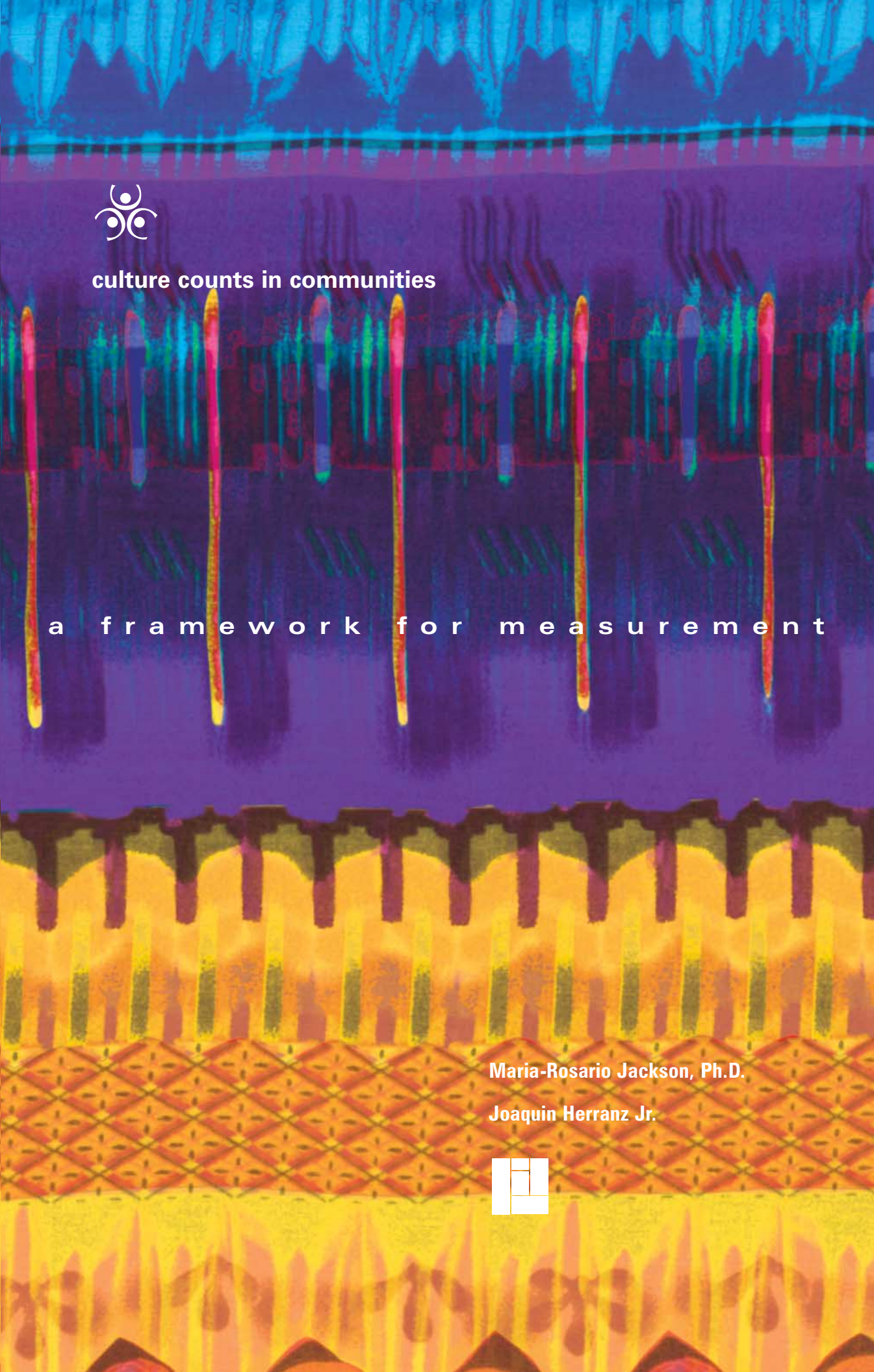

culture counts in communities

a framework for measurement

Maria-Rosario Jackson, Ph.D.

Joaquin Herranz Jr.

The Culture, Creativity, and Communities Program at the Urban Institute is a research initiative that crosses policy lines to study the roles of arts, culture, and creative expression in communities.

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About This Report

This report presents the guiding principles and conceptual framework developed by, and underlying the work of, the Urban Institute's Arts and Culture Indicators in Community Building Project (ACIP). The report also reviews the current state of data and research on integrating arts, culture, and creativity into quality of life measures and suggests prospects for future developments. It is the first in a series of publications of the Institute's Culture, Creativity, and Communities program.

ACIP was launched in 1996 in collaboration with the Urban Institute's National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership,[1] with support from the Rockefeller Foundation. Recognizing that arts and culture had too frequently been neglected in efforts to assess quality of life, the Creativity and Culture division of the Foundation commissioned the Institute to explore the possibility of integrating arts and culture-related measures into neighborhood indicator systems. These systems consist of periodically collected measures that monitor quality of life at the community level.[2] ACIP operates at both national and local levels—actively encouraging the inclusion of arts and culture within quality of life indicator systems and seeking to create the concepts, tools, and language necessary to do so.

ACIP is built on the premise that inclusion of arts, culture, and creativity in quality of life measures is more meaningful when it relies on the collaborative efforts of the wide spectrum of people involved in the arts and in community building.[3] For this reason, ACIP conducts research in collaboration with community builders, arts administrators, artists, funders, and applied researchers in related fields. We address our report to all these groups. The authors offer the material presented here as an initial step in an ongoing collaborative effort of which we are proud to be a part.

Acknowledgments

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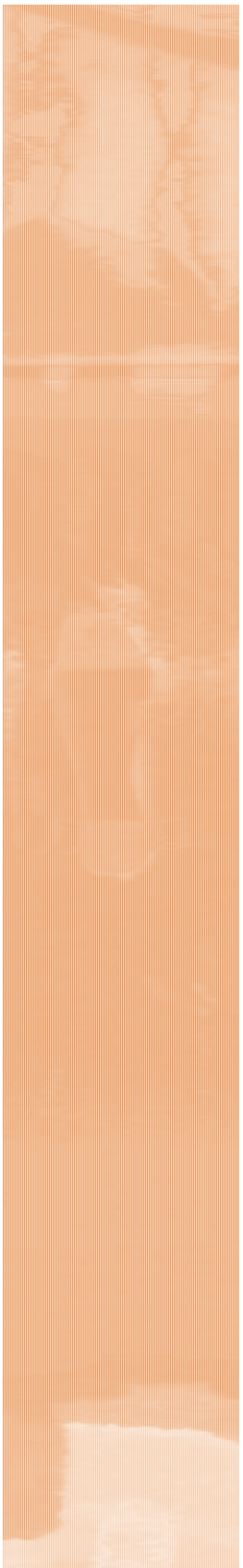
Executive Summary



The Arts and Culture Indicators in Community Building Project (ACIP), launched in 1996 with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, seeks to integrate arts and culture-related measures into neighborhood quality-of-life indicator systems. This task includes creating the concepts, tools, and language required to do so. ACIP is built on the premise that inclusion of arts, culture, and creativity in quality of life measures is more meaningful when it relies on the collaborative efforts of the wide spectrum of people involved in the arts and in community building.

Local leaders and researchers have made important strides in collecting and using information about employment, health, housing, and land use as part of neighborhood indicator initiatives—and in interpreting the dynamics of community building. But they typically have neglected the presence and roles of arts, culture, and creativity in community building processes. To begin filling this gap, ACIP went to both conventional and unconventional sources of information. Information-gathering techniques included in-person interviews and focus group discussions with professionals and community residents in nine cities, document review and telephone interviews with staff from arts and arts-related institutions, and on-site examination of selected community-building initiatives across the country.

We found myriad examples of how arts and cultural participation are important elements of community life and essential components of the community-building process. But except for some research on economic impacts of the arts and arts impacts on education outcomes, we found little theoretical or empirical research that speaks to how arts and cultural participation contribute to social dynamics. Moreover, formal data collection practices are also limited. Although they reveal considerable information about funding, audiences, and facilities, they are based on narrow definitions that overemphasize formal venues and miss the many less institutionalized ways in which communities experience arts, culture, and creativity.

Since existing formal data and research are not an adequate base on which to build meaningful neighborhood indicators with an arts dimension, ACIP—based on its field work and document research—developed a set of guiding principles for the treatment of arts, culture, and creativity in neighborhoods and a set of parameters for research and measurement. These have been refined through a process of idea development and debate in workshops and conferences of researchers, community builders, policymakers, funders, arts administrators, and artists—and through application by ACIP affiliates around the country.

Guiding Principles

Four guiding principles can help capture any and all assets related to creativity or artistic endeavor that people find valuable in their own communities and neighborhoods:

1. **Definitions of art, culture, and creativity** depend on the cultural values, preferences, and realities of residents and other stakeholders in a given community.
2. **The concept of participation** includes a wide array of ways in which people engage in arts, culture, and creative expression.
3. **Arts, culture, and creative expression** are infused with multiple meanings and purposes simultaneously.
4. **Opportunities for participation** in arts, culture, and creative endeavor often rely on both arts-specific and non-arts-specific resources.

These guiding principles provide a way of identifying many facets of neighborhoods' arts, culture, and creativity. But they need to be supplemented by a systematic framework for description: qualitative description for conceptualization and theory building, and quantitative description for comparable measurement and indicator development. ACIP combined its guiding principles with its field research to develop a framework for this purpose.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework developed by ACIP consists of these principles plus four parameters that serve both as domains of inquiry (for conceptualization and classification) and as dimensions of measurement (for documentation, data gathering, and indicator development).

Presence, defined as the existence of whatever creative expressions a given community defines and values as community assets. Since a cultural inventory is the usual form of chronicling a community's cultural assets, ACIP began its work in this domain with a review of such inventories. We found that they typically emphasize traditional cultural venues, thus missing *indigenous venues of validation*, as well as any references to the context in which the resource currently exists or its possible historical significance.

The ideal cultural inventory envisioned by ACIP would be web-based, combining qualitative and quantitative methods, including a wide variety of stakeholders, and taking full advantage of the Web's searchable interactive digital capabilities, such as linking graphics, audio, and video. Such an ideal is still in the future. But ACIP was able to identify several examples of less resource-intensive efforts that successfully embrace local values, using such approaches as ethnography, participatory research, surveys, and computer-aided data collection. These and similar approaches can serve as the foundation for more comprehensive, technologically sophisticated inventories in years to come

Participation, defined as the many ways in which people participate in these creative expressions (as creators, teachers, consumers, supporters, etc.). Unlike the other domains of inquiry in the ACIP framework, cultural participation has been the subject of long debate, often cast in elitist-populist sets of dichotomies: formal-informal, high-low, professional-amateur, and the like. ACIP research supports the recent criticism of such dichotomies as overly simplifying the broad array of

participation forms. Our research also confirms other evidence that broadening the definition of cultural engagement increases participation rates substantially—with many people from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds participating at both community and regional levels.

Impacts, defined as the contribution of these creative expressions and participation in them to community-building outcomes (neighborhood pride, stewardship of place, improved public safety, etc.). The direct impacts of arts, culture, and creative expression on communities are not well documented or understood in the arts and community-building related fields, according to ACIP's literature review and field research. Our field work in cities around the country did reveal a long tradition of community arts practice, with many practitioners operating their programs with well-developed assumptions about the impacts of their efforts. But these often go unarticulated and are omitted from the type of theory that can guide systematic research and data collection efforts.

The fundamental challenge here is that the very broadness of ACIP's arts definition—combined with the fact that arts, culture, and creativity are operating in an environment in which many other factors are operating simultaneously—vastly complicates the task of pinpointing the contribution of arts-related activities to the overall impacts observed. ACIP's impact domain addresses these challenges by proposing a middle-range approach. It acknowledges the complexity and interrelationships of arts/culture/creativity in neighborhoods, but offers a bounded conception based on strong suggestive evidence of the relationship of arts/culture/creativity to neighborhood quality of life characteristics.

Systems of support, defined as the resources (financial, in-kind, organization, and human) required to bring opportunities for participation in these creative expressions to fruition. The production, dissemination, and validation of arts and culture at the neighborhood level are made possible through the contributions of many different kinds of

stakeholders—both arts and nonarts entities. The network of relationships among these entities constitutes a system of support that is critical to a community's cultural vitality. Likewise, support systems for other issues, such as neighborhood revitalization or crime prevention, are likely to have arts-focused players in them.

The best collaborations encountered by ACIP seem to be those that have specific purposes and involve relationships that enable individual as well as collective goals to be achieved. They come into being and evolve based on mutually recognized strengths and needs, taking the form and intensity that best facilitates the work. Successful collaboration of this sort requires organizational flexibility, time, and patience. It can even involve mediation in situations where the participating organizations have different cultures of work and are beholden to different standards of excellence.

The guiding principles and conceptual framework presented here are useful stepping stones toward the grounded inclusion of arts, culture, and creativity as important dimensions of neighborhood well-being. But truly adhering to them poses both opportunities and challenges.

- **Analysts must recognize** that community actors need to be partners in the creation and implementation of studies and data collection efforts.
- **Practitioners must recognize** that harvesting their knowledge and experiences in a systematic way is key to the creation of solid grounded theory that can guide research and policy that will further their efforts.
- **Policymakers and funders must facilitate** this component of a practitioner's job by incorporating into grants and program guidelines the resources necessary to support theory development and systematic data collection. They must also expand their thinking about strategic points of investment in this important dimension of a community's social fabric.

Preface *by Joan Shigekawa, The Rockefeller Foundation*

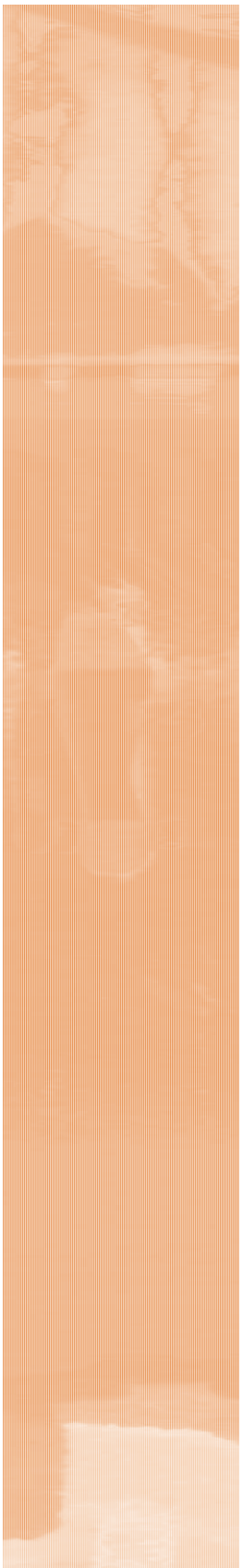
Each of us experiences and contributes to American culture every day, whether through our friends and family, our professions, our artistic endeavors, or our religious and community institutions. Yet historically there has been inadequate attention paid to capturing, in a measurable way, the value of art and culture to our lives and to the broader health of our communities.

"Culture Counts in Communities: A Framework for Measurement" is an important step in the right direction. In this monograph, Maria-Rosario Jackson and Joaquin Herranz, Jr. offer a conceptual framework—a roadmap, if you will—to help guide critical thinking about the intersections between community well being and culture as a first step to measuring the role of culture at the community level. The work represented in this report is an essential building block in the efforts to create and to sustain healthy and vibrant communities.

The staff of the Urban Institute's Arts and Culture Indicators in Community Building Project (ACIP) has included a virtual slice of urban America in all stages of this research. They have worked side by side with people from various income levels, age and racial and ethnic groups, as well as diverse professional backgrounds—artists, community builders, community developers, urban planners, cultural workers and arts administrators, policy-makers and funders, and researchers from various disciplines. As a result, work emanating from their research provides a deeper, richer representation of America's community assets and cultural life in the 21st century. Moreover, it asserts the importance of creativity to America's quality of life and development.

The Rockefeller Foundation is pleased to support the Urban Institute in this pioneering endeavor.

Project Context and Research Strategy



Neighborhoods and metropolitan regions across the country are seeking innovative strategies to address the promises, problems, and uneven prosperity associated with an increasingly technological economy combined with far-reaching demographic shifts. In this era of rapid transformation, paths to financial self-sufficiency within the changing economic opportunity structure are no longer clearly marked. American identity has been enriched by the maturing of diverse racial and ethnic groups and by the arrival of new immigrants. But it has been complicated by the same processes. Accelerating communication and mobility defy conventional concepts of home, work, leisure, community, city, and region. Furthermore, federal and state responses to urban issues continue devolving to the local level at the very same moment when our ability to create social capital—the bonds that enable collective action—is being called into question. If the promises of opportunity are to be fulfilled, more creativity and resourcefulness will be needed from both individuals and communities.

In this context, more than ever, residents, community leaders, planners, and policymakers working to improve the quality of life in America's neighborhoods need appropriate, consistently and reliably collected information about local conditions to do their best work. Such information will help people engaged in neighborhood development and community-building efforts to better understand how a community operates, assesses its assets and needs, identifies trends, establishes priorities, designs programs to address priorities, and gauges progress. In recent years, local leaders and researchers have made important strides in collecting and using information about employment, health, housing, and land use, among other issues, as part of neighborhood indicator initiatives. Important strides have also been made in interpreting the dynamics of community building through theories of change research and investigations of social capital building processes.[4] These are important contributions toward more comprehensively understanding

neighborhood conditions and dynamics. But they typically lack a crucial dimension. With a few recent exceptions, they have ignored the presence and roles of arts, culture, and creativity—essential factors in community-building processes. As a result, existing conceptions of neighborhoods, their conditions, and their dynamics remain incomplete and, thus, inadequate.

Without taking into consideration the roles of arts, culture and creativity in communities, existing conceptions of neighborhood dynamics and conditions are inadequate.

Charged with the task of beginning to fill this gap, ACIP has had to confront some very basic questions: How are arts, culture, and creativity defined, presented, and valued at the neighborhood level? What should be measured and why? What neighborhood-level data are already available for this purpose? What kinds of information need to be collected?

Our research strategy required that we go to both conventional and unconventional sources to address these questions. Specifically, we consulted existing literature on related topics and talked to people who we thought were likely to gather and maintain information about the issues that concerned us—researchers, funders, arts administrators—but we also consulted artists, residents, and community-building practitioners who have firsthand experience with art-based programs in their daily lives. We grouped these questions into two major parts. The first part focused on (a) how arts and culture are viewed by people engaged in promoting art at the community level and by community residents themselves, and (b) to what extent people engaged in community building use arts and culture in their work. The opinions of respondents were solicited through in-person interviews and focus group discussions in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Cleveland, Denver, Los Angeles, Oakland, Providence, and Washington, D.C.[5] In all these cities except Los Angeles and Chicago the field work was conducted in collaboration with the Urban Institute's National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP) affiliates. In Los Angeles it was conducted in collaboration with staff from *The Participation Project: Artists, Communities and Cultural Citizenship*, a study sponsored by the Getty Research Institute. In

We consulted existing literature and talked to those—researchers, funders, arts administrators—who maintain information about the issues that concern us. We also consulted people artists, residents, community-building practitioners with first-hand experience of art-based programs.

Chicago it was conducted in collaboration with staff from the Chicago Center for Cultural Policy at Columbia College. To learn about the actual use of arts and culture in community building, ACIP staff conducted organizational document review and some on-site examinations of the actual activities pursued by selected members of the National Community Building Network (NCBN) and other selected community-building initiatives around the country.[6]

In the in-person interviews and the focus groups, community builders, arts administrators, funders/policymakers, and artists were asked to discuss their views of how arts and culture were defined, present, and valued in the neighborhoods in which they worked. They were also asked to discuss any ways in which they documented cultural participation and the possible impacts of such engagement. Residents in the study communities were asked to discuss the possible presence of arts and culture in their neighborhoods and the ways in which they defined arts and culture. They were also asked to discuss their views about how and if they valued such activity, and about what conditions have to be in place in order for neighborhood arts and cultural activity to thrive. Respondents were identified with the assistance of staff from agencies involved in the NNIP and related projects, and through referrals from people at the national level who have knowledge of community arts organizations and activities around the country.[7]

The second part of our research strategy focused on identifying existing and potential uses of arts and culture–related data for the purposes of developing neighborhood indicators. Information about existing data sets and data collection practices was gathered through document review and phone interviews with staff from foundations, public arts agencies (national, state, regional, and local), and arts-related professional and trade associations, as well as large cultural institutions such as museums and theaters. ACIP staff were responsible for collecting this information from large museums and theaters, and from

community-related arts organizations. The RMC Research Corporation was responsible, on behalf of ACIP, for collecting the same information from foundations, arts agencies, and arts trade and professional associations (Dwyer and Frankel 1996). Some of the information gathered through the previously described in-person interviews with arts professionals also proved useful in this context.

Summary Findings

We found myriad examples of how arts and cultural participation (broadly defined) are important elements of community life and essential components of community-building processes. Arts and cultural expressions—music, songs, murals, sculpture, stories—often embody the history, hopes, frustrations, and aspirations of a community. Arts and cultural practices, moreover, frequently intersect with other community processes and are deeply embedded in them. Theater and dance can be central to youth development programs. Storytelling is often a key part of community organizing efforts. Cultural heritage initiatives are often anchors for economic development initiatives and key activities in efforts to improve public safety (Cleveland 2000; President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities 1997; Weitz 1996). Still, despite ample evidence of such practices and a maturing field of community arts, we found little articulated theory and scant data about arts and cultural participation at the neighborhood level. The fields of anthropology, folklore, and cultural studies provide rich case studies of arts and cultural practices in communities, but these studies are typically done in isolation from, and independent of, current policy issues or debates (Peterson 1996). With the exception of some research on economic impacts of the arts and arts impacts on education outcomes, there is little theoretical or empirical research that speaks to how arts and cultural participation contribute to social dynamics (Wyszomirski 1996).

We found myriad examples of how arts and cultural participation are important elements of community life and community-building processes, but little theoretical or empirical research that speaks to how arts and cultural participation contribute to social dynamics.

Our search for formal data collection among foundations and arts and cultural agencies found a lot of data about funding, audience, and facilities in general. But data collection practices are inconsistent, vary in their sophistication, and yield information that is frequently not comparable across organizations or reporting levels (national, state, regional, and local).[8] Nor are they anchored in any consensus about how the information is to be collected and used. The information typically centers on grant requirements, attitudes and opinions about the arts, audience participation, and organizational financial conditions. There is little indication that data collection is guided by any underlying conceptualization about the societal value of arts and culture. Data collection practices are also based on narrow definitions of art and cultural participation that exclude many, if not most, arts and culture activities that our field research revealed are experienced and valued at the community level. The inevitable result is that the information available in existing databases and data repositories overemphasizes arts and cultural activity in formal venues (both nonprofit and commercial). Such a bias hides the many less institutionalized ways that communities experience arts, culture, and creativity.

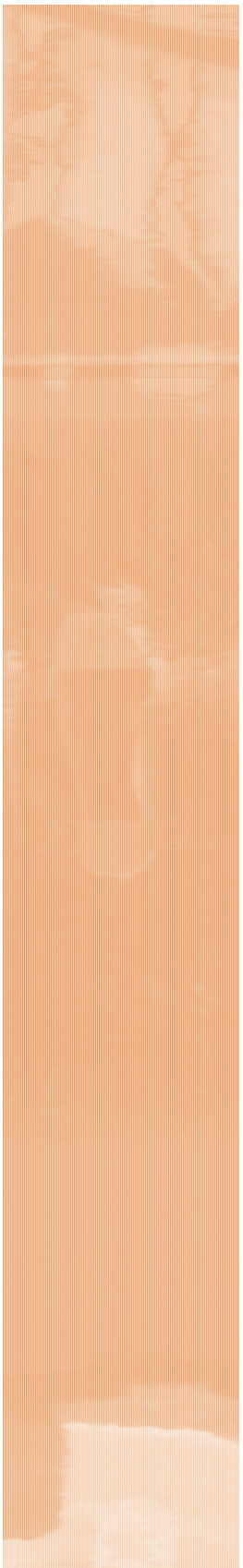
ACIP has shared its fieldwork and document research with ACIP affiliates and in numerous professional conferences and meetings. All have helped us refine our initial ideas about the theories, language, and methods needed to address the deficiencies we identified.

Episodic surveys and research efforts illustrate the kinds of activity routinely missed. A survey of informal arts groups conducted by the San Francisco Foundation, for example, revealed over 100 ethnic dance companies in the northern California bay area. The Tennessee Arts Commission identified more than 300 active bluegrass, gospel, and blues groups in that state. A blues magazine identified 140 annual blues festivals in the United States, most organized by volunteers (President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities 1997). The conclusion is clear. Existing formal data and research about arts and culture in communities are not an adequate base on which to build meaningful neighborhood indicators. However, case studies of community arts, informal data collection practices, and practitioners' stories about the

value of arts and culture in the field—while themselves inadequate for developing neighborhood indicators—provide a rich base for future work.

For several years now, ACIP has been sharing its field work and document research on an ongoing basis—along with its emerging conclusions—in a series of workshops with ACIP affiliates. Additionally, the material has been presented and vetted in numerous professional conferences and meetings in fields of research and policy. As noted, these include applied researchers in the social sciences and humanities, community builders, policymakers (including funders), arts administrators, and artists. All these people—through a process of idea development, debate, and application—have helped us refine our initial ideas about the theories, language, and methods needed to address the research and data deficiencies we identified. The next two sections, respectively, present (1) a set of guiding principles for the treatment of arts, culture, and creativity in neighborhoods and (2) a conceptual framework for research and measurement in this area of which our guiding principles are a part.

Guiding Principles



Development of the four guiding principles to be presented in this section had its beginning in the need to find language that would allow us to communicate with others about the type of neighborhood creativity we wished to capture in the context of community building. Consistent with existing practices in the neighborhood development field that emphasize building on community assets, we wished to capture any and all assets related to creativity or artistic endeavor that people find valuable in their own communities and neighborhoods. But we had to wrestle with how to express this in a way that is at once self-explanatory and relatively simple. We found out very early on that the term "art" was not adequate. This finding is not unique to us. Debates about the definition of art have been raging inconclusively for decades, so much so that in recent years interest has been growing, nationally and internationally, in using more populist notions that include "informal" arts or arts in the "unincorporated sector." As is reflected in our project title—Arts and Culture Indicators in Community Building Project—ACIP began its work with the phrase "arts and culture." But even this, we learned in the early stages of our field work, did not do the job well enough. The terms we now rely on mostly are culture and creativity. They encompass art and have been received favorably by our affiliates. They allow us to formulate a set of guiding principles in language that really does reflect the concept we wish to eventually capture in our neighborhood indicator measures.

Our approach grew from insights gained in the early stages of our field research. One cannot enter a community and expect to understand how art and culture are defined, present, and valued by looking only for conventional art-specific venues; by counting audience attendance at particular events; or even by including large-scale murals or public sculptures. So we went to in-person interviews and focus group discussions to help us uncover a wider range of artistic expression. The pilot focus group discussions we conducted with neighborhood residents in Oakland,

Calif., taught us a great deal. For most focus group participants, the label "art" (and to a lesser extent "culture") carried immediate connotations that automatically excluded many expressions of creativity that are present in communities. Unless respondents were given the opportunity to question what that label represents, they typically assumed that "art" did indeed apply only to those things or activities that exist or happen in places like museums, galleries, and theaters. Some respondents, for this reason, were quick to say they had no art or culture in their communities, simply because they did not have these kinds of venues. When respondents were given the opportunity to reflect on a wide array of community-based "expressions of creativity" that they found "moving," "challenging," "inspiring," "provocative," or "beautiful," however, and were *then* asked to discuss examples of art and culture in their communities, the discussions were colorful and illustrative.

Being able to reassess the terms used freed respondents to talk about a wide range of expressions. Often they extended the term art to include not only activities in formal cultural venues, but also expressions such as religious and ancestral altars, landscaping in homes, street murals, some graffiti, art cars and low riders, local bands and dance groups (often ethnic-specific), church choirs, storytelling, preaching, personal decoration (hair, dress, body art), food (special dishes), and activities related to various festivals and parades (Cinco de Mayo, Dia de los Muertos, Juneteenth, Obon). It was not the purpose of the focus group discussions to explore rationales or attempt to reach consensus about what among the "artistic" activities they mentioned was "art" and what was not. But there was strong agreement that, regardless of what these creative activities were labeled, they were important aspects of community. The creative expressions they mentioned were generally viewed as community assets—often tied to other community-building processes—which were worth preserving and advancing.

These and similar findings from our field research, plus the series of workshop discussions with our ACIP affiliates, led to the development of four fundamental principles that together provide a multilayered and comprehensive guide for the treatment of arts, culture, and creativity in communities.

1. Definitions of art, culture, and creativity depend on the cultural values, preferences, and realities of residents and other stakeholders in a given community. Art, culture, and creativity at the neighborhood level often include the cultural expressions of ethnic, racial, age, and special interest groups that may not be validated or adequately represented in mainstream cultural institutions. Community residents in our field research expressed appreciation for a continuum of activities—amateur and professional, formal and informal—happening in arts-specific (e.g., theaters, galleries, and museums) and non-arts-specific places (e.g., community centers, church halls, parks, schools, libraries, restaurants, and night clubs).

When asked about "art," respondents said there was none in their neighborhoods, assuming the label "art" applied only to museums, galleries, and theaters. However, when encouraged to think beyond institutions and consider "expressions of creativity," respondents identified many community assets.

2. The concept of participation includes a wide array of ways in which people engage in arts, culture, and creative expression. Participation is not just attendance, observation, consumption, or even audience participation. It includes many other categories of action—making, doing, teaching, learning, presenting, promoting, judging, supporting—and spans many artistic disciplines. It can be amateur or professional, active or passive, individual or collective, continuous or episodic, public or private. And people can be motivated to participate in cultural activities for aesthetics and appreciation of the creative process as well as for other reasons.

3. Arts, culture, and creative expression are infused with multiple meanings and purposes simultaneously. At the neighborhood level, arts, cultural practices, and creativity are frequently valued for aesthetic and technical qualities, but they are also often embedded in or tied to other community processes. In Oakland, for example, young immigrant Mien women talked about the value of embroidery circles. The circles provided an

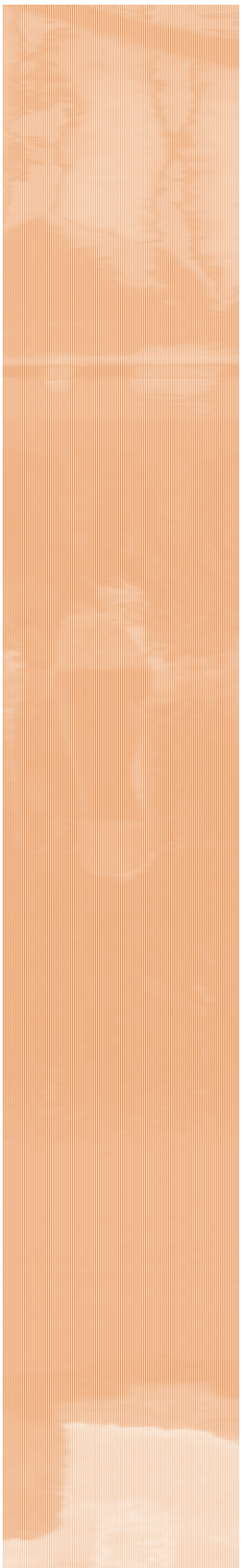
opportunity to hone their sewing and design techniques. But they were also important because they allowed for the transmission of heritage from one generation to the next and the interpretation of life in a new environment. In another example, residents in several cities said they valued neighborhood landscaping and gardening for various reasons. It was beautiful and people worked hard for it. It made the street look like the residents cared about their community. Gardens, moreover, were also expressions of ethnic identity, given the different culturally specific methods of gardening used.

The ACIP principles (a) capture the potential breadth, depth, and value of neighborhood arts, cultural participation, and creativity, (b) make it easier to see connections between cultural activity and community-building processes, and (c) suggest categories for research and measurement.

4. Opportunities for participation in arts, culture, and creative endeavor often rely on both arts-specific and non-arts-specific resources. At the neighborhood level, arts, culture, and creativity have many stakeholders. Not surprisingly, given that such activities intersect with other community processes and priorities, many arts and artistic activities at the neighborhood level are made possible through the collective efforts of both arts-specific and non-arts-specific entities. A church-based youth dance ensemble, for example, may rely on monetary and in-kind support not only from the church, but also from youth service organizations, artists, and arts organizations, among other sources. It is not unusual to see otherwise dissimilar organizations coming together to bring opportunities for cultural engagement to fruition.

The principles presented here perform three valuable functions. First, they capture the potential breadth, depth, and value of arts, cultural participation, and creativity in neighborhoods. Second, they make it easier to see the possible connections between cultural activity and community-building processes. Third, and perhaps most important for our purposes here, they suggest possible categories for research and measurement, as discussed in the next section.

Conceptual Framework

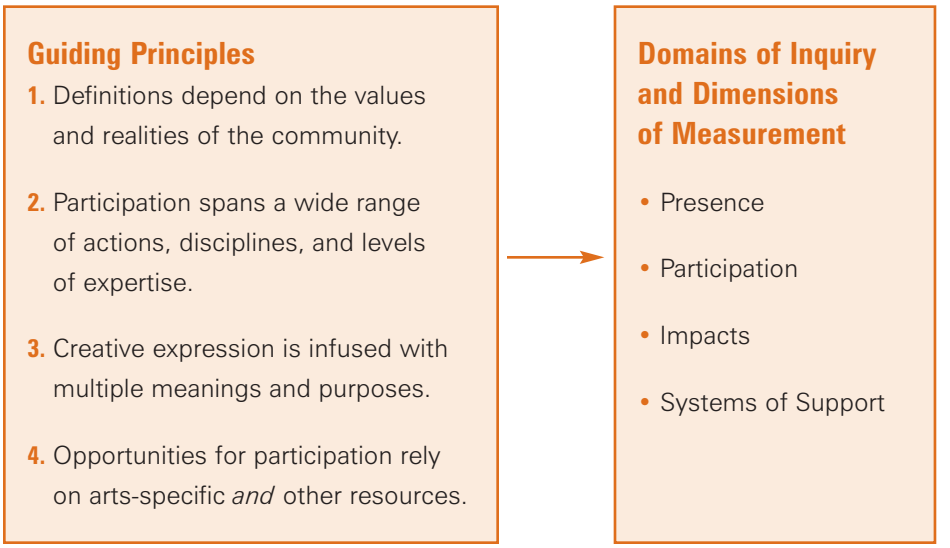


While the guiding principles laid out in the previous section provide a way of *identifying* all the facets of neighborhood arts, culture, and creativity ACIP is interested in, we still need a systematic way of *describing* them—qualitatively for the purposes of conceptualization and theory building, and quantitatively for the purpose of measuring them in comparable ways and eventually building neighborhood indicators. Combining our guiding principles and the findings from our field research yields a framework for this purpose. This framework (see exhibit A) consists of four parameters that serve as domains of inquiry (for conceptualization and classification) and measurement (for documentation, data gathering, and eventual indicator development)

- **Presence:** The existence of whatever creative expressions a given community defines and values as community assets.
- **Participation:** The many ways in which people participate in these creative expressions (as creators, teachers, consumers, supporters, etc.).
- **Impacts:** The contribution of these creative expressions and participation in them to community-building outcomes (neighborhood pride, stewardship of place, interracial and interethnic tolerance, improved public safety, etc.).
- **Systems of Support:** The resources (financial, in-kind, organizational, and human) required to bring opportunities for participation in these creative expressions to fruition.

We discuss each of these four domains in turn, reviewing the strengths and limitations of research and data collection practices pursued in each and highlighting promising practices. The discussion is not meant to be exhaustive. Our intent, rather, is to provide a brief overview to serve as the basis for future development.

Exhibit A: Conceptual Framework for Arts and Culture Research and Measurement



Presence of Arts and Cultural Opportunities

How does one go about capturing the presence of the complex set of activities indicated in our four guiding principles and representing them in their proper context? If, for example, a community has indicated that ethnic dance—present in local churches, social service clubs, and festivals—is an important cultural asset (a) because it is beautiful and moving, but also (b) because it is key to the celebration of ethnic identity, or (c) because it is tied to community empowerment programs, how can one capture this and represent it adequately? Our research suggests that a promising approach is a cultural inventory—the most usual form of chronicling a community's cultural assets—that combines quantitative and qualitative approaches.

Cultural inventories are typically lists or directories that catalog the presence of art and cultural organizations or resources. Because such inventories are a widespread way to depict and represent the presence of arts and culture, they provide insights into how practitioners and researchers address the questions in which we are interested. In our review of cultural inventories we considered two questions: How are cultural

inventories conducted? Who conducts them and what role do residents of a community play in defining the criteria by which things are included or excluded?[9]

To address these questions, we looked at anthropological, sociological, and cultural studies related to documenting cultural activities. We then engaged in a national search and collected sample cultural inventory methods and products from the early 1980s to the present.[10] We included inventories that were self-described or titled as a cultural inventory.[11] Our approach involved analyzing both content and inventory presentation format.

Our content analysis revealed several types of cultural inventories. One type focuses on the natural environment, such as reservoir areas and archaeological resources. Another type, which includes an anthropological/ethnographic approach, identifies ruins, historic structures, and plants and animals in terms of how they are used, and therefore how culturally significant they are to the people who live in that area.[12] A third, the most common, is characterized by lists of art and cultural organizations in a specific geographic area.[13] A fourth type includes descriptions of the art or cultural activities, encompassing a broader range of cultural activity that sometimes includes individual folk artists (such as storytellers) as well as local folk traditions.[14]

We found, as noted above, that most inventories tended to emphasize cultural venues using traditional definitions such as theaters or auditoriums where plays, dance, music, and other performances or exhibits take place. Typically missing were what ACIP terms *indigenous venues of validation*, which may include community centers, church halls, parks, libraries, and business establishments—locations where art and cultural opportunities are often present.[15] Also missing was any reference to the context in which the resource or activity currently exists or any references to its possible historical significance.

In addition to the content analysis, ACIP researchers distinguished among different product types or representation formats, ranging from directories to maps and from paper to web-based versions. We found paper-based directories to have the advantage of providing similar information about formal entities that is relatively straightforward and inexpensive to collect and update across many organizations. However, most of them, both directory and map formats, consisted of listing organizations' addresses and, to a limited extent, describing their cultural program offerings.[16] In general, the web-based inventories shared similar characteristics as the paper-based formats with the added advantage of allowing database searches of organizations and cultural activities.[17] We found no examples of web-based inventories that took full advantage of the video and audio capabilities of the web's digital platform.

Most cultural inventories overlooked what ACIP terms *indigenous venues of validation*—places such as community counters, Church halls, parks, libraries, and business establishments were arts and cultural opportunities are often present.

Our review confirmed that most conventional forms of conducting cultural inventories and representing their findings fall far short of what is possible. They overlook much cultural activity as envisioned in ACIP's guiding principles. They are not rooted in local values. And they overemphasize the obvious characteristics of the built environment, rarely acknowledging embedded artwork or creative activity.

Fortunately, existing technology can advance the development of more comprehensive cultural inventories that currently exist.[18] A web-based cultural inventory to reflect the presence of art and cultural opportunities at the neighborhood level, for example, has great potential. The ideal process for developing such an inventory would do the following:

- Combine quantitative and qualitative methods.
- Include stakeholders such as artists, residents, and community cultural workers.
- Incorporate a participatory definitional approach.
- Take full advantage of the web's searchable interactive digital capabilities, such as linking graphics, audio, and video.

This "hypermedia" format could then reflect spatial dimensions via cultural asset maps, temporal dimensions via oral histories of individuals and neighborhoods, and physical dimensions via architectural histories.[19] In addition to providing recurring data collected consistently and reliably, the inventory would feature neighborhood-level information with multiple uses (for example, both community education and cultural tourism). The inventory would also enable a community feedback loop via public postings and discussions about the use and impacts of art and culture in the area.

Of course, such web-based inventories are expensive to develop and maintain, and require technical skills and resources that are not readily available in all communities. Still, if a particular community finds such a strategy out of range of its resources, there are other promising efforts to better document cultural activities. These include one or more of the following methods: ethnography, participatory research, surveys, and computer-aided data collection. Local ACIP affiliates active in this domain of inquiry are experimenting with newly adapted inventory methods.

Examples of successful efforts that embrace local values include a variety of qualitative approaches ranging from ethnographic research to community meetings. In Chicago, for example, anthropologists used ethnographic research to develop a dozen case studies in several neighborhoods, documenting the experiences and stories of individuals engaged in a variety of creative pursuits.[20] In Boston, researchers used "digital storytelling" to document on digital video the personal narratives of residents describing their cultural identities and expressions in their neighborhoods.[21] Such innovative practices focused on individuals lead to a deeper recognition of the extent of arts and cultural opportunities available in a neighborhood.

Broader initiatives involving participatory research can help clarify the relationship of creative activities to community-building processes as

well as serve as the basis for the development of appropriate data collection tools. The Boston Community Building Network, for example, convened both neighborhood focus groups and city-wide discussions on the definitions and meanings of art and culture to civic life.[22] The result was inclusion of a narrative analysis of broad indicators about "art and cultural life" alongside other traditional community indicators (e.g., economy, housing, education) in a report offering a current assessment and future vision for Boston (Boston Community Building Network and City of Boston 2000). The Network also worked with several local partners to create more effective ways of identifying venues that community leaders have identified as important cultural assets. One outcome of this effort was development of the Greater Boston Cultural Resources Survey. This was mailed to several hundred organizations asking about the locations and descriptions of festivals, culturally themed restaurants and shops, and buildings and works of art that have cultural meaning.[23] Such approaches are still relatively rare, however, compared with the more conventional initiatives we have described.

Our review confirmed that most conventional forms of cultural inventories fall far short of what is possible. They overlook much cultural activity. They are not rooted in local values. And they overemphasize the obvious characteristics of the built environment.

Participation

The many forms of participation, in addition to simply being in an audience, are well captured by an example from Zumix, a music-focused community arts organization in East Boston. Reflecting on how the organization might be considered an asset to the community, agency staff described to us an instance in which Central American immigrant women living in the community approached Zumix about using the organization's space to teach dances from Central America. Staff agreed to let the women use the space and helped them with their efforts. The women recruited neighborhood children to participate in the classes and eventually decided to put on a show for the community. To do this they needed materials for costumes, background scenery, etc. Strapped for cash, the women and staff from the organization approached local vendors to make cash or in-kind contributions to bring the show to fruition.

The performance took place and families, friends, and neighbors attended. So how did people participate? The women and their students were involved in making, teaching, and learning art. The staff from the music organization and local vendors supported the endeavor with resources. Families, friends, and neighbors participated as audience members.

Comprehensive documentation of the multitudinous ways in which people engage in cultural activities would surely improve our understanding of community dynamics—volunteerism, giving, organizing, civic engagement. The breadth, depth, and range of cultural participation in U.S. communities are seldom fully documented, however. The most common ways of documenting or measuring arts and cultural participation involve audience counts—filled seats—and periodic household surveys that also focus primarily on attendance at cultural events. Moreover, most efforts to document these forms of participation are based on definitions that exclude many activities practiced in neighborhoods that ACIP's guiding principles would encompass. Missing, for example, are the creative expressions that may be observed in public parks (drumming), in subways (singing or playing live music), on street corners (impromptu dance), or in private homes (sewing circle, amateur photography, decorative gardening, poetic writing). Optimal practices, in contrast, would consider various categories of engagement in both traditional and nontraditional cultural venues, as well as the nature of the participation. Is it ongoing or episodic? Do people participate as individuals or as groups? Is participation formal or informal? Why do people engage? Do motives for engagement change or evolve over time?

Unlike the other domains of inquiry in our framework, the meaning and significance of cultural participation has been the subject of a long historical debate. This debate has often been cast in elitist-populist terms as sets of dichotomies: high and low, formal and informal, fine and folk,

classic and popular, professional and amateur, and the like.[24] ACIP research suggests that these are false dichotomies that oversimplify the broad array of participation forms. Our view is in line with other researchers' recent criticism of narrow interpretations of cultural participation and with emerging research efforts that offer richer ways to frame arts practice and participation. Peters and Cherbo (1998) argue, for example, that the cultural policy community has mostly focused on arts participation in the not-for-profit and for-profit sectors and has neglected the "unincorporated arts" as a third sector. They argue that one consequence has been an undercounting of cultural participation. According to them, expanding the definition of cultural engagement increases cultural participation rates from 80 percent to more than 95 percent of adult Americans.[25]

The significance of cultural participation has been the subject of long debate, often cast in elitist-populist terms: high/low, formal/informal, fine/folk, classic/popular, professional/amateur. ACIP research suggests that these are false dichotomies that oversimplify the broad array of participation forms.

Recent evidence supports this view. In a national study by the Urban Institute, for example, researchers examined rates of attendance at live arts and cultural events using both "narrow" and "broad" definitions of art and culture.[26] Based on a telephone survey of 2,400 households in five communities, researchers found that a broad view of cultural participation resulted in estimates about 20 percent higher than a narrow definition. Kansas City's cultural participation rate, for example, increased from 65 percent to 84 percent.[27] The study also revealed that many of the people who participated in narrowly defined arts and cultural forms also participated in broader ways. Furthermore, the broad definition resulted in 60 percent higher participation rates among people in the poorest and least-white community as compared to rates using narrow and arguably "elitist" definitions.

Broad definitions of participation, not surprisingly, also show many more informal organizations engaged in such efforts than do narrow definitions. A recent national study by the RAND Corporation examined the profit, nonprofit, and "amateur" sectors of arts organizations. It revealed that activities in the "amateur" sector accounted for about 30 percent or

more of all activities among arts organizations, and the fastest growth in some areas (McCarthy et al. 2001).

Moreover, formal arts organizations themselves appear to be involved in a wider set of cultural activities when asked about expanded forms of participation. For example, RAND researchers recently applied a broader cultural participation framework in a survey of 102 arts organizations across the nation (McCarthy and Jinnett 2001). While 51 percent of the organizations could be described as traditionally "canon-focused" (i.e., supporting the canons of specific art forms), the broader participation approach revealed that another 35 percent were "community-focused" (i.e., using arts as a vehicle to improve communities) and the remaining 14 percent were "creativity-focused" (i.e., engaging individuals in the creative process).

To develop better information about cultural participation, ACIP work includes enhancing the data collection practices of arts-related organizations at the community level in order to create tools and methods that can be adopted or adapted by other practitioners in the field.

Emerging local research confirms these national findings about the pervasiveness of creative participation broadly defined. Researchers from the Chicago Center for Arts Policy at Columbia College (an ACIP affiliate), for example, recently conducted a study investigating involvement in the informal arts in Chicago.[28] They visited 86 neighborhood sites (67 within the city limits and 19 in surrounding suburbs) and examined community newspapers, posters, flyers, and similar postings collected from venues such as grocery stores, churches, libraries, park offices, and coffee shops. Analysis determined that artistic events—including visual arts, architecture, dance, theater, and multimedia—accounted for more than half of the posted activities in almost two-thirds of the sites. Focus groups, personal interviews, and year-long ethnographic studies about the motivation, behavior, and extent of participation in informal arts were also part of the study. People from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds in different neighborhoods were found to participate in the informal arts. In the process, many of them expended considerable amounts of their own time and resources in activities such as purchasing materials, taking classes, and drawing upon social resources through

networks of family, friends, and other artists—in addition to organizational resources provided by churches, libraries, and parks (Wali, Severson, and Longoni 2000).

Further evidence of extensive cultural participation across different communities comes from a series of studies conducted by the Social Impacts of the Arts Project at the University of Pennsylvania (another ACIP affiliate) (Seifert and Stern 1999; Stern and Seifert 1997, 1998). These researchers surveyed residents in five Philadelphia neighborhoods about their participation in 17 local and regional arts and cultural activities.[29] Overall, 80 percent of all respondents said they had participated in a cultural activity in the previous year, 69 percent had attended at least one neighborhood cultural event, and 60 percent had gone to at least one regional cultural event.[30] There was also a strong relationship between local and regional arts participation, with eight of ten regional cultural participants also attending neighborhood events. Poorer neighborhoods had relatively higher local cultural participation rates and lower regional participation rates than average.[31]

In an effort to develop better information about cultural participation in neighborhoods, ACIP work also includes enhancing the data collection practices of arts-related organizations at the community level. Such organizations are often the main source of information about local arts participation. Our work in this domain has been geared toward creating tools and methods that can be adopted or adapted by other practitioners in the community arts and community-building fields. We have collaborated with two local agencies in East Los Angeles: Self-Help Graphics and Arts, Inc., a community-based visual arts organization, and Proyecto Pastoral, a programming division of the Dolores Mission serving mostly public housing residents. All organizations were involved in a collaboration to produce three community celebrations and the preparatory activities leading up to them: *Dia de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead, an All Souls Day celebration), *Dia de la Virgen de Guadalupe* (Day of Our Lady

of Guadalupe, patron saint of Mexico and prominent saint in other parts of Latin America), and *Posadas* (Mexican-style Christmas celebrations).[32] We have also worked in Oakland, Calif., with the East Bay Institute for Urban Arts and in the San Francisco Bay Area with the Community Network for Youth Development and some of its affiliates. Over a two-year period, ACIP sponsored a collaborative research effort involving arts-based youth development practitioners, youth, artists, researchers, and funders. Work with these organizations focused on better understanding participation and its relationship to social capital-building processes. In both Los Angeles and Northern California, we helped the organizations reconsider their documentation practices and created new tools and methods for documenting various aspects of participation.[33]

A broader conception reveals that Americans are more deeply and widely engaged in cultural/creative activities than previously suggested. Furthermore, field research, ethnographies, and surveys are finding cultural participation in multiple forms in many different types of neighborhoods.

In Los Angeles, ACIP work involved creating a registration process for people participating in various arts-based programs, as well as internal program evaluation tools and practices that document the involvement of volunteers and collaborating organizations.[34] For an additional means of more comprehensively capturing cultural participation, staff at Self-Help are currently working with ACIP to develop *community curatorial procedures* (discussed in more detail in the next section). ACIP's work in Los Angeles to date reveals both a fuller range of cultural involvement and more connections to community-building efforts than previously identified. For example, we found a *continuum of cultural opportunities* in community art-making events, such as mask-making and altar-making workshops tied to the Mexican *Dia de los Muertos* festival. In these settings, an individual's participation could shift among many roles and span different levels of expertise—from creator to spectator, from critic to teacher. At the same time, researchers observed that some participants (such as community artists) also acted as facilitators, forging links between neighborhood-based art-making and other kinds of civic engagement, such as community organizing and mural painting.[35]

To sustain such efforts, the organization has adopted changes in its institutional and program policies as well as in employees' job descriptions.

In Northern California, ACIP collaborators have addressed participation, not only by reconsidering existing practices in documenting individual participation in programs (which were already quite thorough), but also by becoming more conscious of the relationships they rely on to do their work. Staff members from several arts-based youth development programs have created processes to document the various collaborators (formal and informal) that make their work possible and in doing so have pushed forward our understanding of a particular category of participant: supporter.

ACIP research found a *continuum of cultural opportunities* where individual participation ranged from creator to spectator, critic to teacher, and facilitator to leader.

To summarize: Accepting an expanded notion of cultural participation has important implications for national survey researchers, as well as funders, practitioners, and policymakers of arts and community development. Recent national studies suggest that a broader conception of participation reveals that Americans are more deeply and widely engaged in cultural and creative activities than previous research suggested. Furthermore, local researchers conducting qualitative and quantitative work are finding that cultural participation takes place in multiple ways in many different types of neighborhoods. However, there is considerable variation across communities in the rates of involvement in cultural activities. At the same time, documentary practices among organizations to track cultural participation in communities remain a challenge, although promising examples are emerging.

Impacts

The direct impacts of arts, culture, and creative expression on communities—particularly the roles participation plays in communities—are not, for the most part, either well documented or understood in the arts or community-building fields.[36] A few other fields have extensive literature on the impacts of the arts, however. Most of the existing research on

the impacts of artistic activities focuses on the educational impacts of arts activities on student learning and educational outcomes. Overall, this research shows that educational achievement is higher among people who study or practice the arts.[37] A related area of research suggests that art and cultural participation contribute to youth development by improving problem-solving abilities, communication skills, and self-esteem.[38] Moving beyond individual-level impacts toward societal impacts, another area of research concerns the economic impacts of the arts at the city, regional, state and national levels.[39] These economic impacts studies examine how much the arts create jobs, increase the local tax base, boost tourism, spur growth in related businesses (e.g., hotels, restaurants, printing shops) and improve the overall quality of life for cities and towns.[40] Moreover, recent research suggests that cities and regions with higher levels arts/culture/creativity also experience increased economic growth rates and competitiveness (Florida, 2002). Even with such narrow definitions, these types of studies provide strong evidence that the arts make positive contributions to education, youth development, and local economies.

In addition to the evidence on the *direct* impacts of artistic activities on individuals and communities, there is also research with the potential to better describe the *indirect* social effects of arts, culture, and creativity in neighborhoods. These include identifying *community assets* and their significant role in community building (McKnight and Kretzman 1991; Kretzman and McKnight 1993), *social capital* research suggesting that a broad array of civic activities promotes a stronger civil society and democratic engagement,[41] and research on whether a community's characteristics influence *individual behavior*.[42] Our literature review indicates that, with a few exceptions, these research approaches have so far overlooked arts and culture as a major influence and neglected the unique and considerable role they can play. Extending those three research areas to explicitly include arts, culture, and creativity could substantially increase understanding about their contribution to community life.[43]

While we lack adequate theory and data on the impacts of arts and culture on communities, it is important to note that researchers and others concerned with this issue are not exactly starting from scratch. ACIP field research in cities around the country revealed that there is a great deal of wisdom from the field that has great potential when harvested fully. Community arts practice has a long tradition, and we have found that many practitioners operate their programs with well-developed assumptions about the impacts of their efforts.[44] However, frequently mired in the tasks of running nonprofit organizations, community arts practitioners seldom have time to codify the premises that guide their work. As a result, these assumptions often go unarticulated and are omitted from the type of theory that can guide systematic research and data collection efforts.[45] Extensive documentation exists, complete with anecdotes, stories, and testimonials to the varied contributions of arts and creative activities to both individual and community development. Yet, without a firm theoretical base and appropriate methods to anchor this material to that base, such narrative evidence cannot lead to generalizable conclusions. This is especially problematic in a public policy context where analysis is heavily reliant on social science methods concerned with establishing causal relationships.

ACIP field research and literature reviews suggest a list of potentially important impacts that participation in arts, culture, and creativity at the neighborhood level may have. It may contribute, directly or indirectly, to

- supporting civic participation and social capital;
- catalyzing economic development;
- improving the built environment;
- promoting stewardship of place;
- augmenting public safety;
- preserving cultural heritage;
- bridging cultural/ethnic/racial boundaries;
- transmitting cultural values and history; and
- creating group memory and group identity.

A review of activity in the National Community Building Network in the late 1990s reveals many examples of connections between arts or creative expression and community building. In Atlanta, The Problem Solving Theater, a youth performance troupe, taught young people about healthy choices and decisionmaking around issues such as teen pregnancy and AIDS. Baltimore's Community Building in Partnership sponsored a community arts festival to celebrate the arts heritage of the Sandtown neighborhood, and through its economic development activity made afro-centric products available to the community through the Avenue Market, one of its local economic development ventures. Little Rock's New Futures for Little Rock funded the Umoja Theater as an after-school program providing a tutoring and life skills program, visual arts, and drama classes, and an opportunity to beautify the neighborhood by creating a billboard about peace. All these illustrate the types of arts impacts that help build community. Some promising studies on social impacts of the arts have been launched in recent years, but many of them are still in early stages.[46]

Extensive anecdotes, stories, and testimonials document the contributions of arts/creative activities to both individual and community development. Yet, without a firm theoretical base and methods to anchor evidence to that base, such narrative documentation cannot lead to generalizable conclusions.

The fundamental challenge is that theoretical and measurement clarity is crucial to the task of identifying the social effects of arts, culture, and creativity as ACIP defines it. But the very broadness of the definition—and the fact that arts, culture, and creativity are operating in an environment in which many other factors are operating simultaneously (as is true of most indicators)—vastly complicates the task of pinpointing the contribution of the arts-related activities to the overall impacts observed.

Researchers should not confuse searching for clarity with expecting to find simplicity. There are two main theoretical and methodological challenges to documenting arts/culture/creativity impacts. The first is having definitions that are either too narrow to capture what we are looking for or too broad for policy use. The second is trying to establish simple causal relationships in an area that is inherently complex—with many interacting forces and about which not enough is yet known to justify

efforts to build formal causal models, even complex ones. ACIP's Impacts Domain addresses these challenges by proposing a middle-range approach. It acknowledges the complexity and interrelationships of arts/culture/creativity in neighborhoods, but offers a bounded conception based on strong suggestive evidence of the relationships of arts/culture/creativity to neighborhood quality of life characteristics.

Through its work with local affiliates—community builders, artists, and arts administrators—ACIP has been working on the task of building grounded theory, developing data collection instruments, and actually collecting data about the potential contributions of cultural participation to various aspects of community life. The following examples illustrate our approach.

In Northern California, working with the East Bay Institute for Urban Arts and the Community Network for Youth Development, ACIP explored the contributions of arts-based youth development programs to increased civic/community participation (i.e., involvement in a range of informal and formal community associational and political activities). The group's main methodological approach involved adopting a "collaborative inquiry" process that emphasized sharing experiences and developing narrative "portraiture" that explored multiple dimensions of social capital.[47] One product was the creation of specific categories of social capital impacts that were useful as common language and concepts, and as a way to chart community-building relationships and networks.[48] For example, a matrix was developed that charted along one dimension individual-level "private" and interpersonal-level "public" types of social capital and along the other examples of these two types of social capital for three categories: young people, adults, and organizations. An additional ACIP product was the creation of social network or "star" maps that visually graphed some of these community-building connections as a series of interpersonal and interorganizational relationships as seen by "connecting the dots" between people and organizations. While encountering several

Among various forms of participation ACIP has focused on *collective art making*—the process of creating art in a group setting for collective use.

challenges in its deliberations, the group process cultivated support for ongoing community discourse and continued testing and research.[49]

In Los Angeles, ACIP has been working with Self-Help Graphics and Proyecto Pastoral to identify the possible impacts of *collective art making*—created in group settings for collective use by the community. Art-making workshops were organized to create art pieces (visual, dance, and theater) to be used and/or displayed/performed during community celebrations. Through participant observation, interviews, and focus group discussions with repeat participants and event organizers, ACIP is working to identify a variety of outcomes associated with collective art-making experiences. The fruits of this endeavor so far include the creation of interview and focus group protocols that have been created collaboratively with staff from Self-Help, Proyecto, and ACIP, as well as a strategy for community curatorial processes that is in progress. Potential outcomes associated with involvement in collective art-making include individual impacts (such as leadership development and the development of problem-solving skills) as well as community impacts (including increase in neighborhood pride, creation of group identity, intergenerational bridging, and transmission of heritage from one generation to the next). Another outcome of collective art-making is the art itself, and its uses. *Community curatorial procedures* are intended to document the creative experience, the art product itself, and the uses of the products within the community. This effort includes the use of qualitative social science–based research methods to conduct interviews and focus group discussions, as well as the use of photography and video.

The need for better research and data about the social impacts and contributions of the arts, specifically within community-building contexts, is critical. But arriving at such data is not easy. As practitioners in the arts field are pressed to demonstrate the value of their work, the challenges inherent in documenting the social effects of arts and cultural participation are underscored. One challenge is that, given the sometimes

intangible and long-term nature of community arts activities and their possible impacts, documentation, especially quantification, can be difficult and expensive. Another challenge, as noted previously, is that there is little well-articulated theory. As a result, some practitioners and researchers making claims about the potential impacts of cultural participation on desirable social outcomes may fall into the trap of oversimplifying and overstating the causal relationships they wish to find. Such overemphasis on single-cause relationships can derail inquiries that may more appropriately identify ways in which cultural participation contributes, along with other social and economic dynamics, to particular outcomes.

There are two main theoretical and methodological challenges: 1) definitions that are too narrow to capture what we want or too broad for policy, and 2) looking for simple causal relationships when not enough is known to justify even complex formal modeling.

Systems of Support

The discussion of the previous domains of inquiry—presence, participation, and impacts—underscores that arts, culture, and creative expression in communities frequently intersect with other community processes and priorities. Not surprisingly, the production, dissemination, and validation of arts and culture at the neighborhood level are made possible through the contributions of many different kinds of stakeholders—collaborations and partnerships among various types of arts and non-arts entities. The network of relationships among these entities constitutes a system of support that is critical to a community's cultural vitality. Likewise, support systems for other issues—such as neighborhood revitalization, youth development, or crime prevention—are likely to have arts-focused players in them.

Community cultural procedures are one way to document the creative process, product, and use of work within the community.

Consider the following example, discussed earlier in another context. In Los Angeles, art-making workshops and culminating neighborhood celebrations were made possible through the collaboration among Self-Help Graphics (a visual arts organization), Proyecto Pastoral (a social service organization tied to the Dolores Mission Church), the base communities in the Aliso Pico Public Housing Development (organized faith-based groups of residents), the Dolores Mission Church School, the Aztlan

Cultural Center, individual artists, and the Getty Research Institute, among other organizations. Self-Help Graphics provided artists to teach arts practices, as did the base communities that had identified residents in the public housing development who had been trained in traditional arts related to the celebrations (i.e., altar-making, *papel picado* or chiseled paper, papier-mache). Self-Help Graphics consulted with the clergy of Dolores Mission Church and members of the base communities to identify themes that would inform the community art work. Dolores Mission School and Aztlan Cultural Center were sites for the arts workshops. And the Getty Research Institute provided resources (financial and staff) to help organize and to document the events as well as offset some of the program costs (i.e., staff and arts materials). As the ACIP and Getty collaborative study revealed, one of the outcomes of the workshops was that women from the public housing development had incorporated the making of *papel picado* into an anti-violence initiative involving mothers of gang members. Effectively, the entities involved in bringing the workshops and culminating celebrations to fruition were both arts-focused and non-arts focused—one of many indications that arts activity often intersects with community improvement efforts.

While such practices as those described above are long-standing, this comprehensive notion of arts and culture systems of support at the neighborhood level is a new area of research. There are no well-developed models of such systems to look to, nor theories about how such systems operate. However, through work with local affiliates, ACIP is beginning to identify the most likely players in these systems and discern important characteristics about collaborations among them.

Based on previous research conducted on comprehensive planning initiatives and on our recent ACIP work, as well as initial inquiries into similar collaborations around the country, we know that such collaborations can take a variety of forms.

- They can be imposed or organic—an arranged (sometimes shotgun) marriage orchestrated by some outside force, or a relationship based on mutually recognized strengths and needs.
- They can be formal or informal, based on specific organizational roles spelled out in a memorandum of understanding, or based on personal contacts and verbal interactions.
- They can be short or long term. A group of organizations may come together to sponsor or produce a one-time event, or a group of organizations may rely on each other year after year to bring to fruition something that for each satisfies community expectations and is central to its mission. Collaborations can also be reactive or proactive.
- They can be formed in response to crisis, or they may come together out of a shared vision for the future.

The best collaborations are purposeful and involve relationships that help achieve individual and collective goals. These relationships are created and evolve based on mutually recognized strengths and needs—and take the form and intensity that best facilitate the work.

In many cases, the relationships among the various players involved in bringing a cultural opportunity to fruition are taken for granted. In fact, one of the areas of concentration for ACIP work in the San Francisco Bay Area was to identify already existing relationships that were either necessary to bring art-based youth development practices to fruition, or the result of these practices. ACIP also discovered through the Bay Area work that the systems are dynamic—expanding and changing.

The best collaborations seem to be those that are purposeful and involve relationships that enable individual and collective goals to be achieved. These relationships come into being and evolve based on mutually recognized strengths and needs. Moreover, as suggested earlier, they take the form and intensity that best facilitates the work. Collaboration of this sort requires organizational flexibility, time, and patience, as well as staffing and resources, and sometimes mediation. These requirements are especially important because the organizations involved often have

different cultures of work and are beholden to different (and sometimes incompatible) standards for success and excellence.

In Los Angeles, for example, the main organizations collaborating to bring art-making workshops in preparation for community festivals to fruition—Self-Help Graphics, Proyecto Pastoral, and the Getty Research Institute (during the early phase)—over time reconciled some differences in language, technological capacity, bureaucratic processes, and evaluation and documentation standards and practices. They also found some ways to bridge differences in opinion about how their shared projects should grow and change, or not, given their own growing and changing individual organizational aspirations. Initially, despite the fact that the social service organization had many art-based programs, and the arts organization had been involved in the community for decades, people from the arts side had difficulty understanding priorities and language from the social service fields and vice versa. People from the arts field did not fully understand reporting requirements tied to social service grants. People in the social services field did not fully understand the needs and priorities related the creative process as led by artists and the presentation standards held by the arts organizations. Requirements related to specific arts supplies and presentation needs (including lighting, sound, and such) were unfamiliar. Joint debriefing sessions and openness among staff and leaders from the various agencies were key to surfacing and addressing these and similar tensions.

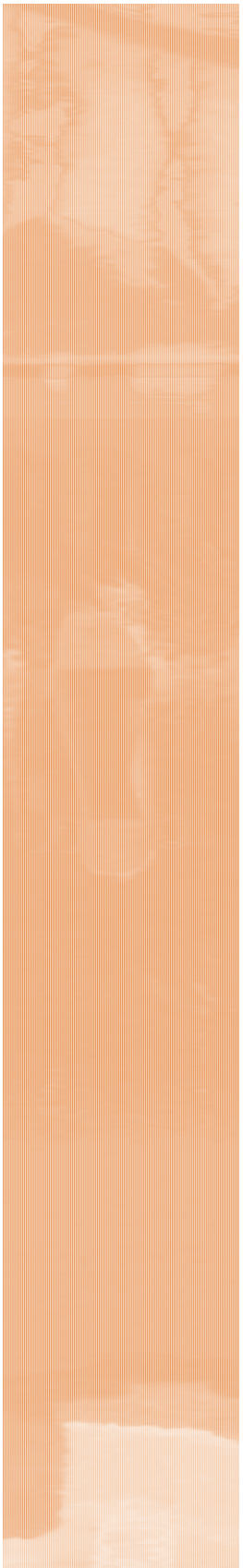
There are many tensions involved in such collaborations, particularly long-term collaborations, but over time, with patience, commitment, and (internal or sometimes external) mediation, the language and practice chasm can close or at least can become surmountable. People involved in the collaboration learn new languages, come to understand the priorities and resources of others, and in the process invent their own collective terms, practices, and standards of success. Such an outcome is optimal, but there are considerable obstacles in its way. New

hybrid measures of success, at times, can be at odds with standard methods of evaluation in particular fields. While the parties collaborating across disciplines or fields may create their own language and measures of success, some of the entities (often public and private funders) to which they are accountable are not aware of, or do not subscribe to, the new hybrid measures of success. Moreover, collaborations that rely largely on the commitment of specific individuals are at risk when those individuals leave organizations or become distracted by other duties.

Although the notion of arts and culture systems of support at the community level is still at a very early stage of development, what we know so far has implications for both practitioners and researchers. Practitioners can become more conscious of the ways in which they rely on collaborations to do their work and ask how their capacity to collaborate strategically might be strengthened. For researchers, a systems approach to understanding support for arts, culture, and creativity at the neighborhood level poses several conceptual and methodological challenges. First, there is likely to be a trade-off between a more complete picture of how things work at the local level and the ability to distinguish analytically among various discrete elements in a system. Second, a systems approach complicates establishing causal relationships and identifying impacts of community-based art activities. Third, pragmatic program evaluation and assessment becomes more difficult. Despite these challenges, an approach that recognizes more adequately the ways in which both arts and community building work in neighborhoods is imperative to any true understanding of the role of arts, culture, and creativity in communities.

Integration of ACIP principles and the collection of adequate data relies on recognizing the connections among community arts and cultural practices and other policy areas or aspects of community life.

Future Opportunities and Remaining Challenges



The guiding principles and conceptual framework presented here are useful stepping stones toward the grounded inclusion of arts, culture, and creativity as important dimensions of neighborhood well-being. But as we have suggested throughout this report, adhering to the guiding principles, and committing to the further development of the framework's domains of inquiry and measurement, pose both opportunities and challenges to community workers, policymakers, artists, arts administrators, and researchers alike. Adherence to the guiding principles reveals more adequately the presence, roles, and value of arts, culture, and creative expression at the neighborhood level, and expands common conceptions about who the stakeholders really are. At the same time it underscores the extent to which we have lacked common language, concepts, data, and tools to articulate, document, and advance the role and value of arts, culture, and creativity within the conventional cultural sector and across other community-related policy areas.

Correspondingly, commitment to the further development of the domains of inquiry and measurement brings into relief important considerations and questions about existing practices and resource allocation, some of which we have started to address here. It is certain that without the integration of community values and realities with corresponding data about community conditions and dynamics, cultural and community-related policies cannot expect to be successful. But the integration of such values and collection of data relies on rethinking how all parties involved do their work. This, in turn, requires recognizing the connections among community arts and cultural practices and other policy areas or aspects of community life. That said, researchers committed to better understanding neighborhood dynamics (particularly those focused primarily on arts and culture) have to reconsider the ways in which they conduct their work as well as the possible uses of the research and data they collect. Analysts must recognize that community residents, program

administrators, and artists are not merely subjects of research, but often partners in the creation and implementation of studies and data collection efforts. Practitioners—community workers, arts administrators, and artists—must recognize that harvesting their knowledge and experience in a systematic way is key to the creation of solid grounded theory that can guide research and policy that will further their efforts. More than merely recognizing this reality, they will have to be key players, along with researchers, in the collection of data that can serve as indicators. Policymakers and funders must acknowledge and facilitate this component of a practitioner's job, by incorporating resources to support theory development and data collection into grants for practitioners and program guidelines. Lastly, within the evolving understanding that arts, culture, and creativity play crucial roles in the continuing efforts to strengthen America's communities, policymakers and funders need to expand their thinking about strategic points of investment in this important dimension of a community's social fabric.

The production, dissemination, and validation of arts and culture are made possible through the contributions of many different stakeholders. The network of relationships among these entities constitutes a system of support that is critical to a community's cultural vitality.

Endnotes

[1] The National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP) is an Urban Institute-based applied research initiative to improve methods for developing new indicators, examining neighborhood dynamics, and facilitating the advancement and establishment of neighborhood indicator systems around the country. Currently NNIP includes partners in 12 cities across the nation.

[2] The full definition of neighborhood indicators, as developed in Kingsley (1996) is as follows: recurrently updated measures that allow one to describe societal conditions, track societal trends, and assess desired outcomes over time at the neighborhood level.

[3] Community building is a way of doing social improvement work that assumes that geographic neighborhoods matter; that problems are best addressed if defined by a broad spectrum of stakeholders; that sustainable solutions are based on knowing facts, building on assets, and a shared vision of improvement that includes social and economic equity; and that an independent community-based capacity for analysis, planning, action, and evaluation is key for success (adapted from Walsh 1997).

[4] Theories of change research involves the creation of theories about community dynamics by charting community leaders' decisionmaking processes (see Connell et al. 1995). Social capital research focuses on the dynamics of collective action and the creation of capacity to act collectively (see Putnam 2000).

[5] During the first two years of the project, 140 in-person interviews and 23 focus group discussions were conducted in mostly moderate- and low-income communities.

[6] NCBN is a network that serves as an information resource to community builders. Its aim is to advance community-building practice and policy. Members include people working in various fields including economic and community development, social service provision, and youth development.

[7] Local, more focused applied research was subsequently carried out by ACIP affiliates around the country.

[8] A notable exception is the National Endowment for the Arts, which collects information from regional arts organizations and state arts agencies as part of regular reporting requirements. This information tends to focus on financial accountability, and includes data such as number and types of grants awarded, number of events and audience counts. See Dwyer and Frankel (1996.)

[9] Involving people in the research process in a way that is immediately relevant to them as individuals or as community members is often referred to as "participatory research," "action research," or, more recently, as "empowerment evaluation." For more information, see Fetterman (2000) and Whyte (1991).

[10] ACIP researchers focused on cultural inventories because they tended to be explicitly concerned with arts and cultural resources. Not included in this analysis were the products of various community asset mapping exercises across the country. These tend to be informally produced and include arts and cultural resources along with other "hidden" assets. In general, "community mapping" or "asset mapping" inventories are tools or techniques used to tally the number of different assets located in a given area. Assets may be defined in a number of ways, depending on the underlying agenda. For more on asset mapping, see Kretzman and McKnight (1993) and McKnight and Kretzman (1991).

[11] This definition turned up a wider sample of "cultural" inventories than our guiding principles cover, such as descriptions of environmental resources, which would not be included in the ACIP definition of culture.

[12] An example of this is a study of the Colorado River corridor by Richard Stoffle (1996) and a team of applied anthropologists.

[13] An early example of this type was published in 1981 by the Arkansas Arts Council. This book is divided into sections related to visual arts, performing arts, humanities, and other. These sections include arts councils, art and history museums, theater groups, dance groups, historical and folklore societies, and arts and crafts fairs. The book provides official name, address, and founding date but includes no photographs, history, or descriptions. One recent example of this type is a Cultural Directory (http://www.rit.edu/~accwww/cult_dir.html) produced by the Arts and Cultural Council f or Greater Rochester in New York State. A variation of the list-type cultural inventory provides some organizational description such as the North Carolina Wilmington Area Cultural Directory (http://www.wilmington.org/culdir.html) and Florida's Pinellas County Arts Council Home Page (http://www.zipmall.com/arts-tampabay).

[14] Examples of these are Maine's St. John Valley Cultural Directory and the Rangeley Lakes Region Cultural Inventory. An example of an inventory that includes broad definitions of art and local folk history, as well as a calendar of local arts events, is Maine's

Brunswick Area Cultural Directory (http://www.curtislibrary.com/arts).

[15] Project staff called these places *indigenous venues of validation* because at times, the fact that the artistic activity happened or was presented in a particular place turned out to be one of the ways in which the activity was validated. For example, the fact that an arts event happened in a health clinic could be an indication of the value that people working in the health clinic in that community place on the activity. It was considered important enough to make space available for it or have the clinic associated with it.

[16] Maps share similar trade-offs to directories, with the extra benefit of making cultural venues and resources easier to find and to situate within a city or neighborhood context. However, they tend to reference built structures and provide relatively limited information. Examples are the Cultural Arts Maps produced by Oakland Citizens Concerned about Urban Renewal (OCCUR) in the early 1990s for five neighborhoods in Oakland, Calif.

[17] Examples of web-based directories include the Greater Rochester Cultural Directory (http://www.rit.edu/~accwww/cult_dir.html), CultureFinder.org, and the Virginia Commission for the Arts Cultural Institutions Directory (http://www.theatreiv.com/vcadir.html). Some inventories have both web and paper versions, such as Maine's Hancock County Cultural Directory (http://www.hancockarts.org/-dirindex.html).

[18] One promising innovative application for those in the arts and community-building field involves the use of global positioning satellite (GPS) technology. Though mostly used to register the latitude and longitude coordinates of physical locations, some researchers are starting to use GPS technology to register characteristics of the built environment as a participatory research strategy. For example, the Urban Institute is currently involved in a project where residents are trained to use the GPS devices.

[19] For an example of a prototypical cultural resource inventory using hypermedia, see James (2001). For other relevant emerging hypermedia applications in urban planning see Laurini (2001).

[20] See Wali, Severson, and Longoni (2000). Ethnographic techniques involved participant-observation, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and a survey questionnaire completed by 165 of the 310 case study participants. The case studies focused on locations throughout the Chicago metropolitan region (including a suburb) and included a range of groups such as community theater, church choir, Asian music ensemble, writing group, individual visual artists, hip-hop artists, and a quilting guild.

[21] Unpublished report of the Boston Foundation to the Urban Institute on Boston ACIP 2001 activities.

[22] Providence provides another example where The Providence Plan, a nonprofit policy organization, is working with arts and community organizations to develop a template to collect information on a regular basis about various kinds of cultural organizations in Providence neighborhoods and the programs that they operate.

[23] See the Greater Boston Cultural Resources Survey at http://www.tbf.org/current/Cultural-_survey.2.pdf

[24] As early as the 1830s, for example, de Tocqueville observed that Americans were highly involved in democratic associations and that this extended to public involvement in arts and culture. He predicted the democratization of both the production and appreciation of art as the United States' democratic culture matured (Tocqueville 1960). For a discussion of the elitist-pluralist debate, see Wyszomirski (in Mulcahy and Swaim 1982). In this debate, the elitist view stresses artistic quality that is usually found in cultural institutions where there are strong boundaries between performer and audience and sees art as distinct from popular forms of creativity. The populist view emphasizes the widest possible availability of the arts and endorses a less traditional, more pluralistic notion of artistic merit.

[25] These estimates are based on Peters and Cherbo's (1998) review of national survey data from the National Endowment for the Arts Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) that has been collected on a five-year cycle since 1982. The 1992 SPPA provided some significant national information on avocational arts activities (called personal arts participation in the surveys) as well as other types of participation in the organized arts activity. Traditionally, the study of arts participation has tracked attendance at live arts events, and then only for one of the primarily not-for-profit fine art forms. Other forms of participation generally were not considered or counted when the arts were discussed or statistics produced. Yet, over time, the SPPA survey has grown more inclusive. By 1992, the SPPA tracked a wider range of arts participation and found that over 80 percent of the adult population participated in the arts; that number rises to over 87 percent if other cultural activities are included and to over 91 percent if movie attendance is included. The survey concluded that approximately nine out of every ten adults were involved in the arts and culture in some man-

ner. Because many of the popular arts and esoteric art activities were excluded, the number of involved adult Americans is probably closer to 95 percent or more.

[26] See Walker and Scott-Melnyk (2000). "Narrow" definitions were mainly based on the Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) conducted by the National Endowment for the Arts, and for music included jazz, blues, classical, or opera; for theater included community, amateur, or professional; for dance included ballet and tap; and for visual art included seeing any visual art form *and* visiting a museum or gallery in the past year. "Broad" definitions were guided by ACIP's guiding principles and for music included pop, rock, soul, ethnic or other; for theater included K–12 school or other theater; for dance included ethnic, folk, American Indian, or other dance; and for visual art included seeing any visual art form and—in contrast with the narrow definition—not visiting a museum or gallery in the past year.

[27] Walker and Scott-Melnyk (2000) cite Kansas City frequently in their report because of its social and economic similarity to the United States as a whole.

[28] In their study, Wali, Severson, and Longoni (2000) define informal arts as amateur artistic activities that are specifically uncommodified and uninstitutionalized.

[29] Cultural activities were defined as jazz, marching band, other popular music, classical, choral music, opera, musical, stage play, poetry, ballet, other dance, art museum, art craft fair, street fair, mural public art, historic site, and film. Three of the case study neighborhoods were economically diverse and multiracial and the other two were mostly low-income and predominantly African-American neighborhoods. However, Stern and Seifert (1998) note a slight bias in their sample toward older, higher-income homeowners.

[30] The most popular neighborhood cultural activity was street fair (37 percent), followed by film (31 percent), art craft fair (26 percent), historic site (24 percent), and art museum (22 percent). The most popular regional cultural activity was film (40 percent), followed by art museum (39 percent), historic site (32 percent), stage play (30 percent), and jazz (29 percent). See Stern and Seifert (1998).

[31] For example, the two low-income, predominantly African-American neighborhoods had neighborhood cultural participation rates of 60 percent and 57 percent and regional cultural participation rates of 38 percent and 23 percent. In contrast, the more affluent and diverse neighborhoods had participation rates of 68 percent, 87 percent, and 67 percent, and regional rates of 75 percent, 86 percent, and 69 percent. See Stern and Seifert (1998).

[32] The research was part of the Getty Research Institute's larger *Participation Project: Artists, Communities and Cultural Citizenship*. The multiyear study, led by Josephine Ramirez, included artists, activists, residents, and visitors in a series of "encuentros" (round-table discussions), focus groups, art-making workshops, and community arts festivals.

[33] Several community arts organizations and funders involved in documenting the social effects of artistic activities have found that the process often provides several benefits. The process provides a learning opportunity for both the arts organization and the funder. It is often an iterative assessment tool that improves practice and quality of programs. Moreover, it is often a means for organizations to understand that they are engaged in a broader array of activities and effects than they previously considered.

[34] In creating new documentation tools ACIP and staff from the local agencies worked to minimize the extent to which documentation might adversely impact participation in community programs that were free and "drop-in" by design. Staff was also attentive to Spanish language needs and any sensitivity about involvement in bureaucratic processes.

[35] In round-table discussions conducted by the Urban Institute and Getty Research Institute, artists in East Los Angeles revealed three approaches of how they may participate in art-based community building. One approach involves the artist as creator of objects with an emphasis on self-expression that may happen to be evocative of broader shared issues. In a second approach, the artist expresses the sentiments of others through the his creation as a form of advocacy. The third approach is that of an artist guiding others in a collective creative process as a type of community organizing.

[36] Wyszomirski (1996) suggests that there is extensive anecdotal evidence upon which to build theories around better understanding the societal impacts of the arts.

[37] See Fiske (1999) for a collection of studies on how the arts contribute to education and learning. For example, Shirley Brice Heath (1999) found that involvement in after-school arts activities in several low-income neighborhoods across the United States had more positive effects on student educational performance than involvement in sports or community service. Catterall and Waldorff (1999) found that the Chicago Arts Partnership in Education (CAPE), a network of nine neighborhood-based partnerships of 23 local schools,

33 arts organizations, and 11 community-based organizations, contributed to improved learning.

[38] For a comprehensive annotated bibliography of arts research related to education and youth development, see California Arts Council (2001).

[39] For a list of state, regional, and national studies about the economic impacts of the arts, see the Economic Impact of the Arts web resources guide available at http://www.artslynx.org/aotl/econ.htm.

[40] For example, according the American Arts Alliance (2001), for every dollar the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) invests in communities, there is a 20-fold return in jobs, services, and contracts. Also, the New England region has been the subject of some of the most innovative studies of the economic impact of the arts. For example, Wassall and DeNatale (1997) found that New England's nonprofit art and culture industry produced a $3.9 billion economic impact in 1996, including indirect and induced spending of $1.6 billion. Another study by the New England Council (2000) that included both nonprofit and for-profit cultural enterprises estimated that cultural tourism in New England in 1998 resulted in an economic impact of $6.6 billion. According to the New England Council, a broader definition of the arts and cultural sector that encompasses creative nonprofit and commercial ventures suggests that such creative industries not only make significant contributions to the regional quality of life but also figure prominently in its economic competitiveness.

[41] For a discussion of how art and culture may uniquely contribute to social capital, see Better Together (2000). For a general discussion of social capital, see Putnam (2000).

[42] For a review of the literature on neighborhood effects, see Ellen and Turner (1997).

[43] These research areas are more developed than that of arts impacts and offer lessons on the complexities of such research. For example, a review of neighborhood effects studies (Ellen and Turner 1997) shows that despite an increasing body of evidence that neighborhood conditions are important factors in shaping individual outcomes, there is no consensus about what neighborhood characteristics affect which outcomes, or what types of individual may be influenced. Additionally, researchers in this area face serious methodological challenges that include selecting relevant neighborhood characteristics, reflecting nonlinear effects, and accounting for individual and family characteristics. In more technical terms, the methodological task is to identify the major factors that are related to or influence the impact measures, and to adjust for the effects of those others factors, positive and negative, when assessing the specific influence of the arts-related variables.

[44] For a historical account of the community arts field see Adams and Goldbard (2001) and Hauser (1985).

[45] To address this, ACIP is taking steps toward documenting and codifying theories of practice through in-person interviews and focus group discussions with community artists and community arts administrators. In ACIP field work researchers have structured their inquiry with community arts practitioners in a way that allows the practitioner to have a sounding board and opportunity for reflection.

[46] Studies contributing to understanding social impacts of the arts at the neighborhood level include the Ford Foundation's *Community Development Corporation Arts Resource Initiative*; the *Social Impacts of the Arts Project at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work*; and the Chicago Center for Arts Policy's *Social Impact of the Informal Arts Study*. Additionally, the societal impacts of the arts (although not exclusively at the community level) have been addressed in a number of policy and academic forums, including *The American Assembly: the Arts and the Public Purpose* (1997); the *President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities* (1999); and the *Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America* at Harvard University (1999).

[47] For a discussion of the Collaborative Inquiry process, see Bray, Lee, Smith and Yorks (2000). For a discussion of developing narratives as "portraiture" see Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997).

[48] After several discussions, the group developed a consensus definition of "community-building relationships" as "reciprocal exchanges, often across social boundaries of class, race, gender, age, physical status, etc. through which participants gain social capital."

[49] Among the challenges faced by the CIG were: (1) sustaining consistent participation among practitioners in the research process; (2) keeping funders and policymakers involved and open to innovative practitioner-based research and documentation; (3) incorporating consistent organizational documentation practices; and (4) sustaining youth participation in the research process alongside administrators, funders, and researchers.

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Local ACIP Affiliates

ACIP currently works with local affiliates in seven cities: Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Oakland, Philadelphia, Providence, and Washington, D.C. These affiliates are committed to better understanding neighborhood dynamics, including those focused on arts and culture. ACIP staff and the local affiliates work on a variety of projects, with foci ranging from city-wide to neighborhood-specific levels. Our aim with the affiliate work is to create tools and methods that can be adopted or adapted by other practitioners in the community arts and community-building related fields.

Updated information on ACIP and its affiliates is available at http://www.urban.org/nnip/acip.html.

Boston

The Boston Foundation
The Boston Community Building Network
One Boston Place, 24th Floor
Boston, MA 02108

The Boston Foundation, and more specifically the Boston Community Building Network, has worked in collaboration with ACIP since 1997. The Boston Community Building Network is a special initiative of the Boston Foundation and has as its mission to stimulate a more effective approach to reducing intergenerational poverty. To advance this mission, the Network has worked with Boston residents to create and document various social indicators. The Network is a partner in the Urban Institute's National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP) and the collaboration with ACIP has produced many fruitful research efforts, including a unified database of Boston cultural data sets and a draft "Cultural Life and the Arts" section in the Boston Foundation's city-wide indicators report: *Wisdom of Our Choices: Boston's Indicators of Progress, Change, and Sustainability*.

Current and future work with the Network involves further development of the "Cultural Life and the Arts" section and a cultural resource survey instrument.

The Boston Foundation is one of the largest community foundations in the country.

Chicago

The Chicago Center for Arts Policy
Columbia College Chicago
600 S. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, IL 60605

Researchers at CCAP and the Urban Institute have teamed up to work on two related projects. CCAP researchers involved in an ethnographic study of informal arts in inner-city Chicago neighborhoods and a suburban site are collaborating with ACIP by contributing to and incorporating ACIP concepts into their data collection and analysis design. At the same time, ACIP staff has worked with CCAP to convene a series of roundtable discussions that aimed to identify the data needs and existing data resources of Chicago community practitioners with the hope of ultimately spurring a local arts and culture research agenda.

CCAP staff has produced a white paper summarizing the main findings from the roundtable discussions. Field work on the informal arts study is in progress. A draft of this research report will be available on the CCAP web site as well as this web site. Alaka Wali, principal investigator on the informal arts project, is drafting a paper that will be part of the Arts and Culture Indicators working paper series.

The Chicago Center for Arts Policy (CCAP) at Columbia College is one of the many dynamic research centers housed at this arts college. CCAP "supports a democratic vision of our arts and cultural life built upon our democratic ideals."

Los Angeles

Self-Help Graphics and Arts, Inc.
3802 Cesar E. Chavez Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90063

ACIP's collaboration with Self-Help Graphics, Inc. (SHG) began in 1998 as part of a research project based at the Getty Research Institute called **The Participation Project: Artists, Communities and Cultural Citizenship**. This research project explored the relationship between collective art making and civic participation. Currently, ACIP-SHG work focuses on the documentation and analysis of collective art-making practices tied to traditional community celebrations in East Los Angeles. ACIP and SHG have also partnered with other East Los Angeles agencies, chiefly Proyecto Pastoral to help advance this work.

ACIP with SHG and Proyecto staff have produced a variety of data collection products intended to better capture cultural participation and possible impacts and contributions of such participation. These products include registration forms in English and in Spanish, interview guides, and focus group discussion guides. For pdf versions of those documents, go to: http://www.selfhelpgraphics.com.

The main thrust of current collaborative work in L.A. is the completion of a document that chronicles the workshops as well as Self-Help's documentation approaches.

Self-Help Graphics and Arts, Inc. is a visual arts organization in East Los Angeles. SHG has grown in its 26-year history to become not only a gallery, but a community resource center as well.

Proyecto Pastoral is a faith-based organization whose general goal has been to improve quality of life for residents of the Pico-Aliso Public Housing projects.

Oakland

ACIP affiliate work in Oakland began in 1998 with the East Bay Institute for Urban Arts and later with the Community Network for Youth Development. ACIP work here has focused on the creation and development of the Collaborative Inquiry Group (CIG) to explore the impacts and contributions of art-based youth development programs. [Collaborative inquiry is a social change-oriented approach to research through which people engaged in a common action or projects reflect upon their experiences and knowledge together over a sustained period of time; see Bray, Lee, Smith and Yorks (2000)].

Members of the CIG have included youth program providers, program intermediaries, funders, policymakers, and youth. Over the years, the CIG met regularly and engaged in collaborative, experience-based research relating to art-based youth development, and focused most specifically on ways to document impacts on individual youths, impacts and contributions at the community level, and more recently impacts and contributions related to the development of organizational networks involved in art-based youth development.

A paper summarizing the CIG process is under way.

Philadelphia

Social Impact of the Arts Project
University of Pennsylvania
School of Social Work
3701 Locust Walk
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6214

The collaboration with SIAP and ACIP is in the early stages. ACIP staff connected with SIAP because many of SIAP's projects display thinking that runs parallel to ACIP concepts. Currently, the codirector of SIAP is working on a paper about cultural participation that integrates ACIP's approach to the notion of cultural participation. This paper will be available on the web in the summer of 2002.

The Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP) is based at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work. This center focuses on policy research relating to cultural institutions and their effects on Philadelphia.

Providence

The Providence Plan
56 Pine Street, Suite 3B
Providence, RI 02903

The Providence Plan (TPP) is a partner in the Urban Institute's National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP) and began working with ACIP staff in 1999. ACIP/TPP involvement has focused on the creation and development of a database of arts and culture resources in Providence. This database seeks to map the intensity of arts and culture activities, and it is intended to serve as a community building tool.

The arts and culture database is currently being updated by TPP staff and will be available later this year. Ultimately, this art and culture data will be integrated into a larger, comprehensive community information network that will include other kinds of community relevant information such as neighborhood demographics, economic conditions, and availability of health and other social services.

The Providence Plan (TPP) is a quasi-public planning agency that is a joint effort of city and state governments that works to address the causes of urban decline. TPP works on all levels by including federal agencies as well as community residents.

Washington, D.C.

DC Agenda
1825 K Street, NW, Suite 710
Washington, DC 20006

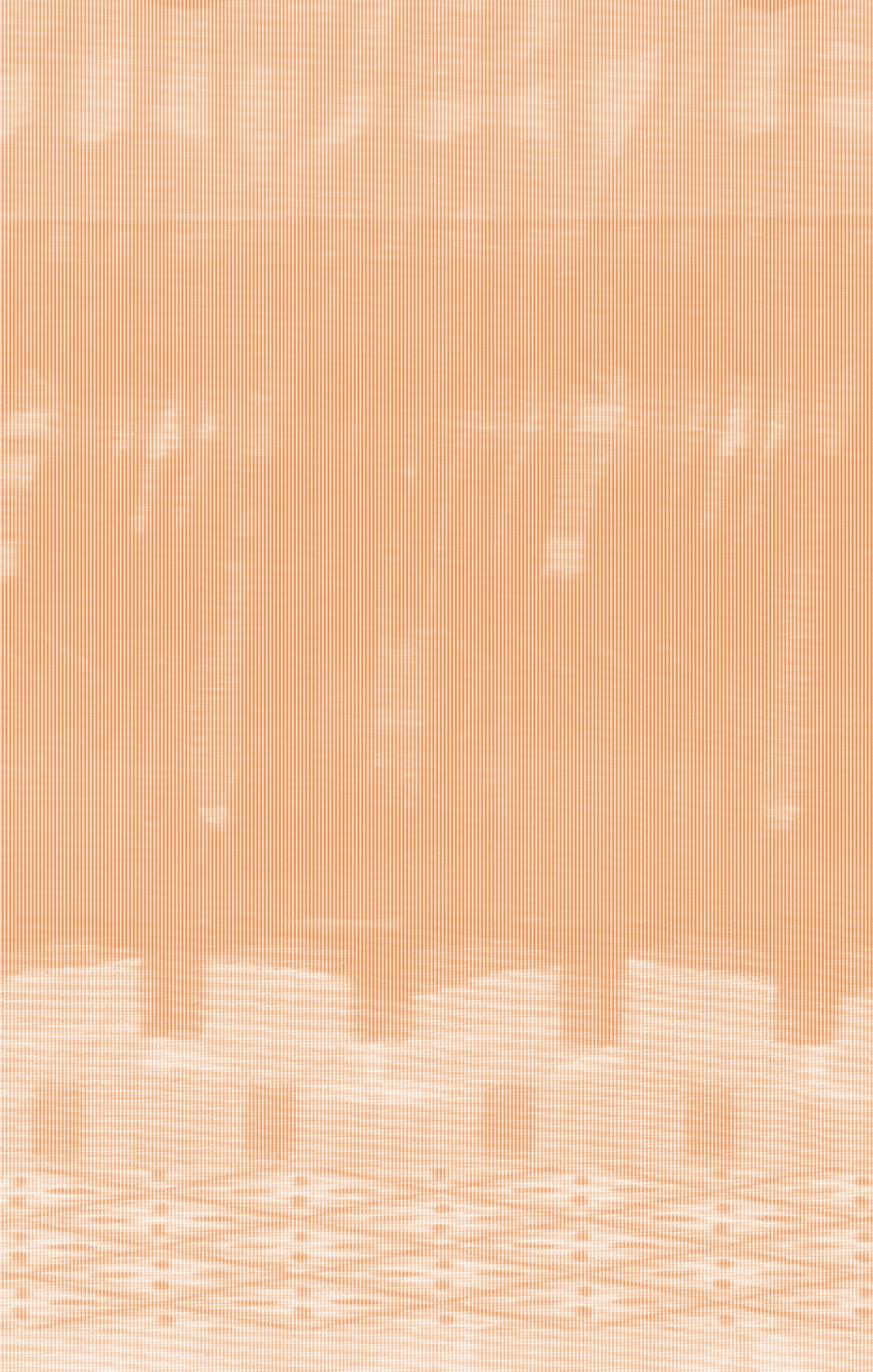
DC Agenda is also a partner in the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP) and has worked in conjunction with ACIP since 1997. The work with DC Agenda has had several related phases. ACIP and DC Agenda worked with the DC Humanities Council/City Lights Program (an art-based literacy project focused on public housing residents and low-income communities) to advance thinking and documentation about program impacts on the community level. More recently, ACIP has worked with DC Agenda and the Humanities Council to organize a meeting of key arts and culture stakeholders. The purpose of this meeting was to assess the arts and culture data-related needs of the District and articulate a research and data collection agenda.

DC Agenda is an organization that focuses on community development by serving as an intermediary between other community groups and institutions in the District of Columbia.

About the Authors

Maria-Rosario Jackson is a senior research associate in the Urban Institute's Metropolitan Housing and Communities Center and director of the Urban Institute's Culture, Creativity and Communities Program. Her work focuses on urban policy and social change; community planning and development; the role of arts, culture and creativity in communities; and the politics of race, ethnicity and gender in urban contexts. Jackson holds a Ph.D. in Urban Planning from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Joaquin Herranz, Jr. conducts research on urban policy, community revitalization, workforce development, organizational networks, and urban arts and creativity. He was formerly director of research at the Urban Strategies Council. He is currently a project coordinator and research associate at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University. He is also a consulting research associate at the Urban Institute, and a doctoral candidate at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.



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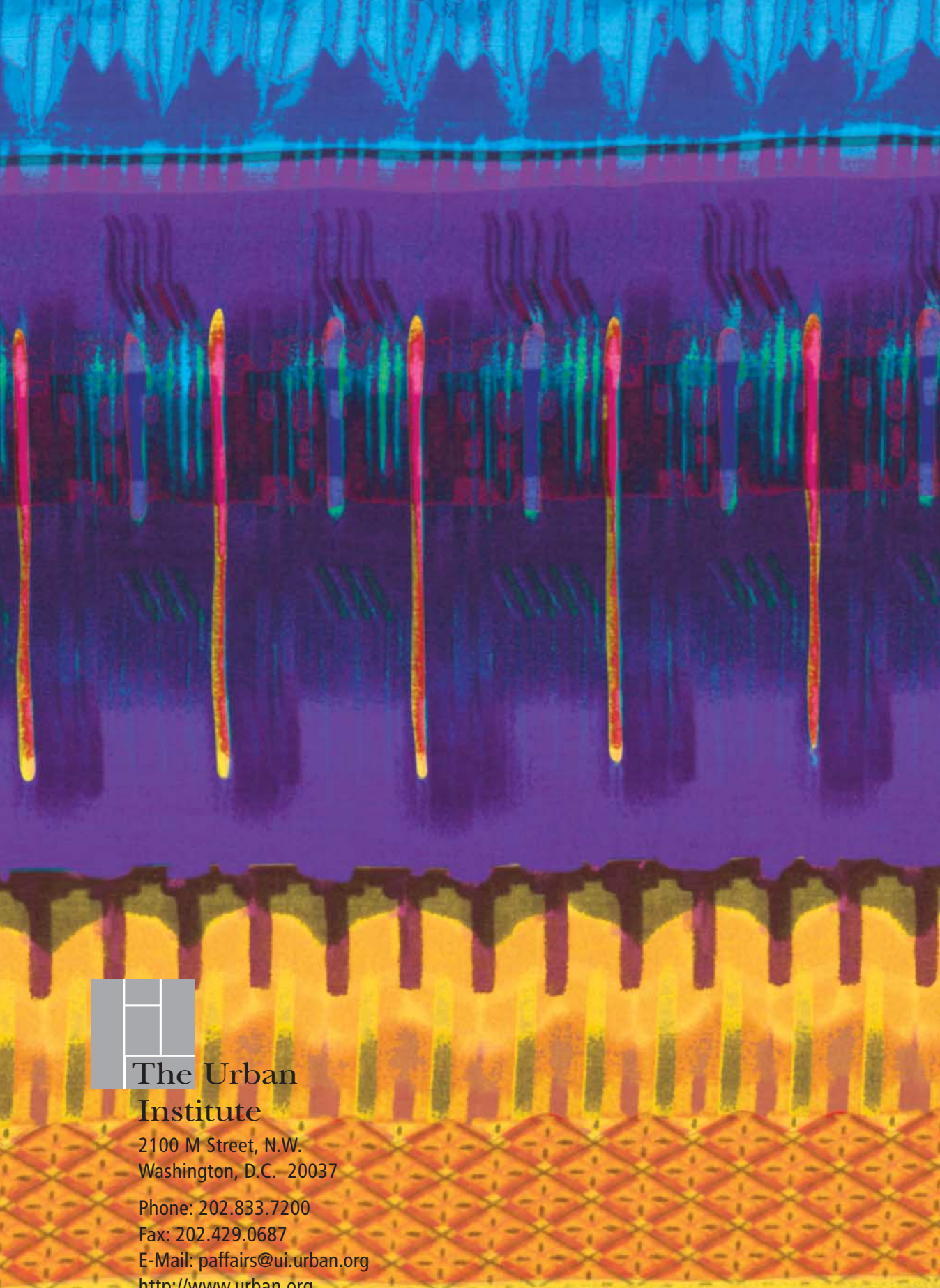

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