what you all are saying about coalition building and what Mindy was adding about history. One of the things that we found really helpful in our West Side project with history is that just in bringing people together, especially in a highly segregated city, history would reveal and uncover the systems of oppression that people were facing in their different neighborhoods. They could compare notes about the systematic nature of racism, you know, the practices of redlining. It took very specific form in the West Side of Chicago that was different from the South Side, but then overlapping as well. In that way, people could come together as you all were just saying.

Jeremy:

How can research be useful and help guide decisions in arts-based community development efforts? What would your respective disciplines and universities need to support this work to happen more often and more effectively?

Jennifer:

We're [Hull-House Museum] at a university, but we have over a hundred community partners, so the most powerful discussions and exhibitions are when they're interdisciplinary and when the researchers are in dialogue with community members. We've had historians who are grateful to be in conversation with practitioners. We always have artists and activists involved in our programs and initiatives. Something really powerful happens when it's very cross-sector and interdisciplinary; people don't even realize they have that need to connect in that way until that encounter. I think that it is really helpful to elevate the interdisciplinary part of this work and research.

Mindy:

The most important role researchers can play is in looking at the edges; it's easy to see what's working, but it's hard to do the critical work, and it's very hard to get that funded. Anything that lifts up that ability of people to really take a deep look at what they did [and ask the really critical question]—did it move the field? Did it actually solve the problems? This is the more critical stance; very hard to get it funded; pretty hard to get published. But if we don't know that, we don't know anything.

Tina:

Within the context of an art and design school, it is exciting to think about all of the different ways we can interact with historical material as a mode of inquiry and community engagement. Some students might think that archival records, maps, and photographs are just things that we use to illustrate history, rather than seeing the ways these materials can enable us to have an active and, as Mindy says, critical conversation with the past in the present. Having the opportunity to physically touch and revisit historical artifacts can spark memories, initiate dialogue, and forge meaningful, intergenerational connections. When a small detail in a photograph or print leads you to wonder how it came into being or to question everything you thought you knew about this image, this is when history becomes alive and the inquiry process begins.

Michael:

Scholarship and research on social movements is often used as a way to legitimize a particular set of practices. I think more about the critical evaluation of creative placemaking, not as a way to undermine the work but actually as a way to elevate it further, to make it more substantive. A lot of the research is really promoting this work, legitimizing this work, and I believe in it. But I think we really have to step back and understand some of its limits and find ways to get that research back to [those who] practice so that those issues get addressed over time.

I would say that in addition to funding being key, there are little to no incentives outside of the creative disciplines to do this work. At least that's the perception. We have to understand how we, within the academy, can articulate the value and impact of this type of scholarly production with publicly facing impact, and how we then organize ourselves to change the norms and policies in the academy to do more of this work.

Victor:

[Terrific! A very good note to end on.](#)

Multiple Ways of Knowing: Translating Outcomes Between the Arts and Community Development

Jamie Hand, ArtPlace America

When I became ArtPlace America’s Director of Research Strategies in 2014, the tension around how to measure creative placemaking success was palpable. Practitioners and communities doing arts-based community development work had been defining their own success for decades, but the then-recent formalization of the field—through the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Our Town grant program, the creation of ArtPlace, significant investments from national philanthropic entities, and numerous other policy and funding shifts—had happened seemingly overnight, without a corresponding or unified theory of change about the *actual* impacts of creative placemaking. The possibilities—and the risks—were both abstract and endless.

The NEA was in the midst of its multiyear *Validating Arts and Livability Indicators (VALI) Study*, and ArtPlace itself had released a hotly contested set of indicators that positioned creative placemaking as contributing to the “vibrancy” of a place.¹ Respected researchers and scholars who had spent their careers studying the social or economic impact of the arts were increasingly vocal, calling out the shaky foundation upon which we were attempting to build a field.²

To further complicate matters, individual approaches to creative placemaking were rapidly evolving—adapting, necessarily, both to community context and to changing social and political dynamics across the country. Artists in the Midwest were collaborating with residents to address stormwater management in low-income neighborhoods, while longtime affordable-housing developers in Harlem were integrating permanent museums into their financial model for supportive housing. An esteemed dance organization was working with local transportation officials to redesign a suburban commuter corridor for pedestrians, while community organizers in southern California were turning to local artists to help build community cohesion and public space in an unincorporated migrant farming community. The sheer diversity of initiatives that fell under the “creative placemaking” umbrella was both inspiring and dizzying, and the tent was only going to get bigger.

It was against this backdrop that ArtPlace launched two new research programs to complement its project-based grantmaking to date. The Community Development Investments (CDI) initiative—the learnings of which comprise most of this volume—was created to generate

1 Many critics felt the Vibrancy Indicators privileged property values and talent attraction over such factors as wellness and household income. For the full list of the indicators, see Andrew Taylor, “Vibrancy by Proxy,” *The Artful Manager*, October 9, 2012, <https://www.artsjournal.com/artfulmanager/main/vibrancy-by-proxy.php>.
2 Ian David Moss, “Creative Placemaking Has an Outcomes Problem,” *Fractured Atlas*, May 9, 2012, <https://blog.fracturedatlas.org/creative-placemaking-has-an-outcomes-problem-97686ba491cb>.

lessons and insights about how community development organizations in diverse circumstances could integrate arts and cultural strategies into their structures and core activities.

The second program, which we refer to as our “Translating Outcomes” work, was a series of 10 research initiatives designed to establish causal pathways between arts and cultural activities and the countless community development goals that we were seeing in the ArtPlace grant portfolio and across the field. Another equally important function of the Translating Outcomes work was to build frameworks that could serve as a bridge for those new to creative placemaking to step into this approach—language that articulated what, exactly, the arts were doing in a given community development project or context.

Recognizing that the comprehensive community development field is made up of many professional disciplines, we developed a matrix to illustrate 10 segments of the field that are commonly understood as discrete sectors: Agriculture & Food, Economic Development, Environment & Energy, Health, Housing, Immigration, Public Safety, Transportation, Workforce Development, and Youth & Education. Our Translating Outcomes project took this matrix as its road map and set out to analyze, make legible, and give language to how arts and cultural practitioners have long been partners in helping to achieve each of these sectors’ goals. It was an incremental, segmented approach to influencing comprehensive community development practice—one that would take time but would hopefully lay the groundwork for the creative placemaking field to embrace a multidimensional array of success measures that are simultaneously more nuanced and more complex than the field has yet been able to capture.

Each sector has its own terminology, conceptual frameworks, priorities, and disciplinary cultures to navigate, and as we dove into the complexity of the first three, the value of rigorous segmentation became increasingly clear.³ Our methods in each sector included interviews with artists, practitioners, and thought leaders—some deeply immersed in the intersection, others considering it for the first time; a meta-analysis of creative placemaking projects both inside and outside of the ArtPlace and NEA portfolios⁴; reviews of peer-reviewed and gray literature on trends and policies in a given sector; and the creation of a taxonomy or typology laying out a hypothesis about “what the arts can do” in language resonant to that sector. Throughout the process, we maintained a commitment to highlighting equitable practices and approaches to creative placemaking, and to centering the voices of artists and practitioners—particularly those of color—who have long been pioneers in the field.

We then, once again, invited artists, practitioners, and thought leaders to review and critique our findings in a working group, where we also engaged them in explicit discus-

3 A critique we often heard about the Translating Outcomes initiative is that it was “re-siloing” the work in a way that undermines the lived experience and reality of both communities and community development work. The segmentation, however, simply served as a methodological tool that allowed us to build understanding, capacity, and nuance in each of the sectors. When viewed as a series, the material can then be applied or combined in contextual ways that make sense for a given project, organization, or community.

4 Our research scope intentionally included people and places who had long been doing arts-integrated community development work, regardless of whether they referred to it as “creative placemaking.”

sion about barriers to collaboration in a given sector: Are there specific policy restrictions or industry metrics that simply cannot accommodate arts and cultural work? How do we inspire community development practitioners—already stretched thin with their day-to-day responsibilities—to take on work that requires a wholly new set of competencies? What does it take to convince a housing developer, for example, that a slight increase to her financial bottom line will produce an exponential return on investment, albeit one that we don’t yet know how to measure?

At the time of this writing, work in all 10 sectors is underway. In seven of the 10 sectors, we have published clear frameworks for practitioners and engaged strategic partners who will carry the knowledge forward within the specific sphere of community development that they serve.⁵ The plan has always been to conclude the Translating Outcomes series with a cross-cutting meta-analysis that brings the sector-specific learnings into a comprehensive whole; however, several key insights have already emerged. Two, in particular, shed light on priorities for the next chapter of creative placemaking research.

- **We keep measuring the wrong things.** Established metrics for success in other sectors do not capture the most meaningful impacts of community development work. We interrogated each sector to better understand its existing systems of measurement and evaluation, and to draw connections between arts and cultural strategies and those established measures or outcomes. What we encountered, however, was far more complicated. Time and time again, we heard in interviews and in working groups that the majority of people doing community change work—even those in fields strongly grounded in evidence-based decision-making, such as public health and community safety—felt that the measures they relied on were insufficient. Many were not meeting their own goals, or if they were, something was still missing. Nearly everyone we have engaged in this research has requested help from the arts and culture sector: How can we more authentically connect with the people we are trying to serve, and how can we incorporate the social and emotional dimensions of the human condition into our measures of success? Concepts like trust, wellbeing, belonging, and collective efficacy are increasingly valued by those working in communities and are understood intuitively to be the domain of artists and culture bearers. New (largely social science based) methods for measuring such concepts will be central to understanding the true impacts of creative placemaking.
- **Creative placemaking research is as messy as the work itself.** A central characteristic of creative placemaking practice is that it is deeply collaborative. And, as discussed in the articles and dialogues about collaboration in this journal (and as anyone who has ever been in a partnership knows, whether it’s professional, organizational, civic,

5 Partners to date include NeighborWorks America and Enterprise Community Partners (affordable housing), Local Initiatives Support Corporation (community safety), Transportation for America (transportation), US Water Alliance and Grist (environment), Welcoming America (immigration), Rural Coalition and Farm Credit Council (agriculture and food systems), and the University of Florida Center for Arts in Medicine (public health). Research papers in each of the sectors can be downloaded at <https://www.artplaceamerica.org/areas-of-work/research/translating-outcomes>.

or as personal as a marriage), collaboration can be messy. Establishing and aligning values, learning and accepting each other's strengths and weaknesses, sharing responsibilities and accountability, and communicating constantly about all of the above are baseline requirements for any successful partnership. When it comes to research and evaluation of creative placemaking work, the same and more holds true. For both the Translating Outcomes and the CDI Research and Documentation efforts, there has been a multidirectional learning curve for everyone involved—regardless of which sector we were investigating, and regardless of whether we were working with an individual researcher or a larger team with varied skill sets. At its simplest, creative placemaking research requires a strategic and deliberate merging of existing evidence bases and methods, bringing anthropologists, sociologists, geographers, planners, participatory action researchers, artists, and more into dialogue with public health scholars, criminologists, economists, infrastructure engineers, and other such specialists, as well as with community members directly affected by the work. More often than not, however, it also requires a unique combination of rigor and flexibility—with methods that honor both the linear and the nonlinear, the established and the experimental, the known and the unknown, the logic model and the lived experience. Future creative placemaking research and evaluation efforts will require unexpected configurations of expertise; we must proactively structure and support such collaborations with the time and resources it takes to learn from each other and to align different ways of knowing.

Frans Johansson's book *The Medici Effect: What Elephants & Epidemics Can Teach Us About Innovation*⁶ has been an important reference for this notion of intersections, and the powerful opportunity that lies in an unlikely convergence or association across disciplines. The participants in this volume's Researchers' Roundtable conversation, too, cite the value of the "edges" in this work; as Jennifer Scott notes, "Something really powerful happens when it's very cross-sector and interdisciplinary; people don't even realize they have that need to connect in that way until that encounter."

There is so much more work to do within each of the intersections we have initiated in the Translating Outcomes research. As the creative placemaking field continues to evolve and grow, critical and longitudinal evaluation of projects—done in collaboration with community members and residents—will be crucial to understanding the full range of outcomes, as well as the risks and limitations, of arts-based strategies. It is our hope, however, that the cross-sector frameworks and resources generated through ArtPlace's two bodies of research serve as a foundation for all sorts of disciplines to see themselves in this work, to step into new collaborations with artists, and to bring their own critical inquiry into the mix.

6 Frans Johansson, *The Medici Effect: What Elephants & Epidemics Can Teach Us About Innovation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2007).

Jamie Hand brings a background in landscape architecture, program design, and grantmaking to her role as Director of Research Strategies at ArtPlace America, where she designs and leads cross-sector knowledge and network building. Prior to ArtPlace, Jamie worked at the National Endowment for the Arts, where she managed the Our Town grant program, the Mayors' Institute on City Design, and the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design. She also advised the Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force on the development of Rebuild by Design, after leading multiple regional-scale design competitions as program director at the Van Alen Institute in New York City. Jamie co-edited Gateway: Visions for an Urban National Park and began her career in the Bay Area as project manager for artist Topher Delaney. Jamie is chair of the board of ioby.org ("in our back yards") and holds degrees from Princeton University's School of Architecture and the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Investing in the Future

SECTION THREE

Creative Placemaking in Government: Past and Future

Mary Anne Carter
National Endowment for the Arts

In 2020, the National Endowment for the Arts (Arts Endowment) will celebrate 10 years of investing in creative placemaking via its signature Our Town grant program. Creative placemaking seeks to use the arts to *unite and strengthen communities* socially, physically, and economically, by forging collaborations among entities from the public, private, philanthropic, arts, and cultural sectors.

To date, the Arts Endowment has supported over 585 creative placemaking projects and invested over \$45.7 million in rural, tribal, suburban, and urban communities throughout the nation. Via project-based grants, the agency incentivizes local governments to play a new role in partnering directly with artists in deep and authentic ways. The arts have played a role in improving everything from public safety to health, while also offering innovative solutions to challenges that have too often divided communities. These investments are transforming places, as well as how governments at all levels fundamentally think about how to approach community development and how they cultivate new partnerships in their communities.

Although the creative placemaking field was primarily founded with the goal of driving economic development and rebounding from the Great Recession, it has also proven to be an effective tool for driving social change by increasing civic engagement and bridging community divides. For example, in Granite Falls, MN (population 3,525), the city is establishing an artist residency program within local government, which will place an artist in direct collaboration with city employees to explore how they, as public servants, can better serve local residents. This type of program is unique in a small, rural setting and has the potential to serve as a national example for other small communities that are interested in implementing a similar, locally tailored approach.

Beyond investing in local creative placemaking projects via Our Town, the Arts Endowment has also focused its grantmaking to support key network organizations. One example is a recent grant to the National Association of Counties to elevate creative placemaking strategies among a network of local county leaders. This award is focused on equipping county leaders with best-practice protocols in creative placemaking so that they may better connect with local artists and carry out their own successful projects. Investments in local creative placemaking projects and network organizations are paving the way for long-term, sustained support and recognition of arts and culture as integral to every phase of community development.

Today, the Arts Endowment has expanded the goals of its Our Town program beyond local economic, physical, and social change to also include “systems change”—defined as improved capacity for a community to sustain and advance the integration of the arts, culture, and design into everyday civil society.

The National Endowment for the Arts believes that the future success of creative place-making throughout America is inextricably bound to the continued collaboration with committed partners who share a belief in the power of the arts to unify local communities.

Mary Anne Carter was confirmed as chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, the nation’s federal arts agency, in August 2019 after serving as the agency’s acting chairman since June 2018. Carter focuses her efforts on advancing the Arts Endowment’s mission to support artistic excellence and access to the arts for all. Since arriving at the agency, Carter has pushed to make the Arts Endowment more accessible to the American people, which includes bringing the annual Jazz Masters tribute concert to San Francisco in 2020, in collaboration with SFJAZZ.

State Policy Innovations to Support Creative Placemaking

Kelly Barsdate and Ryan Stubbs
National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

Jeremy Brownlee and Frank Woodruff
National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations

Creative placemaking is organic, dependent on the mobilization of existing community assets, and often improvisational. Consequently, it has been argued that creative placemaking can occur without government intervention¹ and that bureaucracies may not provide an ideal habitat for creative endeavors. However, government can elevate the role of creative placemaking in public policies and funding streams, thus advancing equitable community development that improves conditions for low- and moderate-income people and communities of color. Government also can include an important legitimizing role through use of the bully pulpit, the articulation and propagation of exemplary practices, and the convening of multiple public agencies around shared goals.

Although the authors recognize that the arts can be a potent ingredient of all public policy (economic development, education, health care, transportation, etc.), this article emphasizes the intersections between two policy domains: cultural policy and community development policy. We believe that's an especially fruitful intersection that can be strengthened to cultivate the strategies and serendipities needed to build equitable, resilient, and prosperous communities where all residents can thrive.

The Policy Landscape for Creative Placemaking

A variety of public policies have intentionally advanced the field of creative placemaking. On the federal level, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) has provided policy leadership through research, funding, and collaborations. The NEA's Our Town grant program was designed to integrate arts, culture, and design activities into community development efforts and to support knowledge building around creative placemaking practices and their impacts. The Mayors' Institute on City Design and the Citizens' Institute on Rural Design use creative methods to advance place-based prosperity. Although the NEA is at the vanguard of these federal efforts, it isn't the only federal agency engaged in this policy domain. For instance, the Institute of Museum and Library Services partnered with the Local Initiatives Support Corporation in 2016 to understand how museums and libraries can support comprehensive community revitalization. In 2017, the Delta Regional Authority invested in grant funding

¹ Leonardo Vazquez, "Creative Placemaking: Integrating Community, Cultural and Economic Development" (Union, NJ: National Consortium for Creative Placemaking, 2012).

and technical assistance to stimulate economic and community development through the cultural sector.

States have likewise used their policy authority to promote creative placemaking. For example, 36 state arts agencies have grant programs dedicated to creative placemaking or community arts development.² Fifteen states have established cultural district certification programs that use cultural resources to encourage synergies between economic and community development.³ County and municipal governments invest in similar creative placemaking efforts through cultural district development, cultural planning, grant investments, and a variety of public art and artist housing approaches. Additionally, local land-use planning and zoning can encourage or dissuade creative places.

A variety of other public policies and funding streams have sometimes provided useful resources for creative placemaking. These include such policy mechanisms as federal community development grants, state-based community development regulation of financial institutions, state community development tax credits, and assessments of fair housing, among others.

Policy Gaps

Creative placemaking practitioners have demonstrated tremendous ingenuity and agility in knitting together these diverse policy strands, public funding opportunities, and relationships to support their work. However, from the point of view of place-based practitioners, public policies can seem unsynchronized, siloed, duplicative, or even at odds with each other. Critical gaps in support for creative placemaking include the following:

- **Equity gaps:** Existing creative placemaking policies and programs too often fail to advance equity goals in low- and moderate-income communities and communities of color.
- **Legitimacy gaps:** Governments may not recognize the value of rigorous and authentic creative engagement during public processes, meetings, hearings, or assessments. Creative implementation strategies may be perceived as less substantive, less efficient, or less likely to deliver results, despite the availability of numerous examples demonstrating their legitimacy and efficacy.
- **Process gaps:** Public policies and funding streams tend to emphasize outputs (e.g., number of housing units) over a community process that defines and engenders authentic community visions that can be mobilized.
- **Capacity gaps:** Public funds to support creative placemaking are scarce, and accessing them can be fraught with obstacles, especially for smaller or grassroots organizations trying to tap into public systems for the first time or for organizations attempting to

2 Custom analysis of grants programs database maintained by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

3 National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), “State Policy Briefs: State Cultural Districts” (Washington, DC: NASAA, 2015).

access funds in cross-sector environments. The capacity (time, money, relationships, and knowledge) required of implementing organizations to weave together a web of missions, interests, policies, and money is daunting.

Examples of creative placemaking sites that have overcome these disconnects are abundant throughout this journal and elsewhere. However, insights gained from localized successes have not been fully translated vertically into systems-level policy change.⁴ And the persistent existence of these gaps can hinder success, efficacy, credibility, and efficiency.⁵ Efforts by practitioners, evaluators, funders, and policymakers to close such gaps can yield systems-level policy change to support creative placemaking practice that benefits all communities, especially low- and moderate-income people and communities of color.

State Policy Recommendations

To address these gaps—and help creative placemaking practitioners more easily weave together the various strands of public-sector resources and relationships—we recommend seven public policy strategies:

1. Elevate creative placemaking as a policy strategy in state plans.
2. Establish mechanisms for connectivity among state agencies whose missions relate to placemaking or culture.
3. Strengthen existing state policies that are positioned to foster creative placemaking and arts-based community development.
4. Amplify and coordinate state funding streams.
5. Educate federal funding gatekeepers about creative placemaking.
6. Embed artists and designers into government agencies that influence creative placemaking or community development.
7. Equip more artists and cultural organizations to play significant community engagement and development roles.

These recommendations focus primarily on state government because many resource determinations for community development are made at the state level, state government uniquely influences broad scale policy diffusion, and states are laboratories of policy where new ideas can be tested.

4 Kiley K. Arroyo, “Creative Policymaking: Taking the Lessons of Creative Placemaking to Scale,” *Artivate: A Journal of Entrepreneurship in the Arts* 6 (2) (2017):58-72.

5 Ann Markusen and Ann Gadwa, “Creative Placemaking” (Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts, 2010); Roberto Bedoya, “Placemaking and the Politics of Belonging and Dis-belonging,” *GLA Reader* 24 (1) (2013); Alexandre Frenette, “The Rise of Creative Placemaking: Cross-Sector Collaboration as Cultural Policy in the United States,” *The Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* 47 (5) (2017): 333-45.

1. Elevate creative placemaking as a policy strategy in state plans.

States adopt a variety of strategic plans for both community development and culture. In addition to satisfying federal requirements, these plans are important vehicles for defining needs, articulating state priorities, and establishing a framework within which resources will be allocated and progress measured. Including creative placemaking at the goal or strategy level could catalyze new state commitments of resources and relationships. Influential planning vehicles may include the following:

- State arts agency strategic plans, articulating cultural development priorities, are required by the NEA so that every state arts agency is eligible to receive federal arts funding. The NEA adjudicates these plans every three years, with an emphasis on the public input methods used and how well the plans address the needs of underserved communities. (As defined by each state, underserved communities can include rural areas, low-income populations, communities of color, immigrants, the aging, disabled populations, and others.) These plans, and the processes used to develop them, offer an opportunity to articulate the value of creative placemaking and to initiate consultations with sister state agencies responsible for housing, community development, transportation, and economic development.
- State Consolidated Plans (Con Plans) identify state affordable housing and community development needs and goals through community dialogue and engagement. State and Entitlement Jurisdiction Con Plans are a federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirement that articulate the needs being addressed by federal-formula community development block grants. Entitlement Jurisdictions tend to be urban and receive block grants directly from HUD. State Con Plans consider the needs of the entire state, with an emphasis on data and grants in areas without an Entitlement. State Con Plans tend to focus on more rural and less densely populated areas. Prioritizing the cultural, engagement, and community identity needs of underrepresented people and places within Con Plans is an opportunity to increase resources, in more rural areas in particular, and improve the perceived validity of creative placemaking as part of comprehensive community development planning.
- State Qualified Allocation Plans (QAPs) outline state priorities for use of dedicated federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credits. QAPs can be used as a vehicle to identify a need for artist housing, such as the District of Columbia’s priority scoring for artist housing in its 2017 plan.⁶ QAPs are revised annually and require public engagement and input. State housing finance agencies have an opportunity to include artists and cultural organizations—or even tap them for leadership roles—when gathering that input.

⁶ Government of the District of Columbia, “2017 Low Income Housing Tax Credit Qualified Allocation Plan” (Washington, DC: Government of the District of Columbia, May 2017).

In state plans for community development, the arts, economic development, transportation, and related fields, *creative placemaking can be a means as well as an end in the formulation of policy priorities*. Creative placemaking is a powerful method for engagement with low- and moderate-income communities and for building equity through the engagement process. When used in planning, arts-based engagement strategies increase the influence of disenfranchised stakeholders, deepen the credibility—real and perceived—of public input upon which decisions are based, reveal unanticipated insights, and lead to innovative strategy formulation.⁷

State-level planners can draw on practices pioneered at the municipal level, such as those used by the City of Minneapolis. The city collaborated with Intermedia Arts to deploy a Creative CityMaking (CCM) strategy that embeds the arts into planning and advances the city’s objective of reducing economic and racial disparities. Based in the Department of Community Planning and Economic Development, CCM employed artists to find new ways to involve citizens who typically were not represented in planning processes.⁸ Ninety percent of residents engaged through arts-based methods had never contributed to a planning process before. Planning participation by people of color increased from 30 percent to 60 percent of the total input pool.⁹ These practices influenced comprehensive city planning efforts, such as the Minneapolis 2040 plan, which draws on arts-based input methods and includes nine specific cultural policy objectives in its efforts to “undo barriers and overcome inequities created by a history of policies in our city that have prevented equitable access to housing, jobs, and investments.”¹⁰

2. Establish mechanisms for connectivity among state agencies whose missions relate to placemaking or culture.

Abundant anecdotal evidence and research underscore the importance of cross-sector partnerships in placemaking. The structure and culture of state government, however, can impede interagency collaboration. State arts agencies and their community development counterparts (state housing finance agencies and/or statewide networks of community development corporations) have different mandates and ways of working and don't always have formal opportunities to collaborate.

Establishing regular mechanisms for networking, knowledge transfer, and “talent

7 Tom Borrup, “Just Planning: Can Cultural Planning Help Build More Equitable Cities?” *GIA Reader* 28 (3) (Fall 2017); Jon Catherwood-Ginn and Bob Leonard, “Playing for the Public Good: The Arts in Planning and Government” (Washington, DC: Animating Democracy/Americans for the Arts, 2012); RMC Research, “The Role of the Arts and Culture in Planning Practice” (Chicago, IL: American Planning Association, 2011).

8 Rainbow Research, “Creative CityMaking Minneapolis: An Adaptive Evaluation” (Minneapolis, MN: Intermedia Arts, 2017); William Cleveland, “Creative CityMaking: In Search of a New Village” (Washington, DC: Animating Democracy/Americans for the Arts, July 2016).

9 G. Kayim, correspondence as cited by Arroyo in “Creative Policymaking” (March 2017).

10 City of Minneapolis Department of Community Planning & Economic Development, “Minneapolis 2040—The City’s Comprehensive Plan (Draft for Metropolitan Council Review)” (Minneapolis, MN: City of Minneapolis Department of Community Planning & Economic Development, December 2018).

exchange”¹¹ at the staff level would be a good start, as would the routine sharing of funding announcements and reciprocal invitations to participate in planning. At the leadership level, cross-sector representation on boards and commissions would be useful. Governors can play a pivotal role in appointing arts representatives to commissions or task forces focusing on rural, economic, and community development; aligning the work of agencies with similar goals; and creating a creative partnership infrastructure to facilitate multisector work.¹²

Thirty-three state arts agencies have full-time community development positions with community arts programming and management as primary responsibilities.¹³ In other states, this role may be combined with other duties. Common roles for community development staff include overseeing grant budgets aimed at local agencies and grassroots arts groups, providing technical assistance, and facilitating collaborations that encourage the integration of the arts into civic life. Each state arts agency implements its community development role differently. For those agencies interested in advancing the practice of creative placemaking, aligning the state arts agency’s community development function with the community development sector’s priorities would send a clear signal that the arts sector strongly validates the work of community developers and the role of the arts in placemaking.

Convenings also can support productive cross-pollination. Many states have housing, community development, and arts conferences. Intentional relationship building at these convenings might help arts and community development professionals to understand one another’s language, needs, and norms. Participants can then serve as translators, bringing community development ideas into the arts space and vice versa.

3. Strengthen existing state policies that are positioned to foster creative placemaking and arts-based community development.

Numerous arts-based community development programs have been in place for years. They include state cultural district certification programs, state public art programs, Main Street programs, and grant programs. Those policy frameworks, guidelines, and outreach mechanisms would benefit from a review of what’s now known about effective creative placemaking practices and their intersections with community development, equity, and inclusion.

For example, 27 states have public art statutes that, among other objectives, integrate the arts into the built environment.¹⁴ Do those policies include truly meaningful public engagement components? Among the 15 states with creative district programs, how attuned are they to the needs of historically marginalized communities? Do state arts agency criteria for

11 Ohio Department of Administrative Services, “Employee Exchange Program” (Columbus, OH: Ohio Department of Administrative Services, 2014); City of Palo Alto, “A Case Study on Creating Learning Opportunities Through a Professional Exchange Program” (Palo Alto, CA: City of Palo Alto, 2004).

12 National Governors Association, “Rural Prosperity Through the Arts and Creative Sector: A Rural Action Guide for Governors and States” (Washington, DC: National Governors Association, January 2019).

13 National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA), “State Arts Agency Staffing Trends: Highlights from the FY2019 Staffing and Compensation Survey” (Washington, DC: NASAA, April 2019).

14 NASAA, “State Policy Briefs: Percent for Art” (Washington, DC: NASAA, 2013).

community development grants create barriers to entry for small, grassroots, or culturally specific organizations? A fresh examination of such programs would ask whether they are reaching underserved communities and would consider the programs' promotion of equity and inclusion through their guidelines and adjudication processes.

4. Amplify and coordinate state funding streams.

Creative placemaking programs at the state level would benefit from additional resources (financial, human, and material) to reach more low-income communities and attain a broader geographic reach. Thirty-two percent of the U.S. population resides in economically distressed counties. By comparison, 26 percent of all state arts agency awards and 24 percent of state arts agency grant funds currently reach these counties.¹⁵ Rural distribution is a crucial part of the puzzle, too: 18 percent of the U.S. population resides in rural areas, which receive 21 percent of all state arts agency grants and comprise 17 percent of total state arts agency grant dollars.¹⁶ While leaving room for improvement, these benchmarks suggest that state funding provides a readily viable pathway for routing more resources to historically marginalized communities. This potential is especially notable when comparing public funds with private funds: just 5 percent of foundation giving is invested in rural areas.¹⁷

Unrestricted operating support funds can significantly boost the capacity of nonprofit organizations serving as anchor organizations for creative placemaking efforts. Here, too, the public sector plays a distinctive role. State arts agencies devote 47 percent of their grant dollars to operating support for nonprofit cultural institutions.¹⁸ In comparison, private foundations devote an estimated 26 percent of their funds to arts operating support.¹⁹ There is no universal state-level mechanism for supplying operating grants to community development corporations (CDCs). However, approximately 14 states and a handful of cities offer state or municipal tax credits for CDC operating and project support. Several states and cities leverage these tax credits to help CDCs implement arts and cultural programs, planning processes, and priorities. This includes arts-based commercial corridor revitalization, such as Lancaster Avenue in Philadelphia. People's Emergency Center CDC used an allocation of the State of Pennsylvania's Neighborhood Assistance/Partnership Tax Credit to undertake the project. In the State of New Jersey's 2018 round of Neighborhood Revitalization Tax Credits, half of all qualified projects included an arts or cultural component, including the I Love Greenville Community Plan in Jersey City, implemented by Garden State Episcopal CDC. Massachusetts' Community Investment Tax Credit was signed into law in 2012, and

15 NASAA, "State Arts Agencies Advancing Equity: Economic Equity" (Washington, DC: NASAA, 2018).

16 NASAA, "State Arts Agencies Advancing Equity: Rural Equity" (Washington, DC: NASAA, 2018).

17 John Pender, "Foundation Giving to Rural Areas in the United States Is Disproportionately Low," (Washington, DC: United States Department of Agriculture Economic Resource Service, August 2015).

18 NASAA, "State Arts Agency General Operating Support Fact Sheet" (Washington, DC: NASAA, March 2019).

19 Reina Mukai, "Foundation Grants to Arts and Culture, 2016," *GLA Reader* 30 (1) (2019): 5-11.

in 2016-2017, 33 CDCs used it to expand their arts programming.²⁰

Leveraging low-cost capital is an effective tool that nonprofit organizations can use to enhance their project and programmatic impact. CDCs commonly access loans and equity investments to develop real estate and implement programs. A national infrastructure for training and technical assistance helps them learn safe and effective ways to access these resources. State government agencies can encourage and sponsor cultural organizations' access to this type of training.

Although private market forces may help sustain enduring prosperity for low- and moderate-income people and places and communities of color over the long term, government has a critical role to play in providing catalytic funding, technical assistance, and other support structures. An optimal resource combination for community development may consist of three mutually supportive components: capital funding (equity investments or loans), operating support for local coordinating entities, and technical assistance funds. The Baltimore Regional Neighborhood Initiative (BRNI), a State of Maryland program, is a good example. Each of its investments is aligned to a community plan and includes capital funds that offer a rate of return to the state, operating funds for the implementing organization, and technical support to help the community organization fully implement its vision. In the case of BRNI, the state is providing each resource. However, the state could also partner with other nonprofits, the private sector, or others to provide some of these resources.

5. Educate federal funding gatekeepers about creative placemaking.

States serve as the distribution nodes for federal community development, economic development, and housing funding—in amounts that often exceed what states themselves invest. Federal resources from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (e.g., Community Development Block Grants and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program), Department of the Treasury (Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program), Department of Agriculture state offices (Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program and Rural Business Development Grants), the Appalachian Regional Commission (Asset-Based Development Initiative), and the Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (Regional Innovation Strategies program) all are distributed through state or regional offices. These state-level staff also serve as technical assistance advisers and as conduits for relaying state and local needs back to Washington, DC.

Funds from these federal agencies have been tapped successfully for some creative placemaking initiatives, but that appears to be the exception rather than the norm. In few instances are the eligibility of arts-based or creative placemaking strategies explicit in the policy guidelines. One successful change occurred through an interagency collaboration between the

20 Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (MACDC), "Community Investment Tax Credit: Program Impact" (Boston, MA: MACDC, 2019).

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Through this partnership, HUD modified its adjudication scoring system for the Choice Neighborhoods program to award points for planning and implementation that included artists, designers, and cultural organizations. Additionally, NEA staff served on HUD grant panels, contributing arts expertise to application reviews.²¹ Although the point shift for HUD grant scoring was temporary, this collaboration demonstrates the potential to familiarize more federal agencies with creative placemaking concepts and elevate arts-based approaches.

6. Embed artists and designers into government agencies that influence creative placemaking or community development.

Local government offices in Boston, Fargo (ND), Portland (ME), New York City, and other sites have incorporated artists-in-residence into municipal planning, public works, and public health agencies. Such artists have helped agencies find new ways to fulfill public mandates, shifted understanding of and relationships with constituents, and sparked a culture of curiosity that can positively affect an agency's decision-making.²²

At the state level, the Washington State Department of Transportation and the Minnesota Department of Transportation now both have programs to embed artists in their agencies.²³ Other state agencies—especially those with responsibilities for housing, economic development, and community development—could emulate this model.

7. Equip more artists and cultural organizations to play significant community engagement and development roles.

Without artists as catalysts, leaders, and resident stakeholders, creative placemaking cannot flourish, and the policies recommended here are unlikely to be realized. Communities need access to—or must identify their own—professional and avocational artists who have the knowledge, passion, skills, and relationships to facilitate creative placemaking. Systematic effort at the state level to identify and support such individuals is likely necessary to ensure artists can be available to all geographies.

Many state arts agencies have experience in training teaching artists, developing artist rosters, and supporting artist residencies, often in education settings. Adding support systems

21 Correspondence from Jen Hughes, Design and Creative Placemaking Director, National Endowment for the Arts, April 30, 2019.

22 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), "Exploring Our Town: The Fargo Project" (Washington, DC: NEA, Accessed March 2019); Mary Pottenger, "Creating Social Change Through Community Connections & Shared Arts Experiences," Americans for the Arts ARTSblog (May 2, 2012); Natalie Delgadillo, "How Artists Are Helping Governments Reach Everyday People," *Governing* (December 28, 2017).

23 Washington State Department of Transportation, "Washington State Department of Transportation to Be the First Statewide Agency to Host an Artist-in-Residence." Press release (Olympia, WA: Washington State Department of Transportation, November 20, 2018); Transportation for America, "Minnesota Department of Transportation to Host a Community Vitality Fellow to Advance Transportation Goals." Press release (Washington, DC: Transportation for America, March 21, 2019).

for artists specializing in community development and public engagement strategies would require more resources and different training curricula, but good models exist that could guide this expansion.²⁴ Resources would need to be developed for the promotion, deployment, and networking of these artists throughout a state, with the goal of embedding them into CDCs, thus enhancing the capacity and impact of the artist, organization, and community. These efforts should include work to help more community development agencies and organizations recognize the potential benefits of—and learn practical tactics for—hiring and partnering with artists.

Encouraging the community development field to employ artists and cultural organizations as partners in public processes ultimately yields more inclusive development while simultaneously legitimizing creative strategies for community engagement, organizing, and placemaking. For example, as described elsewhere in this volume, the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership partnered artists with government officials in three local communities—Milan, St. James, and Worthington—to get community input into everything from identifying and meeting housing needs to developing new public spaces and design guidelines to gathering needs for new public transportation investments. Subsequently, these engagement projects with experienced artists led these towns to embark on new kinds of creative public programs and investments that are better serving their diverse communities.

Legitimacy gaps between government agencies and creative community engagement professionals can form due to stale practices and outdated community engagement tactics. Using high-quality, experienced engagement professionals can be an effective entry point for creative placemaking practice, helping to bridge these gaps and providing a necessary spark for innovative practitioners as they navigate policy environments.

These recommendations have focused on state government, but similar interventions could be considered in federal, county, or municipal policy. Increasing resources for creative placemaking and synchronizing policy streams to support it would be valuable at all levels of government.

Additional Opportunities

The above recommendations do not promote a single unified policy paradigm, because a one-size-fits-all, public-sector approach is unlikely to meet divergent local needs. Instead, we believe it would be effective to elevate and legitimize creative placemaking within existing state policy frameworks. To support this policy evolution, we recommend these measures:

- As practitioners, funders, and scholars continue to document creative placemaking activities, a clearer signpost of the *policy* components of successful projects would help others learn. Policy linkages are present, but they aren't always enumerated. And because the money flows through so many different sources, public funding can be

24 Barbara Shaffer Bacon, "Supporting Artists in Community Settings," *GLA Reader* 25 (2) (2014); William Cleveland, "Options for Community Arts Training and Support" (Bainbridge Island, WA: Center for the Study of Art & Community, 2016).

hard to track. Better documentation would help with knowledge transfer, as well as impact assessment.

- To navigate the tangle of different policy streams, it will be critical to build the capacity (knowledge, skills, and relationships) of individuals working in community development and the arts to become more agile “knitters” of local, state, and federal policy opportunities. Public- and private-sector funders alike could make meaningful investments in training and knowledge sharing to this end. For example, PolicyLink, with support from The Kresge Foundation, helped the partnership between San Francisco’s Mission Economic Development Agency and Galería de la Raza to comprehensively address issues of cultural and physical displacement, ultimately intertwining culture-bearer protection into a housing acquisition strategy in the city’s Mission District. Through this project, both partners became adept at navigating both the cultural and community development realms, supported by a formal learning cohort and knowledge sharing through PolicyLink.
- A multiyear effort—and accompanying case studies—in a handful of states aimed at advancing statewide systems for creative placemaking policy, practice, and capacity building could test the efficacy of the recommendations made here and elsewhere.
- Creative placemaking training and capacity-building programs would benefit from the addition of *policy* and *advocacy* components. Scholarship and data certainly can contribute to policy shifts, but they, by themselves, are unlikely to alter the resource landscape. It will require skilled advocacy efforts to raise resources and understanding among elected officials—and to build public will for equitable placemaking at the community level.

Meanwhile, public officials, community developers, cultural leaders, advocates, and civic groups have opportunities to make an impact on the policy landscape. Adjusting state policies to elevate creative placemaking—in conjunction with the ingenuity of local “knitters”—can create more equitable outcomes and improve quality of life for residents across the United States.

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Do I Need Special Glasses? Seeing Arts and Culture as Part of Community Development for Financial Institutions

*Deborah Kasemeyer
Northern Trust*

The financial sector often attempts innovation by creating new products and services to reflect new trends and needs in the field. However, true innovation is just as often a matter of looking at the world with new lenses and tapping into creativity to adapt existing structures.

There is a growing body of evidence that seeks to validate arts and culture as viable for investment by financial institutions. In the 2014 Community Development Innovation Review, former Deutsche Bank Managing Director Gary Hattem laid out a case for building stronger relationships among cultural institutions, community development organizations, and community development financial institutions (CDFIs).¹ CDFIs, such as New Jersey Community Capital and The Reinvestment Fund, have long been supporters of arts, culture, and creative placemaking projects.² Emerging funds, such as the NYC Inclusive Creative Economy Fund by LISC, are attracting new capital to the table.³ And there is a continued push to look at guidelines for bankers approaching arts-related investments with Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) regulators and how creative-economy investments might qualify for CRA funds.⁴

And yet, it is often through experience and dialogue that we actually begin to understand how to change our own practice. In this piece, I share my own journey and examples in learning how to **recognize, reimagine, request, reinvest, realign, remix, and reframe** to support arts and culture at Northern Trust, all while tackling some pervasive myths about what it takes to support work in this sector.

Recognizing: Arts and Culture in Community Development

I started my work in finance as a commercial lender for Northern Trust, a bank headquartered in Chicago, where I happily work today. Over my career at Northern, I have taken the principles of traditional finance and tried to find new ways to fill capital gaps in communities that often have no access. It has been a 25-year learning curve for me; we started with

1 Gary Hattem, "[Financing Creative Places](#)," *Community Development Innovation Review* (December 2014), Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.

2 Lillian M. Ortiz, "Need Capital for Your Creative Placemaking Project? There's a Loan for That," *Shelterforce* (July 6, 2016).

3 LISC, "[Inclusive Creative Economy Fund Impact Report](#)" (New York: LISC, March 30, 2019).

4 Laura Callanan and Ward Wolff, "[The Community Reinvestment Act and the Creative Economy: Investing in Creative Places and Businesses as Part of Comprehensive Community Development](#)," *Open Source Solutions* (October 29, 2018), Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.

investments in CDFIs and have expanded to become an early adopter of new finance tools, such as Pay for Success. Even with this deep experience, I did not see investments in arts and culture as part of community development finance. There was, frankly, no intersection of arts, culture, and community development in my work.

My personal knowledge of the arts sector was based in visiting cultural institutions. These were wonderful experiences, but they often reflected the arts and culture of primarily those in power, not those in underserved communities. Often funded with large philanthropic commitments, they were distinctly different from community development investments and grants we were working to provide in fulfillment of CRA obligations.

As our definition of community development rests with the CRA guidelines, many arts and cultural institutions serving audiences with a broad range of income levels have not been viewed as meeting the CRA's focus on low- and moderate-income communities. Many institutions have had a hard time understanding how to document the impacts for CRA consideration.

So, from a bank perspective, while supporting arts and culture was recognized as important, arts and culture was not seen as part of our work in community development. Even as we moved into comprehensive, place-based strategies that considered a variety of systems to support development without displacement, arts- and culture-based strategies were not part of our conversations or the activities we looked to support through finance.

Reimagining: Expanding Ways of Looking at Arts and Culture

In my own journey in pushing the boundaries of traditional finance in underserved communities, our conversations at Northern Trust have continued to expand. In meetings with new partners, I often talk about our view of low-cost, patient capital as a key tool of community development, as well as our specific interest in places where capital is not currently flowing.

One such conversation resulted in an introduction to ArtPlace America, where I learned of its intentional focus on how arts and culture can be integrated into community development work to achieve critical, place-based outcomes. From their investments and leadership, I learned how artists were applying their talents and skills to address community problems; how supporting cultural expression in communities was helping to stave off cultural displacement; and how creative engagement, planning, and design processes were changing the ways communities were able to articulate what was important to them. In short, I saw how arts and cultural strategies were not only contributing to community development outcomes, but also were a central lens for successful efforts in development without displacement.

Arts and Culture Belong to Everyone

Trips to Appalachia and Pine Ridge Indian Reservation made the critical connection between cultural expression and shaping successful community futures real and reinforced for me that culture, cultural expression, and creativity lie at the heart of every community—

regardless of income and level of disenfranchisement or disinvestment. Just as capital can be viewed as the grease of economic engines, arts and culture are the glue that holds communities together. Those of us working in community development have too frequently been trying to organize comprehensive community development without the “glue.” Communities are made up of the people who live there and the way they interact with each other and their environment, not pretty buildings. Viewing communities through the lens of culture and the potential roles that art can play allows investing institutions to promote development that reflects and recognizes aspirations and connections of individuals and families.

Community Development Investments in Arts and Culture Go Beyond Real Estate

When people in the field talk about financing creative placemaking, often that means support for real estate development that includes arts spaces and arts uses. These are important endeavors, but there are many additional ways that arts and culture might show up in a community development investment frame. For example, arts and culture can be seen as

- **Community assets** that drive critical community outcomes. Banks could provide financing to stabilize and advance arts and cultural organizations whose missions align with critical community goals.
- Part of **risk mitigation and due diligence**. An understanding of local culture, beloved cultural assets, and the narrative of a place can play a role in community development finance underwriting decisions.
- Part of **entrepreneurship strategies**, where artists as entrepreneurs are a key building block for local economies.
- A focus of **asset-building strategies**, where artists as culture-bearers advance their own financial capability and stabilization strategies.

Requesting: Becoming Intentional About Arts and Culture

Although I was excited about the concept of an intentional intersection of arts, culture, and community development, I wondered how I would be able to actually execute this strategy. The first thing I did was to insert specific questions about arts and culture into conversations. I started asking such questions as, “How might arts and cultural strategies help?” or “What is the role arts and culture might play in this project?” or “What is important about local culture and cultural assets that we need to support?”

Arts and Culture May Be New for Bankers but Is Part of a Community’s History

What I have learned is that many community development entities are already incorporating arts and culture into community projects and plans, but they do not always call it out specifically. They already understand the work as integral to the “community” part of community development; it is the lenders and funders, like me, who did not understand.

This lens has also given me a new view of community development projects. We often focus on projects based on amenities provided, services embedded, community input, and

community decision-making in the development process. We, as investors, spend less time on how the project will contribute to and/or change the existing neighborhood culture. This could be especially important in communities that may be on the brink of gentrification, where many of the new developments will not have been developed with community input and could create a “scrape and replace” situation, where culturally important buildings are torn down and replaced with new buildings that have no tie to the community culture.

Culture Should Be a Central Concern of Community Planning and Development

If we are going to try to maintain neighborhood culture, we need to be intentional as investors and lenders in asking about how arts and cultural strategies might be part of the projects we finance, or how local culture might be reflected in the projects. The good news is that most of our community development partners are already doing this and provide an easy entry point.

Reinvesting: Community Development Financial Institutions

Community development financial institutions (CDFIs) are designed to be vehicles for effective community investment, as they are nimbler and more adaptive than traditional banks to meet the needs of communities. They exist to plug capital gaps and are therefore critical partners in the flow of capital to the arts and culture sector.

One example is an investment we made in Propel Nonprofits, a CDFI headquartered in Minneapolis. Using a holistic approach to community development that engages and serves nonprofits of all kinds, Propel has worked with many nonprofits focused on arts and culture. We invested in Propel by providing useful, low-cost capital to support its lending (see Table 1). Because arts and culture projects are already embedded in Propel’s training and lending offerings, I did not have to create a separate fund to support this work—Northern Trust was able to easily connect with and support arts and culture through a direct investment into an established CDFI.

Table 1: Examples of Arts-Related Investments by Propel Nonprofits

Organization	Loan Products	Relationship to Community Development
<p>Juxtaposition Arts is an organization in North Minneapolis that provides education, training, and mentorships for youth, along with the creation of social enterprises to generate revenue, and has redeveloped several buildings that anchor the neighborhood.</p>	<p>Propel has supported Juxtaposition Arts' growth and projects with facilities loans, term working capital, and a line of credit.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real Estate • Community Asset • Entrepreneurship
<p>Walker West Music Academy (WWMA) offers music lessons and concerts for everyone rooted in the African American experience. The organization's history is steeped in jazz and its location in a historically African American Saint Paul neighborhood.</p>	<p>Propel provided a term loan as part of WWMA's expansion to a new facility, especially the signage and exterior improvements, making its presence known and defining its creative presence in the neighborhood.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real Estate • Community Asset • Risk Mitigation
<p>Ka Joog is a nationally recognized Somali nonprofit that uses education, mentoring, employment, and the arts to motivate Somali American youth to pursue higher education while promoting and building communities' ties throughout Minnesota.</p>	<p>Propel's loan provided Ka Joog flexible working capital to support its tremendous growth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Asset • Risk Mitigation • Entrepreneurship • Asset-Building

Existing Finance Tools Can Be Used to Support Arts and Culture

There is often a push to create new finance tools to address specific issues. Many CDFIs interested in increasing their lending to arts and culture have explored the idea of creating a special targeted fund. The goal for doing so might be to attract new resources from investors who have a special interest in the topic, or to make it easier to define particular products and market them to an arts and culture audience.

I believe in simplifying community development finance and using existing tools and partners that have proven to be successful to bring this work to scale, with a focus on the

cost of capital, rather than creating a separate targeted investment fund or other standalone structure. The issue with standalone funds is that the capital can sit unused until a specific project that meets the defined program is found and approved. Funds also require a beginning or deployment period, middle or hold/expansion, and an exit at the end of a five- to seven-year period. They also typically aggregate capital based on investor return expectations rather than the cost of capital needed by the community development project. These differences can create a mismatch between the funding available and the specific funding needed.

CDFIs have successfully used loan loss reserves, lower-cost capital, and guarantees to bring needed capital in support of arts and cultural strategies to neighborhoods and provide partnership opportunities between banks and foundations who are interested in community development finance. For example, what Propel needed most was patient, low-cost capital to subsidize its commitment to arts and culture so that it could provide below-market loans to arts and cultural organizations whose missions reflected critical community outcomes.

Another lesson from Propel is that it is a CDFI that has internalized its support of arts and culture—it is part of its narrative. Propel has not necessarily changed the way it lends; instead, it has developed relationships within the arts and culture sector and made intentional choices to acknowledge the value those institutions bring to their communities. Many CDFIs have adopted strong narratives around their investments in charter schools, food systems, or community facilities. A similar approach to elevating investments in arts and culture can help better normalize the practice. One first step to generating this narrative is to begin to track arts-related investments and report them as part of regular communications about lending activity.

Foundations and CDFIs Should Partner to Expand Access to Capital

One warning on a recent trend I have seen in this area is the entry of foundations as direct lenders into community development projects. The expansion of foundations as investors in community development is a welcome addition, and many are filling an important need in allowing the overall expansion of community development finance. We have seen examples, however, where a CDFI has been outbid by a foundation on specific high-profile community development projects, including some arts and culture projects. In these cases, the foundation often offers the same terms as the CDFI—but at a slightly lower rate. This type of direct lending is not expanding access to community development finance and can be detrimental if foundations lend only to the higher-profile, lower-credit-risk borrowers. This “creaming,” where stronger finance transactions are originated directly by foundations, leaves CDFIs to do the higher-risk, more complex transactions and hurts overall access to community development finance for the communities and projects that need it most. A better course would be for foundations to partner with CDFIs to expand access to finance, including those specific projects in which they have a special interest.

Realigning: Community Development Organizations

Northern Trust has also been part of supporting the creation of a new focus on arts and culture within nonprofit developers. In Denver, we invested in the Urban Land Conservancy (ULC) to expand its ability to finance new community development but also to support a stronger focus on arts and culture.

Banks Can Support Arts and Culture in Community Development Beyond Financing

ULC's mission is to preserve real estate assets through land banking, community development, and preservation in underserved areas in the greater Denver region for community benefit. The Bonfils-Stanton Foundation, a local foundation in Denver with a major focus on arts and culture, had shared an interest with Northern Trust in pursuing the creation of an entity that could do land banking, community development, and asset preservation. What it described already existed in ULC, and bringing the two entities together to meet and discuss solutions made use of Northern Trust's partnerships and relationships, not just our assets.

Existing Organizations Can Adequately Support the Intersecting Work of Arts and Culture in Community Development

ULC understood that cultural assets are not mission-drift but are central to how it can help benefit underserved communities in Denver. However, it was not aware that there were potential funders and investors interested in supporting this work. Northern Trust not only helped to facilitate the discussions, but also made a \$6 million investment in ULC, with \$1 million of the total investment specifically carved out for arts and culture development. A new entity did not have to be created or imported, but as is often the case, an existing entity can help solve an identified problem, given the right capital.

Remixing: Affordable Housing

In another example of the intersection of arts and culture with community development finance, Northern Trust worked with the Denver Housing Authority (DHA) on a New Markets Tax Credit transaction for its Mariposa development. The project included art woven throughout the development, a music studio for youth residents, a youth culinary program, and a large meeting space for community gatherings. DHA included all of these in its plans because it knew it would improve residents' quality of life. It did not need to be asked to do it, nor did it need special finance tools to include it. We have seen similar work in housing authorities across the country, including at Cook Inlet Housing Authority in Anchorage, AK, one of ArtPlace America's Community Development Investments participants.

And it is not just housing authorities. Theaster Gates's Rebuild Foundation spearheaded the Dorchester Art + Housing Collaborative as a partnership with the Chicago Housing Authority (CHA), Brinshore Development, and Landon Bone Baker Architects. They used Low-Income Housing Tax Credits to convert a former CHA property into a mixed-income community that features a mix of artist, public, affordable, and market-rate housing and a

new art center with a dance studio, community meeting space, and community garden. The Chicago-based CDFI IFF sponsored the Federal Home Loan Bank of Chicago Affordable Housing Project award and holds the first small mortgage (which, to refer back to the important role of CDFIs, is far too small for a traditional financial institution to have an interest in holding).

Incorporate Arts and Culture into the Earliest Stages of Housing Development and Finance

Affordable housing is one of the largest challenges facing many communities. Tension can exist between creating finance strategies that produce as many units as possible and creating strategies that support the development of communities as a whole.

In a 2015 report on the intersection of arts, culture, and housing,⁵ ArtPlace America found that arts and cultural strategies can achieve affordable housing goals by helping to

- Articulate invisible housing challenges
- Nourish individuals and communities who have experienced housing-related trauma
- Organize housing campaigns
- Bridge disparate neighborhood residents
- Stabilize vulnerable communities
- Generate economic development for communities that are structurally barred from access to capital

Providing a housing unit is just one piece of a larger puzzle in addressing critical housing outcomes for underserved populations. Arts and cultural strategies that work in tandem with the goals of affordable housing providers are often able to achieve better outcomes on a number of measures.

How can we, as investors, better support the integration of arts and cultural strategies into affordable housing? We can be intentional in asking specifically how arts and culture are addressed or embedded in projects, and how financing is restricting or expanding community vision. We can ask:

- Are there gaps in financing (due to budgets) that have caused plans to be downsized or programs or projects to be cut?
- What things have been deemed important by the community but have not been included in the final budget?
- Does the development fit into the neighborhood and contribute to maintaining the neighborhood's culture?

If we find capital gaps that are keeping projects from reaching their full potential, we can try to fill those gaps with requests for specific grant funding or look to use flexible, lower-

5 Dayna Sherman, "Exploring the Ways Arts and Culture Intersects with Housing" (Brooklyn, NY: ArtPlace America, April 2016).

priced capital to allow the arts and culture work to be fully realized. When you remix arts and culture as a critical ingredient for successful affordable housing, the questions change from “Why is this important?” to “How do we think creatively to plug the financial gap that is critical for the project’s success?”

Reframing: But Will I Get CRA Credit?

Building a Case for Investments in Arts and Culture to Qualify Under CRA

Lenders who find themselves having to compile CRA materials may doubt that they will ever get CRA credit for investing and lending related to arts and culture. CRA is a law in place to encourage banks to make credit available in low- and moderate-income (LMI) areas. It is important to note that the regulation that implements the law is based on regulatory interpretation. Although some lenders may not like the uncertainty of CRA, regulators’ ability to interpret the context and key components of a project means lenders have the opportunity to make a case that the arts and cultural strategies they are supporting have a primary purpose of community development and can therefore be considered for CRA credit. Some ways to do this include the following:

- Describe the intended outcomes in a way that directly and intentionally ties the activity to a defined community development purpose. All of the examples provided in this article received positive consideration as qualified CRA activities with little to no question by examiners. Helpful resources, such as the ArtPlace America field scans⁶ and the PolicyLink report on arts, culture, and equitable development, draw out and frame the relationship of arts and cultural strategies to particular outcomes in housing, transportation, health, safety, and beyond.⁷
- Take the extra time to follow up with examiners who deny credit to understand why and engage in discussion to help them better understand the materials you presented.
- Engage community development groups as allies in explaining the importance of arts and culture in creating positive sustainable change in communities and the benefit to low- and moderate-income families and areas.
- If possible, tour communities with your examiners so that they can see firsthand and understand the context of community development.
- Focus examiners on successful examples that have maintained or expanded the neighborhood culture, rather than those that may have scraped away the neighborhood culture in the development process.

6 ArtPlace America, “Translating Outcomes” (Brooklyn, NY: ArtPlace America, 2019), <https://www.artplaceamerica.org/our-work/research/translating-outcomes>.

7 Kalima Rose, Milly Hawk Daniel, and Jeremy Liu, “Creating Change through Arts, Culture, and Equitable Development: A Policy and Practice Primer” (Oakland, CA: PolicyLink, March 2017).

Advancing a Clear Vision Forward

So, no, you do not need special glasses, but you do need to expand your vision to be able to see the power of the arts as a means of celebrating a community's history and culture—and a critical part of community development. The steps are easy:

- **Recognize** that arts and culture have often been left out of the conversation.
- **Reimagine** your own understanding of the roles that arts and culture can play in community development.
- **Request** that your partners consider the role of arts and culture in the course of their project development.
- **Reinvest** your funds through community-serving institutions with the flexibility they need to be creative in supporting arts and cultural investments.
- Help community organizations to **realign** their practices where arts and culture can help achieve their missions.
- Work with housing developers to fill capital gaps that help them to **remix** their core ingredients toward greater success.
- Spend the time to **reframe** the work in a way that centralizes the desired community outcomes over the arts-based activities so that CRA examiners can fit it into their filters.

A little creativity on the part of lenders can go a long way toward achieving a better vision of what community development can do.

Deborah Kasemeyer is a Senior Vice President and Director of Community Development & Investments at Northern Trust, where she oversees the bank's community development capital deployment and an investment portfolio of over \$1.9 billion. An early adopter of innovative community finance structures, using tools such as Pay for Success, she works to fill capital gaps in underserved communities across the United States through direct investment. Northern has received nine consecutive Outstanding CRA ratings spanning 22 years of evaluation under her management. Kasemeyer also leads the bank's Social Impact Advisors practice, which works with clients to invest capital for direct community impact. She graduated from DePaul University with a B.A. in economics. Her board memberships include IFF, a large regional CDFI headquartered in Chicago; the National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders, headquartered in Washington, DC; and Akola, a social enterprise business headquartered in Dallas and Uganda.

CultureBank: A Vision for a New Investment System

*Deborah Cullinan, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts
Penelope Douglas, CultureBank@YBCA*

As we consider the role of artists in more equitable community development, we posit that arts organizations should focus on developing the conditions for new futures to emerge. In this vision, we as a society understand and value the essential role the artist plays as a key collaborator in more imaginative—and therefore, more productive—community investment. This understanding would lead to investments in arts and culture as incubators of community well-being, producers of health, and stewards of equitable community development. It starts with art. And CultureBank—an experiment in placing a tangible value on the contribution of arts and culture to community development, housed at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA)—is exactly the kind of big, paradigm-shifting project that can help make this vision a reality.

We named this work CultureBank to provoke new ways of thinking about value. The name is inspired by seed banks, which store agricultural seeds to preserve genetic diversity and retain seeds with historical and cultural value. We propose that such a bank must exist to preserve the diversity and historical and cultural value of community assets—to steward resources in support of all that a community values, not just for the benefit of a fortunate few.

Language changes and crystalizes over time, reflecting the evolution in our collective understanding. At CultureBank, we use keywords as part of our broader strategy to shift core concepts in our investment system. Currently, these key definitions include the following:

- **Investment** — All forms of capital, whether structured as grants, debt, equity, notes, or combinations of these. This also includes nonfinancial assets.
- **Investor** — All of the key actors who invest in communities. For us, this includes artists.
- **Culture** — The values, beliefs, and traditions that inform a society’s way of being.
- **Artist enterprise** — The organization the artist leads and operates, however big or small.

The CultureBank concept sees the artist as a key early-stage investor who can help prepare a community for more substantial investment by working collaboratively with local residents and stakeholders to identify and develop assets that matter to the people who live in those neighborhoods.

Genesis: Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

When it opened in fall 1993, YBCA imagined itself as a new kind of art center—an inclusive center for the people that would prioritize diverse perspectives and experiences, as well as nurture the local arts ecosystem. Part of San Francisco’s Yerba Buena Gardens redevelopment project, YBCA and the surrounding gardens and amenities sit on land that is rich with complicated history. Once an Ohlone Indian burial ground, the gardens took shape amid decades of disagreement, displacement, and, finally, community consensus. These beginnings imbue the organization with an innate commitment to the diversity, complexity, and ingenuity of its place, as well as a propensity to explore new ways for arts organizations to engage and support their communities.

Today, YBCA embraces its role as a civic institution with a mission to generate culture that leads to individual and societal movement. Inspired by Jeff Chang—author (*Can’t Stop Won’t Stop*, *Who We Be*, and *We Gon’ Be Alright*), vice president of Narrative, Arts, and Culture at Race Forward, and YBCA board member—we believe that culture precedes policy and cultural movement catalyzes lasting change. We are committed to creating a place for people to come together to grapple with the urgent challenges and questions of our time. Recent lines of inquiry at YBCA have been shaped around such questions as: Can we design freedom? What does equity look like? How might we reimagine political power? By design, YBCA fellows and artists tackle those questions from diverse perspectives and disciplines, creating a powerful array of nuanced, poetic, out-of-the-box responses. We look for the game-changing ideas—whether they are policy propositions, artistic proposals, or new ventures—and we find a way to incubate them, to make them real.

It is this inquiry-driven creative environment that led to CultureBank. Penelope Douglas—an artist who also brings lenses from the worlds of community development, impact investment, and social entrepreneurship—was facilitating a cohort of YBCA Fellows focused on issues of labor and the question, “Why work?” At the same time, Penelope was a visiting scholar with the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco’s Community Development department. This overlapped with questions of equity and citizenship that YBCA was pursuing in other fellow cohorts and in our artistic program. Out of that cross-sector foment came CultureBank, which addresses major challenges in our financial and community development investment work and sees a new era that, this time, truly shifts the system of capitalism in service of long-term wellbeing for our communities and our planet.

Rethinking Investments in Well-Being

Twenty-five years ago, the idea of a triple bottom line gave rise to investment vehicles that married the mainstream U.S. financial system to other social-return objectives but without acknowledging communities as holistic entities. This concept gave birth to the term “impact investing.” Writing for the *Harvard Business Review* in 2018, John Elkington, who coined the term “triple bottom line,” stated that he was rethinking the concept:

But success or failure on sustainability goals cannot be measured only in terms of profit and loss. It must also be measured in terms of the wellbeing of billions of people and the health of our planet, and the sustainability sector's record in moving the needle on those goals has been decidedly mixed. While there have been successes, our climate, water resources, oceans, forests, soils and biodiversity are increasingly threatened. It is time to either step up—or to get out of the way.¹

Wellbeing is not just an aggregation of individual benefits. Rather, it relates to a much broader notion of who or what prospers in society in relation to each other and the long-term health of society as a set of interconnected systems.

For decades, policymakers have staked their antipoverty agendas on investment that focuses not on systems but on single components—solve housing, increase household employment, etc. This approach looks for solutions to discrete problems. As a result, policies fuel transactional and fragmented investments. For example, “We need more affordable housing” becomes a politician’s platform, yielding policy changes that incentivize transactions to bring housing units on board without a holistic assessment of supporting systems. “We must solve the workforce development problem” brings grants to community colleges for specific types of job training, which often come online just as the hoped-for skills are becoming outdated. Talented and creative community development investors have responded to these potential solutions by bringing greater and greater expertise to new products and transactional structures. Yet the wealth inequality gap continues to widen, and poverty persists.

The Question Is, “Have We Made a Culture of Equity Central to Our Investment System?”

In looking at this question, CultureBank takes an entirely different approach. As a starting point, it focuses on an undeveloped and mostly ignored part of the *investor* landscape. Artists, and arts and culture enterprises, are left out of major investments despite their proven ability to understand and celebrate the depth and diversity of community assets that exist and that matter to people. They are the missing piece if we are to invest for an equitable and regenerative future. CultureBank aims for a model that considers long-term outcomes and a more complex form of social return on investment (SROI).

To achieve this new model, we need to invest in the following:

- 1) A **shift** in how we define the scope of the returns that benefit society. We must evolve from value systems that focus on financial gain for some and toward a culture of equity and shared prosperity.
- 2) The **assets** that bond humans to their places and to one another, such as languages, knowledge of local geography, the real narrative of a neighborhood, and green spaces.

¹ John Elkington, “25 Years Ago I Coined the Phrase ‘Triple Bottom Line.’ Here’s Why It’s Time to Rethink It,” *Harvard Business Review*, June 25, 2018, <https://hbr.org/2018/06/25-years-ago-i-coined-the-phrase-triple-bottom-line-heres-why-im-giving-up-on-it>.

Artists are contributing their talent and skills to invest in assets that financial investors often do not see. In doing this work, they are creating conditions that allow us to invest very differently, valuing more equitable outcomes.

We know that artists are changing lives and transforming communities across this country, but their work as investors in their communities—as people who are committing time, money, and other forms of capital to realize their community’s development—remains marginalized and underfunded. CultureBank seeks to develop and scale the massive potential of artists as investors in their communities by encouraging new forms and structures of investments—all sources and all uses. In addition, CultureBank seeks to determine how to value and share the positive benefits of these investments.

The Three Streams of Returns

CultureBank structures its investments around the central concept of three streams of returns, each yielding value over short, medium, and very long (a generation’s) timeframes:

- 1) basic economic returns, where the repayment stream is financial revenue
- 2) the accruing assets of community (ex: improved community amenities in the short-term; systemic changes in attitudes, behavior, and social cohesion in the long-term)
- 3) shift in culture within the community (commitment to investment in shared prosperity that promotes an equitable future)²

The CultureBank Model: Tapping into Cultural Power

Many U.S. communities that have been traditionally understood as “poor” are home to a rich array of cultural assets. Often, these communities are under extreme stress, which makes them vulnerable. However, they also have power that can be better understood and nurtured. They hold assets of value, opportunity, and inspiration, such as music, dance, cultural traditions, diverse language skills, natural green spaces, knowledge of the geography, oral narratives, and people themselves, that are extremely valuable in achieving long-term health and shared prosperity. Identifying and unleashing the potential of these assets will help communities build a collective and resilient vision for their future. Therefore, investment in these assets becomes investment toward the *ROI* of long-term health and shared prosperity.

² Adapted from Penelope Douglas and David Erickson, “CultureBank: A New Paradigm for Community Investment,” Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco Community Development Working Paper, March 2017, <https://www.frbf.org/community-development/files/culturebank-cdfi-paradigm-for-community-investment.pdf>.

What Will Our World Look Like When We Get This Right?

Thirty years from now, imagine local communities whose citizens have designed a fully cooperative model for sharing in prosperity. They have come together over time, working with artists and their organizations, to first identify the value that exists in their community and then to co-create their distinct vision of community wealth. This vision includes cultural assets, as well as monetary resources, that they can build together. In this place, community asset mapping is a well-worn tool, used both to understand and honor lost assets, as well as to illuminate the dynamic landscape of current community wealth. Shared ownership that places the long-term value objectives first is a common principle among investors. Investors are community members, as well as other stakeholders, who have cowritten the key investment memoranda.

Ten years from now, in the Oak Cliff neighborhood in Dallas, TX, Tisha Crear's juice bar and fresh-food market—Recipe OC—has laid the groundwork for a dozen artist enterprises to contribute to a healthier neighborhood by building upon community assets, including language skills, knowledge of their geography, and natural outdoor spaces. Recipe OC was the first of what will be many enterprises that tie geography and language skills to community safety, and the results are grounded in real evidence.

Two years from now, by locating Recipe OC at a very specific site in the neighborhood, Tisha has reoriented the walking path for kids in the nearby school away from a hazardous section of road that lacked sidewalks. Activating the space at night with community dinners and events was the first step in creating a dialogue across several spoken languages. The community has clear evidence of increased social cohesion. Tisha's wall is full of people's sentences about their enjoyment of her juice, along with everything from their new blood pressure results to their new friends. These events also helped to reimagine the way people traverse the neighborhood, bringing back to life an underused park nearby.

Today, in summer 2019, Tisha's collaboration with CultureBank in Dallas and her participation with equally high-impact peers in a learning cohort positions her as an essential early-stage investor in the Oak Cliff neighborhood and paves the way for much more productive and collaborative investment in the community's vision of shared wealth.

The people who provided early capital to CultureBank are leading the way to demonstrate what a portfolio focused on regenerative principles looks like, as they celebrate these outcomes and increase their participation. Together, they share the experience, along with the various forms of value of community wealth. They have become comfortable investing in a variety of community assets simultaneously, as well as in their role as one in a community of shareholders that seeks interconnectedness and collective prosperity. Tisha and other artists and arts organizations experience a fundamentally different relationship within that same community of shareholders.

CultureBank at Work Right Now: Setting the Stage in Dallas

Here's what it looks like on the ground in Dallas.

CultureBank is collaborating with Clyde Valentin, the executive director of Ignite Arts Dallas, a leading civic engagement organization within Southern Methodist University (SMU)'s Meadows School of the Arts. This partnership is essential, given the leadership commitment that Clyde demonstrates, his deep knowledge of Dallas, our shared values, and the resources that SMU provides. Together, we have developed a critical relationship with The Arts Community Alliance (TACA), an intermediary that brings a long commitment to the local arts community and the capacity to fundraise and manage a fund. We are piloting a project to develop a new type of social impact fund at TACA, in which TACA and Ignite Arts Dallas are both part of the community of shareholders as the work progresses to its next phase.

These partners explored every neighborhood in Dallas and spoke with dozens of community and city leaders, with the goal of understanding the community landscape and identifying the first learning cohort of CultureBank Dallas artists. In early 2019, the partners hosted a series of conversations across the city's neighborhoods. They shared the CultureBank vision of artists as early-stage investors in communities, working with residents to develop and define the value of community assets. They discovered dozens of artists building enterprises and creating impact.

The CultureBank partners then invited artists who were interested in participating in a learning cohort to build their capacity as investors in their community and to demonstrate early-stage community asset development. Twenty-four artists responded to the invitation, and the partners chose six to participate, representing a diversity of practice and neighborhood. The artists have received resources to propel their work in identifying assets of value in and with their communities.

By the end of 2019, these six artists will have participated in several learning sessions together, as well as one-on-one meetings with the CultureBank team, to refine the scope of their work. They have established concrete commitments for what they bring to—and receive from—the cohort. They commit themselves to sharing their resources with one another (e.g., bringing a literacy popup to a food space). They commit themselves to the community by agreeing to seek service on a community association or nonprofit board. The CultureBank team has committed to providing investment resources, specific one-on-one expertise, content for each meeting of the cohort, and video documentary support for key milestones of the artist's work in the community.

In 2020, the CultureBank team will invite artists to join new learning cohorts and expand local partnerships across more institutions. CultureBank will also make larger demonstration investments. The structure of these investments will reflect the central return objective in this early phase: maximize the artist's capacity for impact by bringing to light the value of community assets and the benefits they provide to communities. These investments may be zero-interest loans, structured so that the loan is forgiven upon the completion of the artist's

work within a set time period, and the investor's and artist's shared understanding of the next steps on the path to community benefits.

The pilot phase in each place is the important testing and learning period. Achieving replicability and the opportunity to structure meaningful new forms of investment many times over will require resources and more capacity. The goal is to make major investments that steward a new model of value generation in the context of regenerative and equitable objectives in a community.

The partners have held conversations and meetings with numerous community leaders, family foundations, social enterprise organizations, philanthropic organizations, and arts and culture leaders in Dallas to follow the catalytic resources provided by the partners for the pilot phase.

CultureBank pilot partnerships are also on the ground in Kansas City, MO, and Oakland, CA.

An Invitation

For the pilot investment phase, donor capital is the most important financial support mechanism. These early investors will experience the initial steps in a new model of community investment. During its pilot phase, CultureBank seeks to illuminate value within communities and does not aim to achieve any sort of traditional ROI. YBCA, where CultureBank is housed, is committed to building the capacity of artists as true investors in their communities while building the demand from today's impact, community, and social investors for the vital role the artist will play in the work.

The invitation is here for everyone to consider: What will I do with my investment resources to support both a culture of equity and a more regenerative model for shared wealth in my community, in my place? What's the first shift I should make?

true wealth
is the already accomplished
organization of human capabilities
to clothe,
shelter, feed,
protect, inform,
and accommodate
the initiatives of human life
the magnitude of true wealth
consists of the number
of forward days
of the number of human beings
already provided for

—*Buckminster Fuller*

Deborah Cullinan is CEO of the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) and a founding partner of CultureBank. She is one of the nation's leading thinkers on the pivotal role arts organizations can play in shaping our social and political landscape, and has spent years mobilizing communities through arts and culture. She is committed to revolutionizing the role art centers play in public life. During her tenure at YBCA, Cullinan has launched bold new community programs, engagement strategies, and civic coalitions. She is a cofounder of ArtsForum SF, co-chair of the San Francisco Arts Alliance, and a board member of California Arts Advocates, Californians for the Arts, MissionHub, and the Community Arts Stabilization Trust.

Penelope Douglas is a founding partner of CultureBank. She has spent the past twenty-five years as a social entrepreneur, pioneer in community development investment, cofounder and CEO of Pacific Community Ventures, and senior executive and board chair of MissionHub and SOCAP. Throughout her career Douglas has been committed to building bridges across banking, community development finance, social enterprise, impact investing, and the arts. She currently serves as an advisor to several women-led social enterprises, is a board member of Startgrid, and was a visiting scholar with the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco's Community Development Department. She has been featured in media outlets such as the New York Times, NPR, the San Francisco Chronicle, and California magazine—that last highlighted her as a pioneer of “compassionate capitalism.” Douglas is also an artist, an athlete, a native Californian, and a graduate of Smith College.

Widening the Lens: Arts, Culture, and an Equitable Future for All Communities

Michael McAfee, PolicyLink
Rip Rapson, Kresge Foundation

In this conversation, held in April 2019, Michael McAfee, president and CEO of PolicyLink, and Rip Rapson, president and CEO of the Kresge Foundation and chair of the Funders Council of ArtPlace America, explore why arts and culture strategies are central to equitable development. They provide insight into how leaders can build on lessons learned from the Community Development Investments (CDI) program to create healthy, opportunity-rich communities for all. Communications consultant Fran Smith moderated the conversation.

Why is fusing arts and culture as an integral component of community development important for achieving equitable outcomes?

Rip Rapson (RR): One of the things that has always perplexed me is why we ever thought that arts were anything *but* an integral part of community development. As we look at the way communities have evolved in America, issues of community identity, history, economics, politics, and otherwise have always been expressed through the vocabulary of arts and culture. So, I would phrase the question differently: Why *have* arts always been an integral component of community development, and how can we support that work? So much of what we've tried to do with PolicyLink and others is to ensure the role of the arts is understood, valorized, and strengthened over time.

Michael McAfee (MM): I agree with everything you said. And I think of James Baldwin's statement that art is a way to correct delusion. I see arts and culture as essential for correcting delusion in our society, in our perception, and in our consciousness. In community development and in our organizations, we run to data, data, data. But data often miss the things that are right in front of us. If we're going to get to equitable outcomes, we must see clearly the ways in which we've designed the society to not be equitable, and we must see the ways in which humanity causes harm. If you don't correct that delusion, you don't get there. That's why I think arts and culture are integral.

RR: That reinforces a couple of things for me. One is that arts and culture have always had a powerful role in social capital, in reinforcing or even creating informal bonds of trust and support that lie at the heart of community and certainly at the heart of equitable communities. To that end, arts and culture are as much a process as a product. I mean, they can be a product, and often they're a glorious one. But they are also a process of bringing people

together to find shared identity, find difference, find shared purpose, or find divergent purpose. That active, creative iteration makes the arts and cultural process so different from our normal problem-solving process.

How does incorporating arts into community development create new avenues for problem-solving and elevate resident voice and power in that process?

RR: If the problem is defined through a lens of creativity and artistic heritage, often the problem we *think* we're trying to solve changes. If we think we're trying to solve a housing problem or a transportation problem or even a human services problem, the conversation gets narrow pretty fast. It gets technocratic and isolated pretty fast. Arts and culture tend to broaden the aperture of problem analysis. Once you do that, all sorts of different solutions flow in. Opening the aperture permits many more aspects of the economic, social, and political dimensions to inform how you take something apart and put it back together. When we're talking about issues of urban America, I think we have to focus at least in part on deconstructing barriers to full equity and justice. Arts and culture play a really powerful role in that active deconstruction and reconstruction. It's not enough oftentimes, but I think we've failed to appreciate fully the extent to which it is absolutely necessary to pry things open in a way that our traditional disciplinary approaches to community work don't permit us to do.

MM: Arts and culture awaken us to what is already there in a community—the artistic expressions, the cultural connectivity, and other things we miss because of the limited aperture that we bring to the work. Art-centered development amplifies and accelerates resident voice and power. This is the work for us to be doing at this moment in our nation because, one, our institutions that are central to a strong democracy have a very limited aperture, and two, we are grossly disconnected from that resident voice and power. We can't seem to find the right set of strategies to alleviate so many of the problems that frustrate us because we are unmoored from the soul of community, which to me is arts and culture.

RR: I think one of the complexities of urban America is figuring out how you honor, acknowledge, and value community heritage while creating a sufficiently wide berth for exploring a community's changing form and function. We see this struggle in Detroit and many other communities. It's quite complicated to look back, look current, look forward, and understand the relationship of those things as you begin to define where your community wants to move next. It's an act of synthesis that often lies outside the competence of our traditional systems. They don't work that way; it's just too hard. Arts and culture do a particularly good job of trying to hold those concepts simultaneously. Not every piece of art, not every artistic process, but in the aggregate. It's almost the job description of the arts to weave past, present, and future.

How can arts and cultural strategies help communities deal openly and constructively with the often-unspoken dynamics of race?

MM: This really gets to the power of arts and culture. It reveals who we are. It reveals the beloved community to ourselves. Race is not a thing that has to be dealt with and that we have to fear—it's just an embrace of us and our humanity. We need to be able to see that race is no different from any other thing we struggle with, and we can overcome our racial divides if we develop the muscle to do that. But we have to care about it. We have to want to acknowledge and atone for the things we've not done well in our nation's history. If you don't get race, you don't get arts and culture, because you're denying folks their experience, the soul of who they are.

RR: In the past few years, I've participated in different institutions' attempts to come to terms with issues of race, equity, and justice. Some have come at this purely as an intellectual proposition, through history or pedagogy. That's sort of a dead end. You need a wide set of tools that draw on something much deeper and more profound, at a personal level and a community level and a societal level. The efforts that have been enormously powerful blend storytelling, musical expression, and visual creation—different ways of seeing a community and the talents in that community. It's the ability to bridge heart and soul and intellect.

How can arts and culture serve as a bulwark against displacement and reinforce the cultural richness that makes cities so vital and attractive?

RR: Conversations around displacement tend to conflate a few different things. There's physical displacement—you know, when you build a sports stadium or you run a freeway through the middle of a traditional African American neighborhood. There's financial displacement that occurs when property values go up and your grandmother can't afford her taxes. There's also cultural displacement, a sense of identity that's being torn up by the roots and not valued. Often you get the economic development people saying, "Yeah, yeah, we've gotta do this because we have to grow our tax base; we've got to be competitive." And you get the social justice folks saying, "Well, yeah, but you know, you're doing all of this on our backs." When I've seen the most effective conversations around issues of displacement, those worlds are somehow bridged. One important way to bridge them is to think about the cultural dynamism of a place. What does it mean for a community—whether it's as a block or a neighborhood or even a city—to honor its traditions, patterns of settlement, and patterns of culture, and not have those obliterated into something that no longer bears resemblance to what that city used to be?

MM: If you care about the arts and cultural fabric of a community, you will fight for it as hard as you fight for that plot of land to build that new stadium. It's that simple. If, say, I care about community that deeply, will I fight for it as hard as I'm going to fight for the new stadium that's going to displace folks who have built a vibrant community? I'm seeing this happen in Oakland right now. And this is why I'm challenging even my own thinking here,

not just looking externally. The soul of Oakland is being torn out. Why? Because folks don't own land. Institutional leaders will bring them to our lunches and have them perform for us all day long. But they won't be there in another year. As an institutional leader now, I have to ask, will I help buy up the land so that it can be owned by community? If all the leaders who play a role in the design of cities—developers, government, foundations, civic leaders—really care about this beautiful body of work that CDI and ArtPlace have created and nurtured, we would show up differently, holding a different set of interests, fighting for a different set of things. It doesn't mean people can't make a profit. But leaders would no longer be driven by the delusion that if we just create all these nice, shiny buildings, the community will be whole.

RR: We're having this conversation in a really big way in Detroit. This is fundamentally a city whose energy, resilience, and grit stem very much from the African American experience. It would be a huge lost opportunity to *not* figure out ways to capture that experience, how it has changed, and what that sort of dynamism means going into the future. And what is a better vehicle to interrogate these kinds of questions than arts and culture? I mean, we ask our artists and culture workers to go deep, to get us really uncomfortable, to figure out what the real questions are underneath the questions we're talking about. In Detroit, art has been a huge assist. It helps break down some of the rigidity, the preconceptions, and the defensiveness that come with this conversation. It becomes a way of trying to figure out what the channels of communication can be so people don't retreat to their own corners.

This volume features a number of community development organizations, intermediaries, and financial institutions that have embraced this work. What is the broader impact of programs like CDI and other ArtPlace investments?

MM: One of the most exciting things about these investments is they have lent validity to what a community would naturally express. This is an important way that intermediaries or organizations that aren't necessarily sitting on the ground have amplified community voice and experience, by recreating the space for it and recentering community back into our practice. What you hear me describing is my desire to take it further, build on the rich legacy of ArtPlace and CDI and say to folks, one, understand the power of arts and culture. And two, consider what would happen if we didn't simply become seduced by the performance, but if arts and culture actually corrected the distortions in the way we might see community. I think that's one of the important and beautiful competencies for leaders doing this work. Can you see the humanity of folks? Can you recognize the gift—that art allows us to see a different possibility in a community that we may not have considered?

RR: I've actually come out of our experience more optimistic about the community development system. Not only have we made progress in creative placemaking, but this is going to become more commonplace. What we've seen is the unlocking of a whole different way of thinking in some cases, some more successful than others and some perhaps more enduring than others. But things that clearly are going to last beyond a grant or an expressed interest by a bunch of foundations.

What do you see as a key challenge to fully incorporating arts and culture into all community development work?

MM: When I'm on the ground, I very much see how arts and culture are woven into the work, rooted in the community, and connected to me. It is a relationship-building strategy that is naturally born out of community. Intermediaries are more removed. We're often participants in the performance without having connection to that soul, that relationship. We embrace it without having to correct our delusion. Without having to own the ways in which we may be harming humanity, the very things that the artists are saying, are singing, are dancing about. And so I wonder sometimes, do we actually see what is happening right in front of our eyes as intermediary organizations, because if we saw it would we continue down the road with the strategies that we've implemented?

RR: When ArtPlace was created almost a decade ago, there was a sense that arts stood at the margin of the mission of community development organizations, finance institutions, transportation institutions, all the major public systems that we associate with community development. The creators of ArtPlace explicitly intended to try to spur an almost viral uptake of arts and culture into the core of that. We've had success, but it's really tempting to think about public systems in the community development sphere as largely technocratic exercises.

MM: Some of this is not technocratic. I think that's the journey for our field to be on, to embrace this much deeper work. It's for us as institutional leaders who may not have an artistic bone in our body, like Lord knows I don't, to hold this consciousness and this care, to say, I value this, and to struggle with how we apply it in a real way to our community-building work. That's how you get to a new set of results, a greater level of impact in places. For me it starts with leaders showing up with a different consciousness, leaders centering a different theme, actually meaning community for all, and leaders fundamentally questioning what and whom are they building for, and why.

RR: As you were talking, Michael, I clicked back into the pragmatic challenge that arts and culture continue to have. We just broke ground for a new community center in the northwest part of Detroit which will bring together the community, one of the universities, community organizers, all sorts of folks. We had the mayor and all the council members there. And it was really clear to me that all of the ways in which arts and culture helped form that space were invisible to them. Here was a physical space located on a commercial corridor within a broader commercial revitalization effort that involved open space, housing, small business development, and the like. And yet there was nothing about that space that didn't owe its existence to arts and culture. Its design was curated with an eye toward how space works and how community uses space. The walls were full of photo documentation of how the community is evolving, what it used to look like, what it looks like now, and some artistic expression of what the community hoped it would be. A spoken-word poet set the tone. The engagement of young people in the space is going to be through different forms of contemporary

artistic expression. There are going to be DJs, electronic musicians, drummers, and all sorts of stuff. It was both right there in our face, yet completely invisible. We still have an enormous challenge to remind people that arts and culture are not just a symphony or the corner mural project. It's a process of creation and inclusion and identity elevation and problem-solving. That seems soft, but it's another tool to make sure you're doing the work that's most creative, enduring, and effective.

Michael, how does the CDI experience inform and inspire your own leadership?

MM: It has me thinking about how often my desire is to just go to the solution or the policy. It has me thinking about my blind spots and what I'm not seeing when I go into a community. I find it quite liberating to stop and think about the experiences of the people I'm dealing with. To ask myself, how do I sit with them, break bread with them, and think about what possibility we might create if we join in a relationship in a different way? If I slow down and do that, I find I often end up in a better place. One thing that has come out of it for me is that I can do a lot to create a place at PolicyLink that is far more liberating in terms of how that soul is woven throughout our organization. I see so many possibilities if we bring this as a real competency. I've always been intrigued by Bayard Rustin's notion of an angelic troublemaker. How can I use arts and culture to be that angelic troublemaker? So, you all have set me on my own exciting journey. It's the result of leaders at PolicyLink bringing this into our organization and making sure this work is more than just a grant that we have. It's a way of us being in the world.

Rip, what lessons can philanthropy draw from CDI?

RR: In many ways, philanthropy has the same blind spots that the public and private sectors have. We want to compartmentalize. We want to keep our systems separate. We want to assume that pouring money into tangible products is the way we measure our success. My main takeaway is that the one-dimensionality of philanthropy as an approach to community development simply doesn't work. The approach has to be integrative in terms of systems and in terms of the tools it brings. I strongly believe that arts and culture help us break out of the traditional way of thinking about community development, community finance, and public policy, and move us into a more complicated, messy, given-and-take kind of world that ultimately is the future.

Michael McAfee is president and CEO of PolicyLink, a national research and action institute focused on advancing racial and economic equity to achieve just and fair inclusion for all. He brings over 20 years of experience partnering with organizations across the public, philanthropic, and private sectors. Michael joined PolicyLink in 2011 as the inaugural director of the Promise Neighborhoods Institute at PolicyLink. Under his leadership, PolicyLink emerged as a national leader in building cradle-to-career systems that ensure children and youth in our nation's most distressed communities have a pathway into the middle class. Before PolicyLink, Michael was director of community leadership for The Greater Kansas City Foundation and Affiliated Trusts and at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, he managed a \$450 million housing, community, and economic development portfolio.

Rip Rapson is president and CEO of The Kresge Foundation, a private, national foundation dedicated to expanding opportunities in America's cities through grantmaking and social investing and chairs the Funders Council of ArtPlace America. Since 2006, Rapson has led the 95-year-old foundation to adopt an array of grantmaking and investing tools to improve the economic, social, cultural and environmental conditions of urban life through six defined programs: arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services and community development in Kresge's hometown of Detroit. Using a full array of grant, loan and other investment tools, Kresge invests more than \$160 million annually to foster economic and social change. An active member of the national philanthropic and southeast Michigan civic communities, Rapson is board chair of Living Cities, and a board member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago's Detroit Branch, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Detroit RiverFront Conservancy, Downtown Detroit Partnership and M-1 Rail.

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