



Evaluation of
Community Partners In Arts Access

An Interim Report to the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

June 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Social Impact of the Arts Project is conducting an evaluation of the Knight Foundation's Community Partners in Arts Access (CPAA) initiative. This interim report has three parts: an assessment of the relationship of cultural participation and serious crime in North Philadelphia; an update on levels of cultural participation in North Philadelphia and Camden; and the findings of a set of interviews with grantees and others involved in CPAA.

- *Serious crime and cultural participation.* Using data on reported serious crime between 1999 and 2004, we found no evidence that serious crime suppressed cultural participation in North Philadelphia. Overall, crime and cultural participation were *positively* correlated, the result of their mutual relationship with social diversity.
- *CPAA participation update.* Using data provided by the grantees, we discovered a moderate increase in individual participation between 2004 and 2005. Across the five cluster areas, individual participation increased by 22 percent. Because of statistical regression, however, SIAP recommends that it is too soon to tell if these results represent a real increase in participation.
- *Grantee view of CPAA.* Grantees had a generally positive view of the initiative and its impact on their programs. However, the organizations located in North Philadelphia appear to have a markedly different view of the initiative than those located outside the area and in Camden. In particular, the North Philadelphia grantees expressed concern about the cost of partnerships with organization located outside of the area. A surprise finding was that one-to-one outreach strategies—often using artists and humanities scholars—elicited great enthusiasm on the part of the grantees that are using them.

Based on these findings, SIAP makes two suggestions:

- The current structure of technical assistance is slanted toward those grantees focusing on organizational capacity and formal partnerships. An effort should be made to provide support for the community outreach strategies used by a number of groups. A number of local organizations have significant expertise in this area and could contribute to the success of these efforts.
- Looking ahead, the Foundation and Community Advisory Committee (CAC) should examine opportunities to link cultural participation to other strategies for neighborhood revitalization.

INTRODUCTION

The Social Impact of the Arts Project (SIAP) began its assessment of the Knight Foundation's Community Partners in Arts Access (CPAA) in November 2005. The purpose of the assessment is to document changes in cultural participation in North Philadelphia and Camden and how the initiative influences the role of cultural organizations in broader community life.

The core of the assessment is a detailed analysis of changes in cultural participation over the course of the initiative. In SIAP's previous work on the Benchmark Project, it developed a method for using organizational records, supplemented by data gathering at strategic community events. These data are then incorporated into a geographic information system database. This allows SIAP to examine change over time for small geographical areas (census block groups) and the association between a block group's participation level and its other social characteristics.

In addition to an analysis of direct participation, the assessment will include:

- Monitoring partnerships among grantees, between grantees and other cultural organizations, and between grantees and other community-based organizations.
- Surveying artists active in the initiative to assess how their involvement influences their other work in North Philadelphia and Camden.
- Surveying non-arts organizations in North Philadelphia and Camden to assess changes in these organizations' understanding of how cultural participation might influence neighborhood well-being.
- Key informant interviews with grantees and others involved in the initiative to assess how perceptions of the initiative change over its course.

During the first six months of the assessment, SIAP has focused on two major tasks: a wave of data-gathering on participation among the grantees and a set of key informant interviews about perceptions of CPAA based on its first year of implementation. In addition, this report includes an analysis of the role of serious crime on patterns of cultural participation in North Philadelphia that members of the Community Advisory Committee requested at their August 2005 meeting.

1. SERIOUS CRIME IN NORTH PHILADELPHIA

During 2005, the Social Impact of the Arts Project—in collaboration with Research For Action and Alan S. Brown—conducted an analysis of cultural participation in North Philadelphia and Camden. One of the findings of that analysis—in reality a ‘non-finding’—was that there were few social factors that were statistically associated with variation in cultural participation within these communities. The most consistent association found was between the number of cultural resources near (within one-half mile of) a block group and the neighborhood’s cultural participation rate.

At an August 2005 meeting of the Knight Foundation’s Philadelphia Community Advisory Committee, members of the Committee suggested that public safety was likely a significant influence on cultural participation. The Committee recommended that SIAP make an effort to reanalyze its data in light of the effects of crime.

In cooperation with the University of Pennsylvania Cartographic Modeling Laboratory (CML), SIAP was able to integrate crime data for the city of Philadelphia into its database during the past year. This section reports the findings of our analysis incorporating these data.

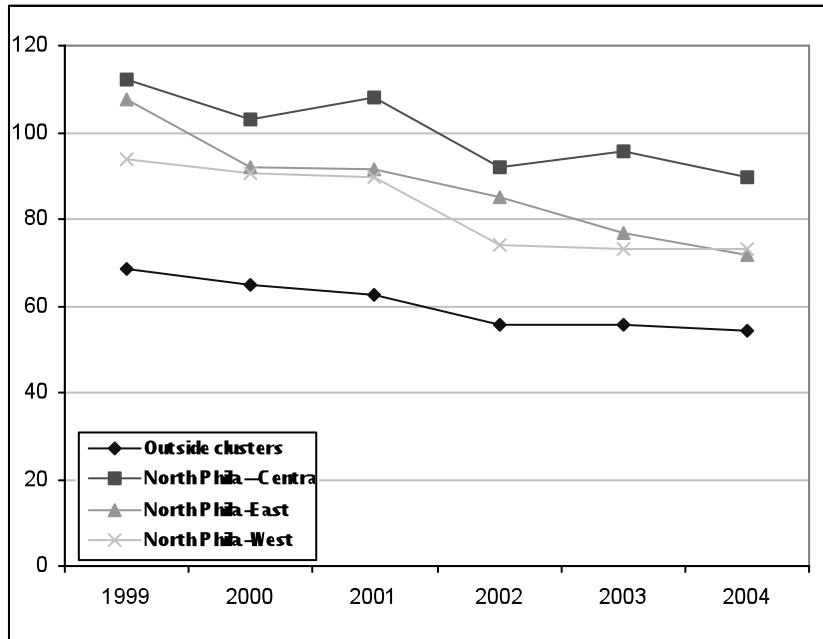
Generally speaking, the hypothesis that crime is a major deterrent to cultural participation is unsupported by these data. In fact, to the extent the data show a relationship between crime and cultural participation at all, the relationship is *positive*—that is, high cultural participation and high crime rates are likely to be present in the same neighborhoods. This relationship is probably not causal. Still, there is no statistical support for the hypothesis that the crime rate near one’s residence discourages cultural participation.

The measure of crime used here is reported serious crime excluding murder and rape. This includes crimes against persons (such as robbery and aggravated assault) and crimes against property (such as burglary and theft). The data were aggregated to the block group level and then merged with SIAP’s cultural participation database for the city of Philadelphia. Data for six years (1999-2004) were averaged and converted into per capita rates (crimes per 1,000 residents). Crime data for Camden were not available, so this analysis focuses on North Philadelphia.

The two measures of cultural participation used here are a broad regional cultural participation rate based on 2004 data from 75 regional cultural organizations and a local cultural participation rate based on 2004 data from organizations located in or serving North Philadelphia and Camden.

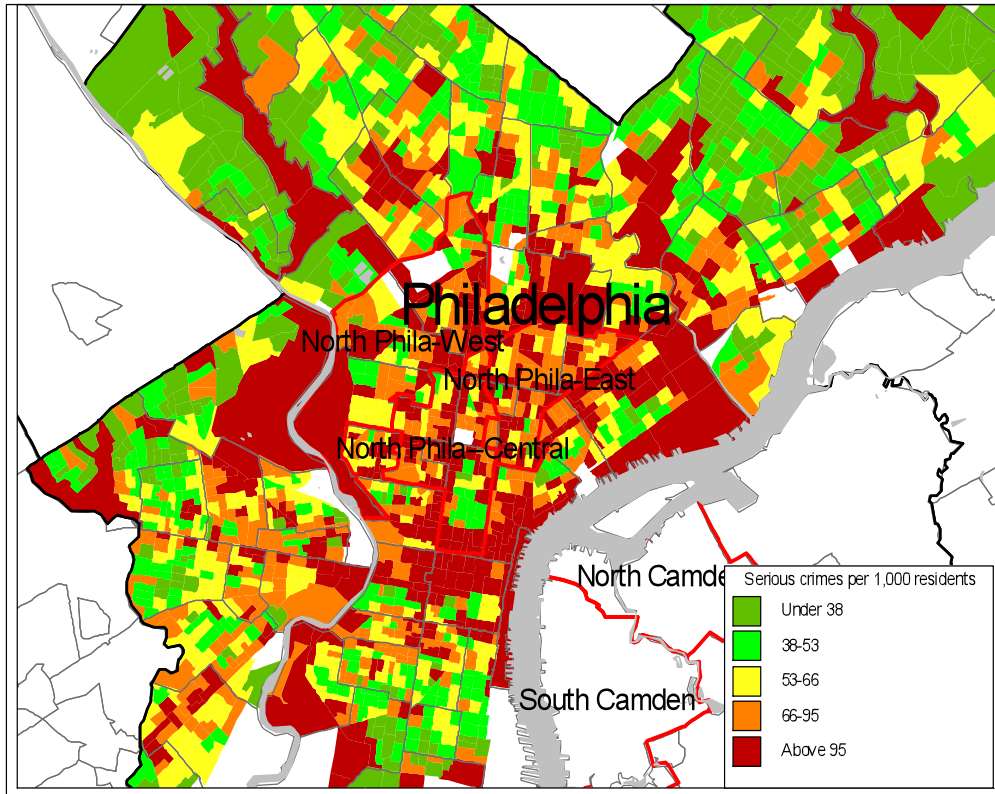
Findings

North Philadelphia is generally an area with above average crime. Between 1999 and 2004, there was an average of 80 serious crimes per 1,000 residents in the area compared to a city-wide rate of just over 60 per thousand. As in the city as a whole, crime rates dropped in North Philadelphia between 1999 and 2004. The largest drop during this period was in North Philadelphia-East where crime fell by one third.



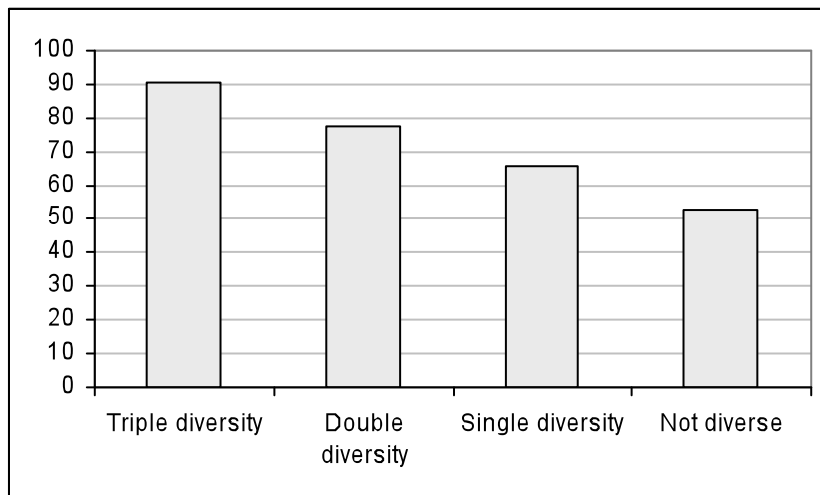
Serious crimes per 1,000 residents, 1999-2004. Crime dropped across Philadelphia between 1999 and 2004. North Philadelphia-East recorded the sharpest declines among the CPAA neighborhood clusters.

Although we associate crime with socio-economic characteristics, the geography of crime is not so neat. While crime is high in most sections of North Philadelphia, the rates in West Philadelphia—the other major concentration of poverty within the city—is low to moderate. By the same token, Center City—one of the more affluent sections of the city—has higher than average poverty. Overall, per capita income was only weakly associated with crime rates.



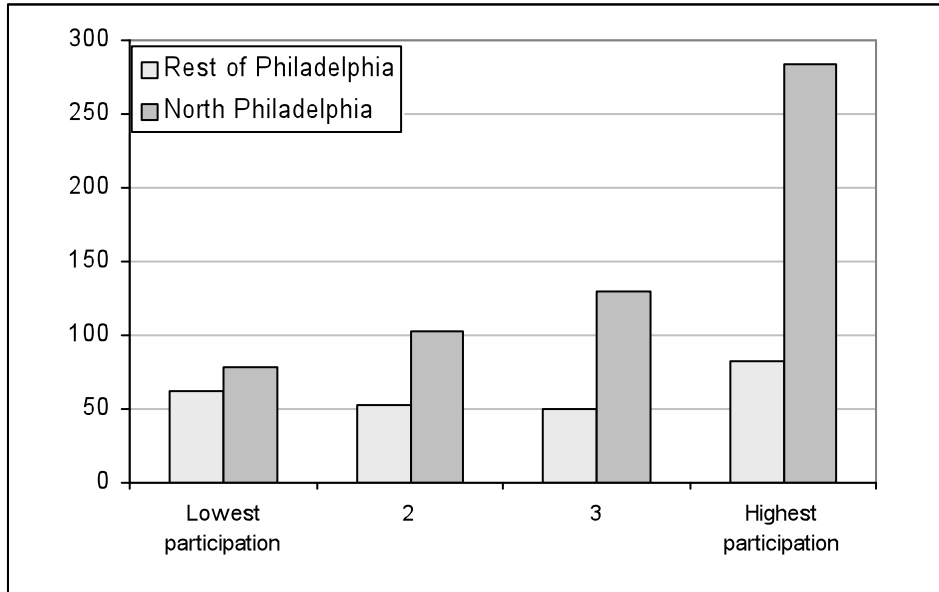
Serious crimes per 1,000 residents. North Philadelphia had higher than average crime rates. However, the fit between crime and economic status citywide was far from perfect.

The relationship of social diversity to crime is about as strong as per capita income. Here we use three indexes of diversity: economic diversity (higher than average poverty and higher than average workers in professional and managerial occupations); ethnic diversity (the presence of more than one large ethnic group); and household diversity (high concentration of non-family households). The more types of diversity present in a block group, the higher its average serious crime rate.



Serious crimes per 1,000 residents by level of diversity. Social diversity had a strong influence on crime rates. Ethnically, economically, and domestically diverse areas had a serious crime rate about 80 percent higher than that of more homogeneous neighborhoods.

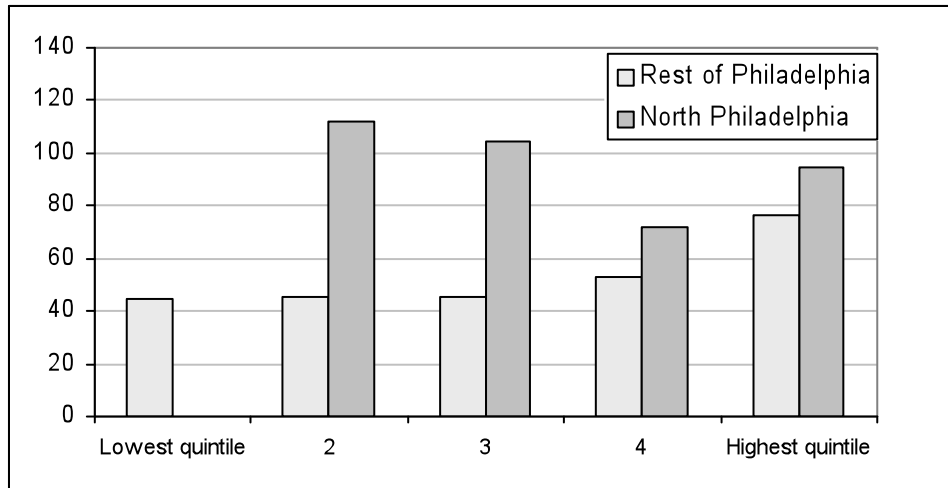
Interestingly, socio-economic status and diversity are also among the most important variables explaining variation in cultural participation across the Philadelphia region. This may explain why there is a significant *positive* correlation of serious crime and cultural participation. Using our broadest estimate of regional cultural participation, the relationship between culture and crime is quite strong.



Serious crimes per 1,000 residents, by regional cultural participation rate of block group. Serious crime was higher in neighborhoods with high cultural participation.

Outside of North Philadelphia, areas with the highest regional cultural participation had crime rates that were about 35 percent above the city wide average. The relationship of crime and regional culture was even stronger among North Philadelphia residents. There the serious crime rate for high participation block groups was more than four times the city-wide average and more than three times the average for all of North Philadelphia.

An analysis of our Benchmark participation rate (which includes groups located in or serving North Philadelphia and Camden) leads to a somewhat different conclusion. Outside of North Philadelphia, serious crime and cultural participation are positively related. Inside North Philadelphia, however, in contrast to the regional rate, there is no clear relationship between Benchmark participation and serious crime.

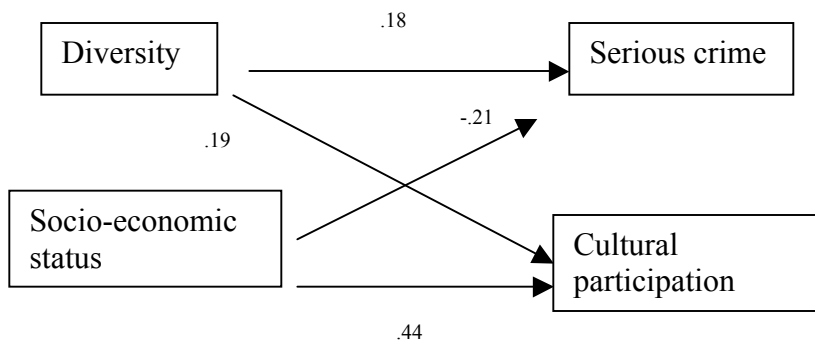


Serious crimes per 1,000 residents, by Benchmark participation rate (quintiles). Benchmark participation (organizations located in or serving North Philadelphia) was correlated with crime, but in North Philadelphia itself, there was no significant statistical relationship between the two.

This analysis raises questions about the role of crime in deterring cultural participation in Philadelphia. To the extent there is a relationship of crime and culture, it ranges from no relationship to a positive relationship.

The correlation of crime and culture is not causal. Rather, two of the variables that are most influential in predicting cultural participation—socio-economic status and diversity—are also important in explaining variations in crime. The relationship of socio-economic status and crime is relatively straightforward; economic distress is both a direct and indirect stimulus to criminal behavior. The relationship of diversity to crime is less clear. The crime literature—from its beginning—has seen social diversity as a stimulus to crime. Closely associated with cities, diversity has been seen as an indicator of the absence of a moral consensus that could enforce codes of behavior. This lack of a coherent moral code, it has been argued, reduces the social enforcement mechanisms that keep crime in check.

Thus, this analysis suggests the following model:



Model of relationship of socio-economic status, diversity, crime and participation with partial correlation coefficients. Diversity is associated with both serious crime and cultural participation. In contrast, socio-economic status is more clearly related to participation than serious crime.

Social diversity and socio-economic status are associated with both serious crime rates and cultural participation. They have roughly the same impact on serious crime, but socio-economic status is a much stronger predictor of cultural participation. Furthermore, where socio-economic status (measured by per capita income) has a positive effect on participation (the higher one's income, the higher one's participation), it is negatively associated with serious crime.

The data used in this analysis are far from perfect. The data on crime are from police reports, so we know that they miss a significant share of victimization. It is also likely that the rate of under-reporting is higher in low-income neighborhoods, thus understating the relationship of crime and income. It is likely that flaws in the crime measure are the reason that our ability to predict crime rates accurately is so poor.

Probably the greatest limitation of this analysis is its geographical scope. The data suggest that people who live in block groups with high crime rates attend cultural events at a higher rate than those who live in block groups with low crime rates. We do not know the effect of high crime rates (or perhaps, as importantly, *perceived* crime rates) around cultural venues on the willingness of people to attend events. There is little doubt, for example, that the perception of crime in the “Badlands” section of North Philadelphia may discourage attendance. The irony, of course, is that Old City—one of the ‘hottest’ cultural districts in the city—has roughly the same serious crime rate as the “Badlands.”

2. TRENDS IN CULTURAL PARTICIPATION IN NORTH PHILADELPHIA AND CAMDEN

The core of the CPAA assessment is the development of a time-series of small-area estimates of cultural participation from before CPAA was implemented in January 2005 until its conclusion in 2008. Technically, this part of the assessment is an “interrupted time-series” design, that is, we measure the key outcome variables in the time period leading up to the initiative, during the initiative, and immediately following the initiative to see what effect the Foundation’s grantmaking had on these variables.

One of the major benefits of this design—compared to a simple pretest/post-test design—is that ‘statistical regression’ does not pose a threat to the validity of the findings. “Statistical regression” or “regression to the mean” occurs when measurement errors create the illusion of change over time. Specifically, there is a general tendency of those who have a high score at one point in time to see their scores go down at the next measurement point, while those with low score will tend to go up. Thus, there is a general tendency of pretest/post-test designs to show declining differences over time. An interrupted time-series reduces this threat to validity by using multiple points across the course of the study. Thus, extreme scores will have a tendency to average out over time.

The reason we provide this pedantic explanation of statistical regression is because this interim report appears to demonstrate this phenomenon. By the end of the assessment in 2008, we will have multiple data points for every comparison we make. Now, however, we only have two points—the 2004 baseline established by the Benchmark study and our

2005 results. As we shall see, many of the differences we discovered in the Benchmark study appear to be reduced in our 2005 data: neighborhoods with high participation saw their scores go down; those with low participation saw it go up. It may very well be that these figures are reflecting actual changes in the population, but we will only know for sure after we accumulate further data. For now, we present these findings in light of this *caveat emptor*.

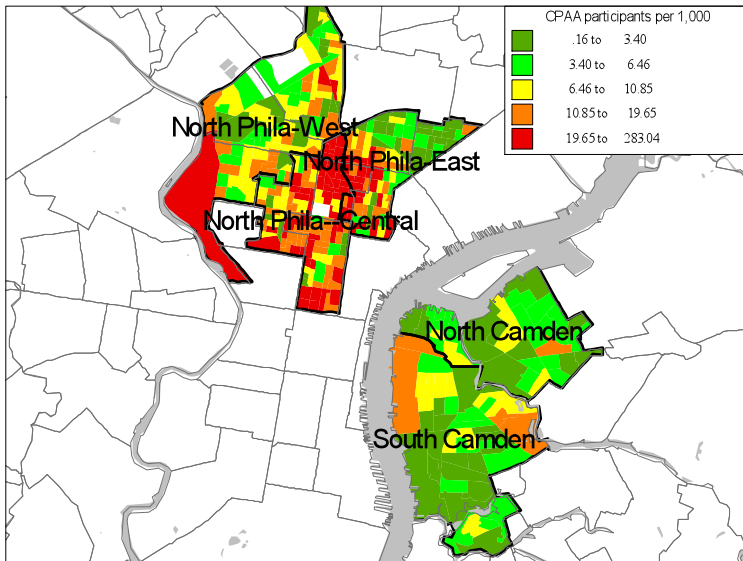
Data and Methods

During the past six months, SIAP has worked with all of the grantees to provide accurate data on direct participation in their programs. All but one grantee were able to provide some data. SIAP developed small area participation estimates by compiling data provided by cultural organizations that are located in or serve North Philadelphia and Camden. A variety of participation data were collected, including mailing lists, audience lists, event sign-in sheets, student registration, artists and teachers, and organizational connections. Using these data, SIAP developed a geographical database that identified the number of cases from each participant list located in each of the metropolitan area's 4,000 block groups. The data were grouped into four indexes of individual involvement—audience/attendees, students, artists, and mailing list entries—and one index of organizational involvement. In all, seventy-four separate databases were compiled in this analysis. To measure rates of participation, the total number of participants in each block group was calculated as the *number of participants per 1,000 residents*.

One challenge of this round of data gathering was to reconcile these data with those gathered during the Benchmark Project. The Benchmark study included data on approximately ten groups that were not CPAA grantees. In addition, several of the databases gathered for the Benchmark study were not available during this wave of data gathering. Thus, the sources for the 2004 baseline and 2005 are not identical.

Patterns of Overall CPAA Participation in 2005

In 2005, CPAA grantee participation was concentrated in North Philadelphia-Central. Within this area, in fact, there were two separate concentrations of participants. Lower North Philadelphia had some of the highest participation rates in the CPAA cluster, as did the area immediately north of Temple University. This north of Temple concentration of participation, in fact, included a section of North Philadelphia-East stretching out toward the Fifth and Lehigh neighborhood—a center of Latin American residential and commercial life. However, the overall rate of participation for North Philadelphia-East was suppressed by extremely low rates of involvement in the Harrowgate neighborhood (between Front and Kensington, north of Lehigh). As we found in the Benchmark Project, participation rates in North Philadelphia-West and Camden were much lower than in the central and eastern section of North Philadelphia.



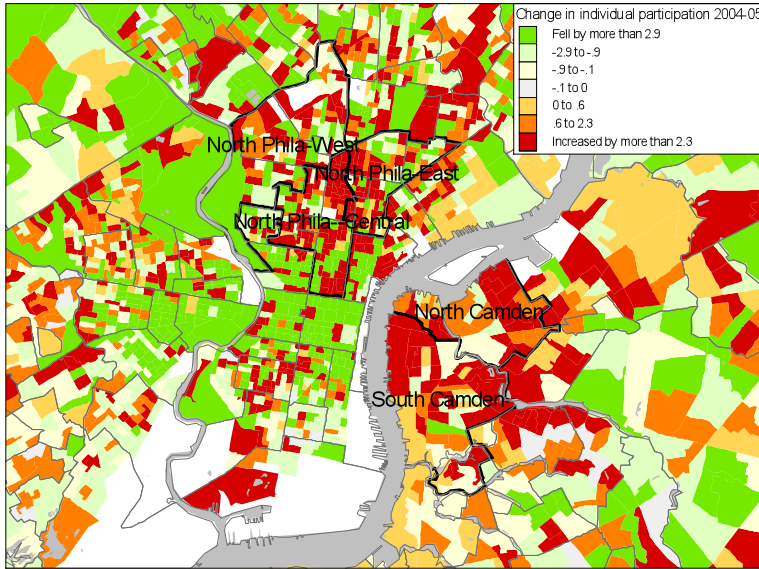
CPAA participants per 1,000 residents, North Philadelphia and Camden. Central and eastern North Philadelphia remained the neighborhoods with the highest CPAA participation in 2005. Camden—despite improvement—had significantly lower rates of participation.

Overall, we estimate that cultural participation increased moderately between 2004 and 2005 among the CPAA grantees. In 2004, individual cultural participation for these organizations in North Philadelphia and Camden was approximately 9.9 per thousand. In 2005, the comparable figure was 12.2, an increase of 22 percent.

Location	Individual participation		
	2004	2005	% change
Outside cluster areas	5.4	4.7	-13.6
Rest of Phila	12.1	10.2	-15.3
Rest of metro area	2.8	2.5	-10.8
Cluster areas-total	9.9	12.2	22.5
North Phila--Central	20.4	25.6	25.2
North Phila-East	11.7	13.8	18.0
North Phila-West	8.7	8.9	3.1
North Camden	3.2	5.2	60.4
South Camden	3.9	6.7	70.8

Individual CPAA participants per 1,000 residents (comparable databases). North and South Camden—which had the lowest individual CPAA participation in 2004—recorded the largest percentage jump in participation last year. Still, their rates remained well behind those of the North Philadelphia clusters.

The largest percentage increases were in the two clusters with the lowest participation in 2004—North and South Camden. Increases in North Philadelphia were more modest. As we have noted, there is a real possibility that these changes are a result of statistical regression. Further data gathering is needed to determine if they represent a consistent trend.



Change in CPAA participants per 1,000 residents, 2004-2005. Areas of Camden were among the neighborhoods with the largest increases in individual participation between 2004 and 2005.

The increase in individual participation between 2004 and 2005 appears to have been scattered throughout most areas of the cluster neighborhoods. Rates were up in virtually all sections of Camden. In North Philadelphia, the extreme north and eastern areas saw their participation rates decline most sharply.

		Organizational contacts		
Location		2004	2005	% change
Outside cluster areas		0.25	0.46	83.4
	Rest of Phila	0.66	1.30	98.6
	Rest of metro area	0.09	0.12	40.5
Cluster areas-total		1.77	2.35	32.2
	North Phila-Central	4.24	5.41	27.6
	North Phila-East	1.82	1.95	7.1
	North Phila-West	0.53	1.25	138.4
	North Camden	0.73	1.34	83.6
	South Camden	2.05	2.28	11.1

CPAA organizational contacts per 1,000 residents (comparable databases). Organizational contacts increased across the board during the past year.

Our estimates of comparable organizational links also show substantial increases within North Philadelphia and Camden. Here again, the evidence should be interpreted with caution both because it represents only one point in time and, additionally, because the character of organizational lists varies more dramatically from year to year than do those of individual participants.

Types of Participation

The CPAA assessment is tracking four different types of individual participation: audience, students, artists, and mailing lists. The mix of these types of participation varies from organization to organization and from neighborhood to neighborhood.

		Students	Audience	Artists	Mailing list
Outside cluster areas		0.68	0.22	0.18	2.78
	Rest of Phila	1.13	0.30	0.43	6.88
	Rest of metro area	0.50	0.18	0.07	1.17
	Location				
All cluster areas		2.76	1.08	0.45	6.07
	North Phila-Central	4.08	0.38	1.06	16.51
	North Phila-East	3.01	2.51	0.61	4.65
	North Phila-West	1.47	0.06	0.26	6.38
	North Camden	3.16	0.95	0.18	0.47
	South Camden	2.76	1.68	0.12	0.97

CPAA participants per 1,000 residents, by type of participant.

Enrollment in classes and workshops and attendance at performances and exhibitions is fairly consistent across the cluster neighborhoods, with the exception of North Philadelphia-West. None of the CPAA grantees are located in this neighborhood cluster,

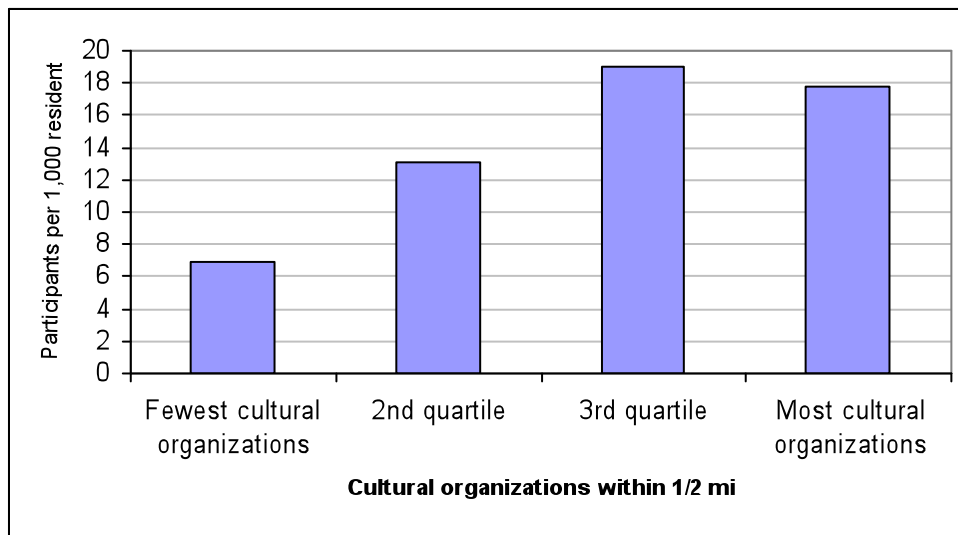
which may provide part of the explanation for the low rates of students and audience. These results are consistent with the findings of the Benchmark Project, which also identified North Philadelphia-West as an area that has seen its cultural scene decline over the past decade. With the exception of mailing lists, there is not a sharp difference in participation between Camden and North Philadelphia.

What Types of Neighborhoods Have Higher Participation?

In the region as a whole, cultural participation is consistently associated with three sets of factors: socio-economic standing, social diversity, and institutional presence. Sections of the metropolitan area that had the highest socio-economic status, those that were more diverse, and those with many cultural organizations were more likely to have higher rates of cultural participation.

For the most part, the factors that influence cultural participation in the region are not relevant to explaining it in North Philadelphia and Camden. The uniformly low socio-economic status of the areas and their lack of ethnic diversity prevent these factors from influencing or ‘explaining’ variations in cultural participation.

As in 2004, however, institutional presence does make a difference. Those parts of North Philadelphia and Camden with relatively high numbers of local cultural institutions are much more likely to be the areas from which CPAA grantees draw their participants.



CPAA participants per 1,000 residents, 2005, by number of cultural organizations within one-half mile of block group.

Neighborhood Housing Markets and Cultural Participation

During the early years of this decade the Philadelphia housing market has shown unusual vitality. According to an analysis of housing markets completed by The Reinvestment Fund (TRF) in collaboration with the City’s Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI), nearly half of all Philadelphia block groups for which there were data in both

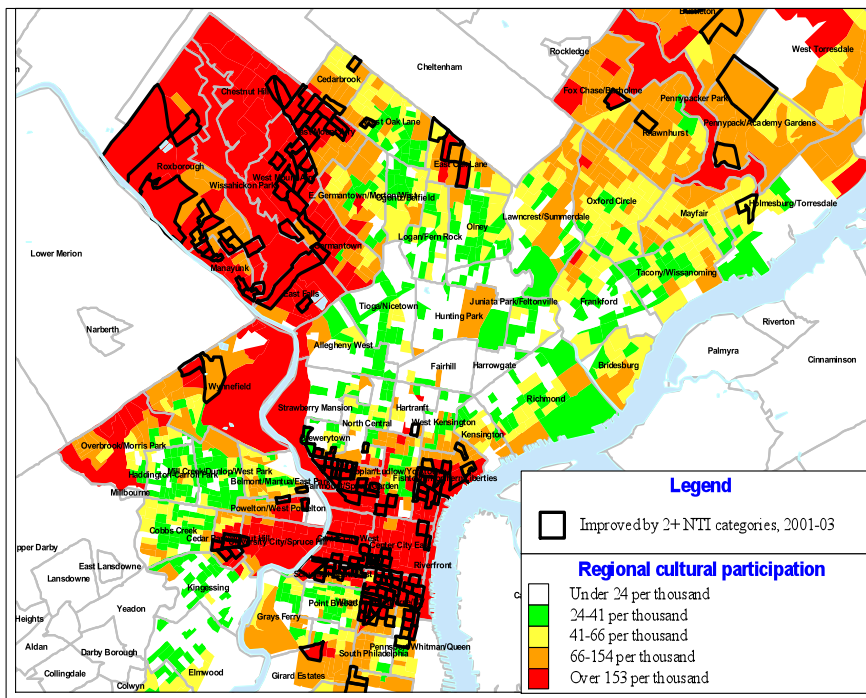
years saw their housing market conditions improve between 2001 and 2003.¹ In North Philadelphia, only about 20 percent of block groups experienced improvement over this period. Still, given its recent history, this was a good market for North Philadelphia.

For the city as a whole, SIAP discovered what can only be called a remarkable correlation between regional cultural participation and improved housing market.

Housing market change	Regional cultural participation				Total
	Lowest	2	3	Highest	
Less than 1 category	40.1	31.2	17.1	11.6	100.0
Two or more categories	1.1	2.8	11.2	84.9	100.0
All block groups	35.1	27.6	16.3	21.0	100.0

Change in housing market categories by regional cultural participation rate, 2001-2003.

Of the block groups where housing conditions improved more than two categories between 2001 and 2003, fully 85 percent were in the top quartile of the city with respect to cultural participation.

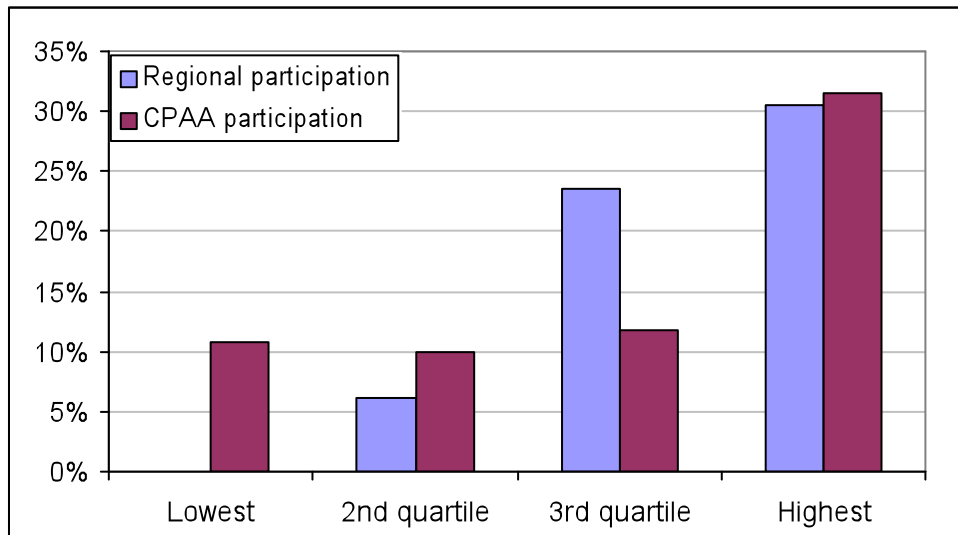


Cultural participation was a remarkably strong predictor of housing market improvement between 2001 and 2003. Neighborhoods adjoining North Philadelphia—including Brewerytown and Fishtown—were among those that saw their housing markets improve most quickly.

For the most part, this improvement in the housing market has occurred outside of North Philadelphia. Two of the neighborhoods with the greatest improvement—North Liberties and Brewerytown—however, border North Philadelphia. Using a slightly broader definition of improvement (moving up one NTI category), there is a clear relationship

¹ This is based on an eight-category scale developed by TRF that ranges from (best to worst): Regional choice, high market, steady, transitional up, transitional steady, transitional down, distressed, and reclamation. We consider a neighborhood that moved up one category to have improved.

between cultural participation and an improved housing market within North Philadelphia.



Percent of all block groups where housing market improved at least one category between 2001 and 2003 by cultural participation rates (quartile), North Philadelphia. Within North Philadelphia, the odds that a block group’s housing market would improve were clearly related to its level of cultural participation, whether measured as involvement in regional or CPAA grantee organizations.

Overall, 17 percent of block groups in North Philadelphia had their housing markets improve by at least one category between 2001 and 2003. However, among those with the highest participation in regional cultural organizations, 31 percent improved. Among block groups with the highest CPAA grantee participation, the same percent improved at least one NTI category.

To summarize, the data on CPAA participation in 2005 paints a picture of moderate increase. As the initiative moves forward, the assessment will be able to estimate the scope and contours of these changes with considerably more clarity.

3. GRANTEE VIEWS OF CPAA

As part of the assessment process, SIAP conducted interviews with the directors responsible for carrying out the projects funded by CPAA. The interviews elicited each grantee’s perspective on implementation and allowed to identify common themes in approach and experience.

The Big Split

A notable characteristic of the initiative as it has evolved is a split between two sets of grantee organizations—a split that is reinforced by geography, social class, and ethnicity.

We characterize the split as that between community-oriented and institution-oriented strategies. The community-oriented grantees are by and large institutions located in North Philadelphia and Camden. Their core work is offering classes to local residents, producing performances or curating exhibits directed at local audience, or organizing neighborhood festivals. The institution-oriented grantees are generally located outside of

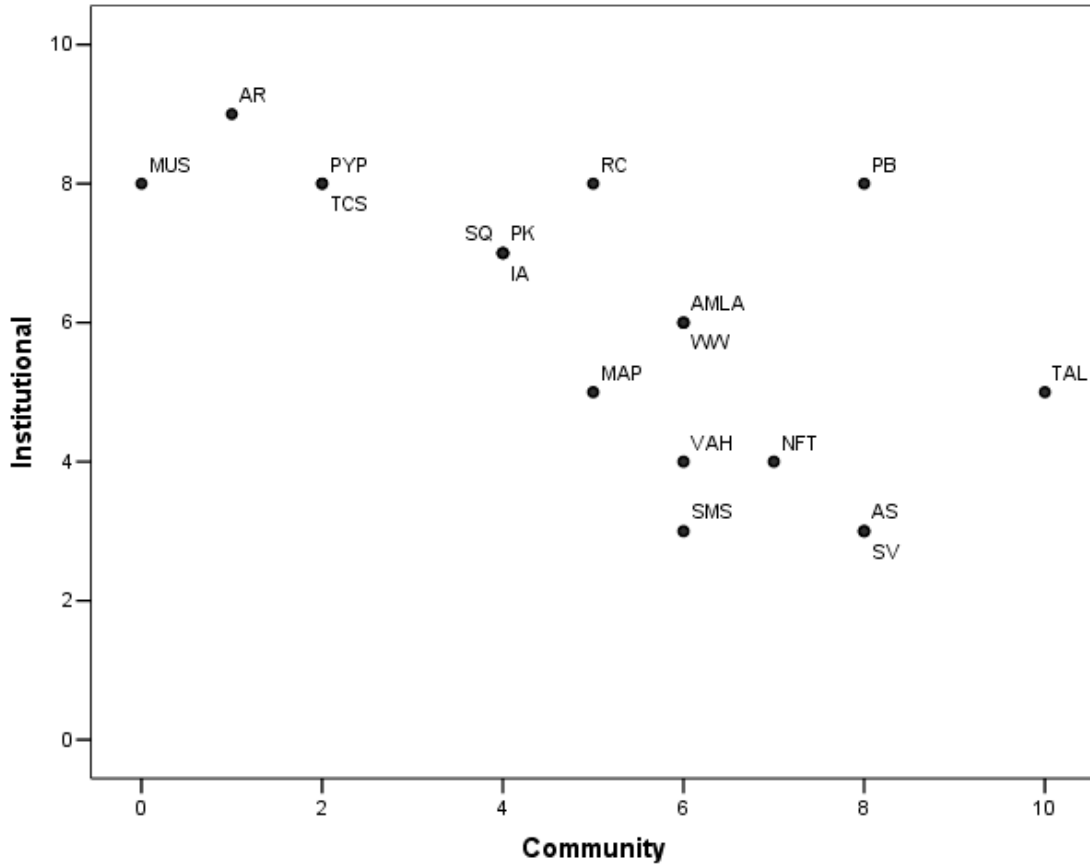
the neighborhoods and have had relatively little direct contact with residents. The ‘purest’ institutional-oriented grantees are those using school-based strategies; others collaborate with social service agencies and Philadelphia Housing Authority. Since the 1960s, of course, it has been widely recognized that these institutions, while *in* the community, are not *of* the community. As a result, they present relatively few opportunities for translating institutional connection into community engagement.

The chart on page 17 presents—in very schematic form—the distribution of CPAA grantees along these two dimensions. In the upper left-hand corner are the grantees most engaged in institution-oriented projects; these include the partnership between Musicopia, Young Playwrights, and The Clay Studio, ArtReach, and Rutgers Camden. In the lower right-hand corner are the most community-oriented programs. These include Taller Puertorriqueno, Art Sanctuary, the Village of Art and Humanities, Settlement Music School, and New Freedom Theatre, all of which are based in Camden or North Philadelphia. Scribe Video—because the Precious Places and Community Visions programs are so central to its core mission—is also included in this cluster.

Between these two clusters are a group of ‘hybrid’ grantees that have a more complicated relationship to these two dimensions. Point Breeze Performing Arts Center, for example, is a grassroots community arts program, but its community is in South Philadelphia. In the context of CPAA, Point Breeze’s focus is on an institutionally-oriented program based at three PHA sites in North Philadelphia. Yet, its core mission as a community-arts program influences its strategies and orientation toward CPAA. Spiral Q, Perkins, Mural Arts, AMLA, and InterAct represent a different relationship to these two dimensions. Their CPAA projects are institutionally-oriented; however, each has incorporated an explicit community engagement strategy into its project. Walt Whitman has developed a similar approach, although its Storefront Arts program is tilted somewhat more toward a community-orientation.

As the chart makes clear, the institution- and community-orientation differences are not absolute. Each grantee is located somewhere along each continuum. However, these differences in emphases have been reinforced by other considerations, which have turned them into a more sizable barrier to the initiative.

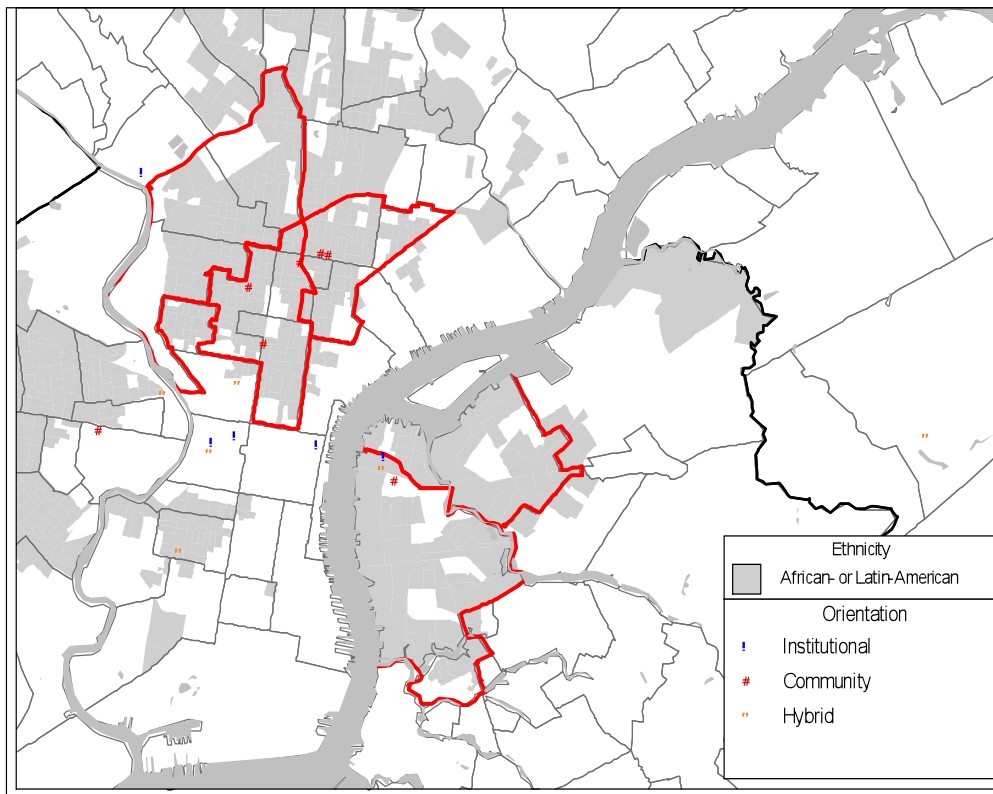
The first and most visible reinforcing factor is geography. Virtually all of the groups located in North Philadelphia and Camden are in the community-oriented cluster while a large number of the organizations located outside of these areas are in the institution-oriented or ‘hybrid’ cluster. This division is often compelled by circumstances. Local groups have a public face; they are a recognized community facility and often employ members of the community. Institution-oriented groups lack these entrees and are more dependent on partnerships with community-based organizations.



Distribution of CPAA grantees with respect to community- and institutional orientation.

Legend: AR—ArtReach; MUS—Musicopia; PYP—Philadelphia Young Playwrights; TCS—The Clay Studio; RC—Rutgers-Camden Center for the Arts; SQ—Spiral Q; PK—Perkins Center for the Arts; IA—InterAct Theater; PB—Point Breeze Performing Arts Center; AMLA; WW—Walt Whitman Arts Center; VAH—Village of Arts and Humanities; NFT—New Freedom Theatre; SMS—Settlement Music School—Camden; AS—Art Sanctuary; SV—Scribe Video Center; TAL—Taller Puertorriqueno; MAP—Mural Arts Program

A second reinforcement to this division is race and ethnicity. As the map below suggests, most of the community-oriented organizations are located in African- or Latin-American neighborhoods while most of the institution-oriented organizations are not.



Location of CPAA grantees compared to African- and Latin-American neighborhoods in metropolitan Philadelphia.

The difference between the two types of grantees is not in itself important. However, these two groups tend to have sharply different perceptions of CPAA. Specifically, community- vs. institutional-orientation influenced the three sets of findings from the interviews: how the CPAA project fits into the organization's mission; what has worked and not worked during the first year of project implementation; and issues around the overall goals of the initiative.

CPAA and Grantee Goals

Grantees for the most part see the goals of CPAA as fitting well with their organizational missions. This may appear to be a commonsense finding, but we often hear complaints that funding initiatives push organizations away from their core concerns. Clearly this is not the case with CPAA.

The grantees see CPAA enhancing their mission in three ways. First, many grantees see enhancing their organizational capacity as one of their central goals; CPAA has done an admirable job of supporting this goal. Second, CPAA is seen as supporting the grantees' objective to expand on-site participation. Finally, CPAA is given high marks for supporting the expansion of institutional partnerships.

Some community-oriented grantees saw a gap between their mission and CPAA goals, expressed as “a lost opportunity” vis-à-vis strengthening the targeted communities of North Philadelphia and Camden. According to one grantee, “The Knight CPAA initiative was an opportunity for community-based institutions in this community doing this work. . . . If local organizations [could] not be the leads, they [could] at least be the partners [as grantees]. . . . If local organizations are not developed enough, you need to provide monetary support for their role as partners, so they can develop.” For community-oriented arts and cultural organizations, organizational and community capacity-building are viewed as interdependent and mutually beneficial processes that contribute to community reanimation. Local program collaboration has the potential to “attract critical mass, gain momentum, [and] generate spillovers” in the words of one grantee. It’s “an opportunity to make something grow and institutionalize it.”

Organizational capacity building and stabilization

One of the major thrusts of the initiative has been to strengthen the organizational capacity of grantees. A number of the grantees saw this commitment as central to their current organizational objectives based on strategic planning, although the character of this fit varied from grantee to grantee.

One universal message to emerge from the interviews was an appreciation of the Foundation’s long-term funding commitment. CPAA began at a relatively low point in the life-cycle of community arts institutions. The recession of the early 2000s had hit several established organizations particularly hard, and a number of traditional funders of community arts organizations—in both the philanthropic and public sectors—had reduced their involvement in the sector.

CPAA has provided the grantees with an opportunity to look beyond their typical ‘short-term crisis-management’ mode and to consider broader issues related to organizational survival and the pursuit of their mission. Most directly, CPAA has allowed a number of grantees to hire staff to pursue community outreach and project management, functions that have often been absorbed into other staff responsibilities. In addition, a number of grantees have used grants and technical assistance to examine issues around succession, strategic planning, and facility planning.

Expanding on-site participation and crossover participation

Among organizations based in North Philadelphia and Camden, the most common fit between CPAA and the mission of organizations was to ‘get people in the door.’ One grantee saw CPAA having a direct impact on participation through the programs funded by the initiative, as well as “the assumption of cross-participation to other . . . programs.”

A number of grantees suggested that a blending of program expansion and increased partnering provided the best means of reaching more youth. “We anticipate that the satellites would feed into [our organization] in two ways: (1) the most promising students would come to [our] School and (2) kids and their families would come to [special] programs [that are] a low-cost, high impact program[s]—a big bang for the buck.” Yet, another grantee was skeptical about whether three years was enough time to build a sustainable youth program.

One barrier to this process is the current state of arts knowledge in the local communities. Several grantees noted that community residents have grown used to free programming and resist paying for classes or performances; *people* think that art happens for free. To reach out to the community, we do programming for free. If we then charge a fee or approach real cost, they think we're spendthrift. People have no idea that our utility bill just for turning on the lights is \$4,000 to \$7,000 . . . We offer classes for . . . 28 dollars a week. What are people's expectations? It is hard to develop a cordial relationship with the public when people think that art should be free."

Reducing barriers to involvement

For grantees that are not community arts centers, community participation translates into opening avenues for residents to develop social networks outside of their immediate neighborhood. One grantee saw CPAA supporting its vision "that community residents come to the . . . Center not just as audience members but in active roles like donor, volunteer, or presenter. . . . Residents, for example, would use the [center] for voluntary and community arts events, such as a tribute play for the dead. That is the long-term sustaining factor. Ultimately the goal is to make [this] an arts-rich community."

As the Benchmark Project report noted, Camden cultural organizations have found it particularly difficult to create links to local residents. As a result, one grantee noted the need to produce "real, visible evidence of our commitment to the community." Programs like Rutgers-Camden Center for the Arts' "ambassadors" program or Walt Whitman's "storefronts" program seeks to engage residents on a one-to-one basis, in a sense to build social networks one link at a time.

Organizations located outside of North Philadelphia and Camden often view the fit of CPAA into their mission in different ways. A number of these organizations have been committed to an institutional partnership means of building participation. For example, the *Exploring Ourselves and our Cultures* partnership (involving Musicopia, Young Playwrights, and The Clay Studio) is premised on the belief that school-based programming generates ripple effects that will bring about broader cultural participation. Other organizations have built explicit links between institutionally-based programs and broader participation. For example, InterAct's goal is to bring the kids in its outreach programs downtown to InterAct Theatre to perform and to showcase the kids' performances in front of its adult audience and main stage subscribers.

Develop and deepen community partnerships

Not surprisingly, the engagement with community partners has been the most widespread means of linking grantee missions to the goals of CPAA. But within these broad categories, there are subtle differences related to the nature of the partners. It is hardly news that many organizations located within poor, urban neighborhoods are often "in" the neighborhood but not "of" the neighborhood. The institutional rigidity of public schools, public housing agencies, and social service providers has been an issue in areas like North Philadelphia and Camden for the past fifty years. These more bureaucratized organizations present one set of challenges around partnership related to their own institutional logic. For example, what appear as 'partnerships' to CPAA grantees are often seen as 'outside contractors' to schools and housing agencies, which are acquiring a particular service or program.

The most recent potential bureaucratic partners for cultural organizations are in law enforcement. Several grantees have pursued funding from police departments, prisons, and county prosecutor's offices. Certainly, these are parts of the public sector that have seen their funding increase in recent years, and the expansion of community policing and restorative justice approaches has made this sector more amenable to seeing the possible benefits of culture-based strategies. Yet, given the often tense relationships between law enforcement and community residents, these community partnerships may limit other overtures to local residents.

Another set of grantees has sought to develop partnerships with less bureaucratic organizations. For example, Scribe Video Center's Precious Places program seeks to build relationships among local residents, humanities scholars, and media artists to foster a new understanding of the importance of place in North Philadelphia and Camden. Spiral Q's project—as a means to mobilize and empower marginal communities—seeks to cultivate and document communities' stories, as well, through the use of pageants and parades. These more informal community partnerships carry their own difficulties including missed meetings and unhonored commitments, but they appear to provide more promise of linking residents to cultural providers than the more bureaucratized institutional settings.

ArtReach provides a unique example of deepening community involvement. In contrast to the school and housing-based programs that seek to use an institutional focus to connect to a wider community, ArtReach's "community" is defined by its institutional partners. Because of its member agency structure, ArtReach is not as concerned with sustainability of community partnerships or reaching target constituencies but rather sustaining the depth of programming.

Develop community and educational skills of artists

An often-overlooked element of the community cultural sector is its role in developing artists. On the one hand, community-based organizations provide jobs in a sector that is often characterized by unemployment. At the same time, the sector provides rare educational and training opportunities. The Mural Arts Program is the most obvious example of a training opportunity that is hard to duplicate, but grantees like AMLA and Taller Puertorriqueno—as well as non-grantees like Asian Arts Initiative and the Philadelphia Folklore Project—are also critical to the nurturing of emerging and mid-career artists and giving them the skills needed to do grassroots work.

This goal is particularly important to CPAA because the use of one-to-one community outreach strategies, often via artists and humanities scholars, has emerged as a significant impact of the initiative.

What Has Worked and What Has Not

CPAA implementation grants have allowed cultural organizations to pursue two goals: to build on their existing participation and to develop new partnerships. In addition to these two instrumentalities, however, a third set of strategies has emerged from the projects: individual outreach efforts using artists, humanities scholars, folklorists, or 'ambassadors.' No single generalization can summarize the grantees' current perceptions of what strategies have worked or not worked during the first year of the implementation

phase. Overall, however, grantees expressed more satisfaction with their efforts focused on building on existing participation than they expressed about institutional partnerships. Furthermore, the strategies around individual outreach—although often in an early stage—have generated the most enthusiasm among grantees that are using them.

Grantees with a longer history of serving low-income neighborhoods see CPAA's primary contribution as the opportunity to stabilize programs or expand upon their long-term strategies. For these organizations, CPAA funding was seen as an endorsement of their long-term commitment. As one grantee noted, "Community arts are the future of the arts. You have got to get them young, and the younger the better." The ability of these grantees to expand community programming—like La Feria del Barrio in North Philadelphia—is one of the major impacts of the initiative. A direct influence of CPAA has been the ability of local organizations to hire program directors for initiative-funded projects, which has enhanced the organizations' capacity for direct outreach as well as new community partnerships.

A number of community-oriented grantees expressed considerable satisfaction about their local partnership building. AMLA has been actively involved in the East North Philadelphia Youth Services (ENPYS) coalition, which has given musical expression a more prominent role in the development of its educational and cultural curriculum. Taller's *Visitacion* program—a cultural encounter developed in collaboration with Raices Culturales Latinoamericanas—has brought hundreds of school children to Taller and has developed a curriculum for teachers and schools involved in the program.

The partnership between Musicopia, The Clay Studio, and Philadelphia Young Playwrights is viewed by all partners as a success, both in terms of delivering programs and in developing a stronger relationship with the school district: "We have buy-in by the Philadelphia School District. They have been very supportive, and the relationship is working extremely well." Other institution-oriented grantees, including InterAct Theatre Company and ArtReach, also expressed satisfaction developing programs with local partners.

Yet, the partnership focus has not been an unalloyed success. Even the most successful partnerships admit that: "We took for granted that implementation would be easier than it actually was." In some cases, unresolved issues between partners have prevented entire elements of the implementation plan from moving ahead. Sometimes this was the result of institutional inflexibility on the part of larger institutions like the School District of Philadelphia or the Philadelphia Housing Authority. For example, efforts to create a city-wide Latin jazz band were frustrated by a number of bureaucratic obstacles. Other times it was a function of clashes of personality and interests and/or time and resource shortages. Efforts to coordinate work among CPAA grantees in Camden have generally been stalled.

Concerns about partnerships have resulted, to some extent, from the perception of many grantees that the Foundation and TCC 'wanted' these partnerships to happen, even if the grantees themselves had reservations about them. This certainly played a part in the history of cooperation among the Camden grantees. The community arts centers, of course, were already heavily involved with institutional partners, and sometimes perceived the pressure to partner with other CPAA grantees as more of a burden than an

opportunity. “The partnering is fine if it makes sense,” noted one grantee. “On the other hand, if you already have the resources, there is little point in getting someone involved just to get them involved.”

One surprise that emerged from the interviews was a convergence among grantees in their use of one-on-one outreach strategies. Although the specifics vary from grantee to grantee, they each see using individuals with cultural competence as a key strategy for deepening the engagement of participants in their program.

For some grantees, these strategies represented simply an expansion on their existing program. Scribe Video, for example, has connected with community groups via media artists and humanities scholars for a number of years. CPAA has allowed Scribe to expand this strategy to more places. For other grantees, however, this approach represents a significant innovation. Mural Arts’ use of both folklorists and ethnographers has added a depth to community voice in the development of mural themes with the artist. RCCA and Walt Whitman are using a different definition of cultural knowledgability; rather than relying on trained scholars, they have looked for individuals with knowledge of the participant community and the personal skills needed to connect with potential participants.

The outreach efforts are notable in several respects. First, they are seen as successful by most grantees that are using them. In addition, they seem responsive to the Benchmark Project’s finding that there was a great amount of informal social engagement in North Philadelphia and Camden, but that this involvement was not connected to established cultural resources. If these one-on-one strategies are able to establish durable links, they might serve as a model for future efforts to stimulate cultural engagement in low-income communities.

In conclusion, grantees are generally satisfied with their individual implementation goals and with their efforts at one-on-one outreach. Institutional partnerships have had more mixed results. For institution-oriented organizations, they have generally been successful because partnerships are the primary means of connecting with constituencies. For community-oriented grantees, however, they have created both successes and challenges. These organizations already had large numbers of institutional partners, so the push to expand relationships with other grantees was often seen as exactly that—a ‘push’ exerted from outside.

CPAA Goals and Grantee Missions

Our interview question about the purpose of the initiative and how it fits with each grantee’s mission evoked a variety of responses. It is clear that the grantees understand that the purpose of the initiative was “to broaden, deepen, and diversify cultural participation.” Indeed, this has become somewhat of a mantra among the grantees. In addition, most of the grantees acknowledge that increasing the variety of institutional partnerships is a key means of achieving this goal.

At the same time, there was a clear difference of emphasis between how community-oriented and institution-oriented grantees described the role of these partnerships. Institution-oriented grantees have a tendency to see partnerships as an end in themselves or as the key strategy for increasing broader participation. According to one grantee,

“The students’ enhanced self-knowledge through the creation of art and their sharing of that art within their families, schools, and neighborhoods will form the basis of a stronger, healthier, and more culturally enriched community.” Community-oriented grantees, generally, are less sanguine on the role of institutional partners. One grantee, for example, suggested that arts partners should function more like sub-contractors—brought in to provide a particular service but not central to the overall program.

Several grantees expressed concerns, as well, about the cost of partnerships. Grantees that manage or have access to facilities in North Philadelphia noted that they were under pressure to accommodate grantees from outside the area even though this carried real costs.

Questions about the Foundation’s goals elicited responses related to the Foundation’s strategies as well. Here the history of TCC’s involvement in CPAA continues to generate a certain amount of confusion. TCC was very involved with each grantee in the planning stage of the initiative. The firm’s clear “theory of change” was that organizational strengthening and arts partnerships would give grantees the ability to expand participation, and it was not shy in communicating this theory to grantees. During 2005, the Foundation decided that TCC’s involvement in the CPAA initiative would become more circumscribed. TCC would facilitate peer learning among grantees through a workshop series and provide a number of hours of consulting per grantee, but it no longer had responsibility for the overall trajectory of the initiative.

This shift in TCC’s role was communicated to grantees in June 2005, but as we interviewed grantees in early 2006, many seemed unsure about the precise change in TCC’s role. This is, in part, a reflection of the grantees’ orientations. The institution-oriented grantees—for which organizational capacity-building and partnering are priorities—have been in a much better position to take advantage of both the workshops and coaching offered by TCC. For them, TCC’s role has had greater continuity. Community-oriented grantees expressed the view that the initiative had shifted from a hands-on strategy to a hands-off strategy. As one grantee put it: “We had so much hands-on during the planning process and so little contact since receiving the award. Are the goals the same?” Overall, however, regardless of orientation, the CPAA grantees understood that TCC had consulted with them to develop a technical assistance agenda—not the workshop speaker series that is the actual program.

One interesting side-effect is a perception on the part of some grantees that the Foundation was committed to a hands-off approach to the initiative. One grantee commented: “I applaud Knight for doing something that’s so iffy. Take this money and do something with it . . . In fact, that’s their method, not their goal.” Another noted: “Knight gives us funds, and we are free to fail or succeed. TCC checks in occasionally but is very low key.”

The one-on-one outreach strategy has been a beneficiary of this perceived autonomy. A number of grantees were quite candid that these efforts have not worked out exactly as planned. Finding the right fit between a folklorist or ‘ambassador’ and a community is hard to achieve, and a number of grantees have had to rethink these outreach efforts.

SUGGESTIONS

SIAP's findings to date are too preliminary to be framed as *recommendations*. However, we have been encouraged by Julie Tarr to make suggestions about mid-course corrections that might benefit CPAA. It is in this spirit that we make two observations—one having to do with a gap in the current program and one having to do with the longer-term impact of CPAA.

Training Community Artists and Ambassadors

As we have noted, one of CPAA's unanticipated successes during its first year was the use of one-to-one outreach. Most of these efforts use professional artists or humanists, although others focus on individuals with the right 'people skills.' Grantees report a lot of enthusiasm for this approach, although they admit they still have a lot to learn about choosing the right artists or 'ambassadors' and using them effectively.

The initiative would be well served by providing some technical assistance to those grantees using this strategy. The current arrangements for technical assistance—the peer-learning workshops and TCC Group coaching—were clearly designed to respond to the initiative's emphasis on organizational capacity-building and institutional partnerships. The institution-oriented grantees are the major beneficiaries of existing technical assistance.

Our suggestion would be to contract with one or more arts organizations in Philadelphia that have experience in training artists for community work. The Philadelphia Folklore Project has extensive experience identifying, documenting, and providing technical assistance to local grassroots and traditional artists. The Asian Arts Initiative has a track record with its Artists in Community Training program. A consultant might undertake reconnaissance to determine the level of interest and the types of technical assistance that would be most helpful. Then, a decision could be made about whether to make a substantial commitment to community-oriented technical assistance.

When CPAA was originally developed, it focused on two strategies for increasing participation: enhancing organizational capacity and developing institutional partnerships. As the initiative has unfolded, a third strategy—using artists and others to pursue individual outreach—has emerged as a significant dimension of CPAA. TCC has developed a program of technical assistance to respond to the first two strategies. We suggest that modest resources be made available to provide assistance to those grantees pursuing this third strategy.

Participation For What?

CPAA is focused on increasing cultural participation in North Philadelphia and Camden. One lingering question is: why? Certainly, there are a number of legitimate answers to this question. The original motivation for CPAA came from the findings of the 1999 community indicator survey commissioned by the Knight Foundation, which found that nearly half of African-Americans—regardless of educational background—considered the lack of arts and cultural opportunities in metropolitan Philadelphia a 'big problem,' compared to only 15 percent of whites and 30 percent of Latin Americans. This perceived lack of cultural opportunities provided the core rationale for CPAA.

This rationale led to the design of an initiative that has what might be called an ‘internal’ focus. If the purpose of the initiative was to expand cultural opportunities, then a focus on the organizational capacity of cultural organizations and partnerships between groups was an entirely appropriate strategy.

As the initiative moves through its second year, it is an appropriate time to consider what’s next. In particular, when we consider the role of the arts and culture in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods—as distinct from their importance to African Americans or Latin Americans across the region—it makes sense to consider how cultural engagement might help address some of the other pressing challenges faced by North Philadelphia and Camden. In other words, it is time to consider how these ‘internal’ strategies that have been the focus of CPAA might link to ‘external’ strategies that could have a wider impact on these communities.

As we have noted earlier, there is compelling evidence that cultural engagement is related to *community capacity building* and that this increased capacity translates into concrete impacts on poverty rates, population growth, and property values. SIAP is in the process of learning more about the direct connections between culture and community revitalization and developing policy approaches that maximize this effect. The Reinvestment Fund (TRF), a community development financial institution, and SIAP are currently pursuing a project that identifies key policy and funding options that might incentivize culture-based revitalization efforts. Over the next year, as our work with TRF moves to completion, we will share the findings with the Knight Foundation and the CAC.