NNIPCamp Columbus, June 19, 2013

Session 2 – Arts & Culture

Led by Kathy Pettit, Urban Institute

Notes by Maia Woluchem

Present: Kerri Campbell, Liza Morehead, Melanie Kortyka, Devin Keithley, Bart Roberts, Steve King, Gloria Albetta, Max Weselcouch, Eleanor Tutt

Maria Rosario Jackson—Arts and Culture and Community Building Project (<http://www.urban.org/publications/311392.html>. ) is the basis for this. Getting beyond the formal arts to become a part of it. And going beyond it: how does arts affect health and economic development?

They’re working on something with the National Endowment of the Arts (description at http://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/activities/partner/validating-arts-and-livability-indicators-selected-communities):

They’ve created a set of comprehensive indicators, based on the idea that the arts are going to grow the economy as well. So the indicators from national data sets are important.

* Part I: Test the national indicators
* Part II: Catalog the indicators

In particular, tracking local arts indicators from projects around the country. So you can say—here are some ways that other places are tracking the expanse of arts in their community. So question—what are other people doing or what are people thinking of this?

Gloria’s comment: We never felt like they got any traction—it was interesting to participate but it didn’t really resonate. The indicators were also up for debate. She’s concerned that it just came down really to counting indicators rather than measuring impact.

Eleanor: Some things we’re tracking are the lives of artists—Survey called “Artists count”.

Arts and data day: Getting artists interested in displaying work in a way that can captivate the neighborhood. Titled “Off the Charts”. For an example—A play about breast cancer was released in St. Louis. We may learn from that that there are things that resonate when using art as opposed to using some other medium.

Liza: With our arts and culture indicators—there haven’t been a lot of traction. We don’t have interesting data—artists’ earnings and school arts’ specialists exist already, but stakeholders were interested in knowing the socioeconomic breakdown of artistic communities and things like that—they aren’t sure how to use the data in a productive way.

Big question—what does traction look like?

Gloria: What action does the data help stimulate? Maybe the funding is important, but it wasn’t really in my case.

Bart: We did an economic impact study of the A&C organizations in our Buffalo region and people are really interested in it still! Cultural data project as well—In NY state, it involves organizations providing info about what they do and how they do it—research can be done without explicitly contacting the organizations

Liza: If every group that’s funded can increase the communities that they serve geographically, it increases neighborhood equity and fulfills the mission. But they are not measuring it.

Tim (Dallas): Big Thought (<http://www.bigthought.org/>) —arts organization that has a program called “Thriving Minds”. The action is changing the presence and relevance of arts in schools and public space. The traction is the annual report showing the district’s performance benchmarks (# music teachers in schools). Or alignment of programs in elementary/middle/high school. What does Dallas need to do to support these alignments all the way through? This work captured experiencing art and music at home and in their neighborhood work. Trying to improve curricula

Research Archive describing their surveys:

<http://www.bigthought.org/WhatWeDo/ResearchAssessment/ResearchArchive>

Indicators: What % of families went to a play and where? Can survey “creative landscape” in households, neighborhoods, schools, etc.

Let’s access kids through the increased relevance—like One Direction. This project started with the notion of building appetite of the arts and the relevant supply. Questions they grappled with: is sports a culture?

ESRI has data on arts. We should check Gloria’s data from neighborhood to neighborhood to check if the ESRI data matches the survey data coming from Gloria’s household study.

Retail decision makers use the ESRI data to determine where they’re going to locate—movie theaters for example.

Tim: National Center for Charitable Statistics & the coding system (NTEE)—to participate, you need to have an employee and a certain income. So what we’re revealing is that there may be some issues in the data. Lots of organizations have poorly categorized some of their activities. (<http://nccs.urban.org/Learn-About-NCCS-Data.cfm>)

Devin: We tried to cover many aspects of the arts in the Benchmarks projects based on the Americans for the Arts Arts Index. They found that the number of festivals from the NCCS data seemed fishy when they looked at the raw data. Measuring social entrepreneurship is a problem for us

Tim: Arts in schools are really up to the principal. It’s not mandated by the district or the state. There’s no rhyme or reason for the arts curriculum.

Eleanor: Our regional arts curriculum is funded by the hotel/motel tax. Does investment in the arts pull money from some areas and push it into others? Example— money from hotel/motel to other neighborhoods can potentially create more equity. Eleanor participated in a program that connected artists and social workers, so they can have a shared vocabulary and learn about program evaluation.

Kathy: Generally NNIP partners have a connecting role to get arts and other things together. Arts & neighborhood development, arts & health, arts & education, etc.

Max: Baltimore’s underground art scene has fostered a culture that may be worth harnessing. Is there a way to potentially identify those underground places and harness the energy?

Kathy: There’s a ***Cultural Research Google Group*.**

<http://groups.google.com/group/cultural-research/topics>

An idea is that you shouldn’t commoditize arts. They should be valuable as they are and not just for economic gain.

Gloria: That’s why arts curriculum in the schools is great.

Liza: Number of school arts’ specialists and students per specialist is recorded nationally by school district.

Tim: Sometimes that discrepancy can be explained by capital. Or parents *care* and provide auctions by the PTA or something like that. The district is trying to communicate the fact that they’re not responsible for those disparities.

Bart: The indicator of cost per student is really important—Sometimes struggling schools have $20,000, and sometimes the nice suburbs have $12,000. Sometimes the money raised by parents is important. Aside from state funding, there are lots of other funders.

Tim: Lots of arts aren’t captured—the underground, sometimes it’s entirely informal. It’s a different way of getting at the question—public art and public space. Dallas survey tried to arrive at this—do you get things at school, at home, at a friend’s place?

[***www.bigthought.org***](http://www.bigthought.org) is an important website here.

Big Thought has a protocol manual as well. They wanted to do something that was relevant rather than approaching the problem by replacing deficits. It was culturally competent. An asset-based approach instead of a deficit-based approach.

Kathy: MuralBase in Philly—shows the location of all the murals in the city. Question to the group—Is crowd-sourcing really helpful in this?

Max: Yes. Because if there are things people take pride in, it could be a good opportunity. Philly counted their murals, now they’re known for murals!

Tim: Crowd-sourcing is helpful to delineating neighborhoods in Dallas. It could be used to find “best music” “best paintings”, etc.

Devin: UrbanSpoon is totally crowd-sourced and it’s awesome. So maybe creating a cultural food index or something similar to UrbanSpoon.

Melanie Kortyka: Artwalk in MyColumbus app helps in 7 districts to promote highlights of the area. Funding through the Columbus Arts Council, run by Columbus Public Health. Mobile app is used for tracking, calling, etc.

Tim: What we’ve arrived at is that crowd-sourcing is important to understanding what the valued assets are. For example, Dallas has a great urban forest, now with a trail. How do we use this trail to get people into the neighborhood? Allowing the community to label what the “culture” is.

Bart: Crowd-sourcing that produces data will not be as exciting to everyone else. We need incentives for reporting—a final product.

Steve: Once you start to codify an art area, it’s the precursor for gentrification, which isn’t good as well.

Bart: One important topic is historic preservation (and it is easier to measure).

Liza: There’s no app that shows registered historical properties, locally or nationally.

**Relevant Links:**

Columbus’ self-guided walks, with downloadable maps: <http://publichealth.columbus.gov/artwalk.aspx>

A new program with FREE guided walks throughout different neighborhoods in the community (a combination of the Columbus Art Walks and the Columbus Landmarks Foundation):

<http://columbuslandmarks.org/art-walks-landmark-talks/>

<http://www.bigthought.org>