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IMPACT ASSESSMENT IN THE ARTS
A FIELD SURVEY AND NEW FRAMEWORK

Introduction

"The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls."
- *Pablo Picasso*

Picasso's quote about the value of art is striking in its beauty, profundity, and distance from the material reality of much of human experience. From his point of view, the practical work that dominates public discourse and private lives, the grand work of business and government and the modest work of making a living, is just the dust of daily life.

Most people, however, live in the everyday. While art enriches everyday life, the need to make a living frames almost everything we do. Furthermore, the world seems to be getting more practical over time. Rising secularism makes it harder to talk about issues of the soul, and our increasing reliance on data throughout our lives makes anything that cannot be quantified seem almost not to exist. Those who love the arts take their value for granted, but efforts to communicate that value are increasingly unsuccessful unless they can be made in practical language. And of course artists need to make a living too.

This paper examines the question of how to make a practical case for the arts through a survey of the field of arts advocacy. As young arts professionals, we wanted to understand the history and trajectory of our field. Our goal is to synthesize the issues of the field in a way that will help us move them forward throughout our careers.

In section one, we conduct a literature review to understand the recent history of research on impact assessment in the arts. We look at research focused on artists and arts organizations and nonprofit organizations in general, while also drawing inspiration from studies in the field of marketing that examine experience-based products very similar to arts projects.

In section two, we compile indicators that repeatedly show up in the literature review, and propose a set of generic categories of arts impact. We then introduce a framework to visualize our system of impact measurement, and give examples of how this framework may be used to

profile both the interests of funders and the competencies of arts programs. Our hope is that such a framework is a step toward resolving an important gap in the field identified in a number of papers - the inability of funders to assess opportunity cost when considering arts programs.

In section three, we elaborate on our framework through two mini-case studies detailing the relative impact profiles of two New Haven community arts programs. We discuss how the two programs, which may be placed by funders in a similar category, in reality have different impact goals and ideally should not compete for the same funding. Our hope is that a tool like our framework can facilitate more efficient matching in the crowded market for arts funding.

I. Literature Review

Though arts impact measurement has traditionally been tied to economic development measures, we found through a survey of current literature and through correspondence with members of the National Endowment for the Arts, ArtPlace America, and Bloomberg Philanthropies, that the future of such measurement is vast. No longer are "tourism generated" or "jobs filled" the most convincing arguments for increased programming in the arts. Rather, to win support of donors, policy makers, and other stakeholders, arts initiatives and organizations are increasingly oriented towards improvement of urban life and community cohesion and must use convincing data and qualitative accounts to demonstrate both instrumental and intrinsic success. Here, we attempt to summarize the most compelling research to date on reframing arts outcomes including: economic indicators, data utilization, capturing intrinsic benefits, and finally placemaking and community development efficacy.

Traditional Measurement in the Arts: Economic Impact

<u>"New England's Creative Economy: Nonprofit Sector Impact" (New England Foundation for the Arts, 2011)</u>
We open our literature review with a paper representin the status quo of art i pact easurement i the United States over the past several decades, with focus on straightforward econo ic impact. The New England Foundation for the Arts, which published this report in 2011, kes the quantitative case that arts an ulture nonprofit organizations contribute to the vitality of surrounding for-profit and nonprofit businesses by investing in employees and capital expenditures and by attracting audience members – thus boosting the creative economy.

In outlining its methodology, the report describes the size, location, and operations of various nonprofits across New England "from the world-famous museums in Boston to the smallest historic society in Downeast Maine, from performance centers in Vermont to design schools in

Rhode Island, and libraries all across the region" (NEFA, 2). It then presents quantitative data in aggregate to make the following five points:

First, arts and culture nonprofits in New England deserve recognition as a significant industry in their own right, spending over $3billion and employing 53,000+ Americans in 2009 alone (NEFA, 3). Second, this industry is progressing at a steady clip, with growth in number of organizations at 14%, spending at 24%, and employment at 28% over the span of nine years (NEFA, 4). Third, the arts and culture industry is stable and generally less affected by economic downturns than most other businesses. For instance, during the global economic crisis, New England's overall workforce and personal income diminished. Over the same time period, even as nonprofit arts organizations saw their assets wane by 6.9%, the number of organizations still grew by 1.1% and spending grew by 11.5%, demonstrating resilience even during turbulent times (NEFA, 5). Fourth, they have a significant commercial footprint, with a total economic impact of $8.4billion and 83,000 jobs in 2009 comprised of "direct" spending, "indirect" supply chain effects, and "induced" impact through the spending of industry and vendor staff (NEFA, 6-7). Fifth and finally, the authors propose that overarching economic gains should also include measures beyond spending, such as additional dollars locally from the arts attracting tourism, new commercial and private residents, and the cultivation of artists.

Proposals for Reframing Art's Impact using Data

"Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators" (The Urban Institute, 2006)
Taking a leap from the economic impact approach commonly utilized by arts organizations, the Urban Institute's Arts and Culture Indicators Project, a group whose mission is to "help policymakers make better decisions for neighborhoods and cities" instead takes the data-driven approach of demonstrating how *communities* are impacted by powerful work in the arts (Urban, 2). Their method involves developing quantitative arts metrics that can be integrated into more general evaluation processes that compare quality of life longitudinally in different environments. The Urban Institute's ultimate success would be to gradually alter existing city livability measurement systems to acknowledge the powerful presence of the arts.

This paper presents three advances in the work of the Urban Institute's indicators project. First, it proposes the following definition of cultural vitality: "…evidence of creating, disseminating, validating, and supporting arts and culture as a dimension of everyday life in communities" (Urban, 4). The definition is meant as a frame for an index of measures to assess the presence of cultural assets and activity that has a positive effect on communities. The paper breaks down what it seeks to measure into three dimensions: presence, participation, and support.

Second, the paper reviews existing data sets for their usefulness in helping to measure cultural vitality along the three identified dimensions. It presents an arrangement of datasets in four tiers.

> *Tier One: inexpensive and universally available data collected at least each year that is nationally comparable (i.e. Census Bureau's County Business Patterns, National Center for Charitable Statistics, Bureau of Labor Statistics)*
> *Tier Two: The same as tier one, but not nationally comparable. (i.e. public assembly and funding data collected by local agencies or police departments)*
> *Tier Three: Same as tier two, but only representing a distinct occurrence, rather than activity over time.*
> *Tier Four: Qualitative data (i.e. ethnographic or anthropological community studies)*
> (Urban, 7-8).

Third, the paper proposes initial arts and culture evaluation tools using Tier One and Two data. As examples of how these indicators would be used, the paper compares cities through the existin eographic breakdown of metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) based on the indicators. The authors then use data in all tiers to describe in detail the cultural vitality of individual example communities. The initial set of indicators touch on the *presence* of opportunities for cultural participation through measures such as arts establishments per thousand population (nonprofit and commercial); percentage of employment in nonprofit and commercial arts establishments as a proportion of all employment; nonprofit arts organizations per thousand population; and nonprofit community celebrations, festivals, fairs and parades per thousand population. The paper does not present indicators to directly measure *participation,* the second dimension, as it did not find Tier One or Two datasets able support that assessment. For *support,* the indicators mentioned are nonprofit art expenses per capita; nonprofit arts contributions per capita; and percentage of artist jobs, relative to all jobs (Urban, 38-40).

The paper concludes by assessing the future challenge of assessing arts impact through efforts such as the arts and culture indicators project. It names barriers, such as the lack of accepted, available information within the arts field for presence and participation, such as arts venues per capita or the level of arts curricula in K-12 education. However, the authors remain optimistic as the planning field becomes increasingly interested in ideas like the increasing the "creative economy" and the "creative class" (Urban, 9).

"Communicating Value: Reframing Arts and Culture Data" (RMC Research Corporation, 2008)
Joining in the movement to expand arts and cultural evaluation beyond traditional economic development metrics, the authors of this paper survey 45 planning and economic develop ent professionals to draw conclusions about when and how quantitative methodologies should be

used in the arts. The authors conclude by considering how to tactically convey this data outside the arts sector in order to reach wider audiences.

They organize data into six categories, quoted directly (RMC, 4):
1. *Data about Employment in Cultural Jobs and Cultural Fields*
2. *Data about Economic Impact of Cultural Activity*
3. *Data about Cultural Assets*
4. *Data about Infrastructure Supporting Cultural Activity*
5. *Data about Participation in Cultural Activities*
6. *Data about Public Opinion of Value of Cultural Activity*

The planning and economic professionals surveyed are consistently skeptical of data in the arts, and the authors propose two explanations for this. First, the participants have very personal ideas about the arts based on their own histories interacting with cultural resources. They have difficulty divorcing arts data collection and conclusions from personal memories of attending arts events. Second, data collection methods as well as data interpretation in the arts is not fully trusted nor has it regularly complied with data best practices in the past. Past users have been known for "over-interpreting or over-generalizing results and claiming causal impact from descriptive or correlational designs and data" (RMC, 11). As a result, the authors admit that arts data related to "economic impact, cluster employment, participation, perceptions, and vitality indicators" has historically been used well to describe or promote programming in articles or annual reports, but it is not yet universally convincing for making policy decisions (RMC, 12).

The authors recommend developing a better understanding of audiences to whom data is being presented and gearing data towards their purposes. For instance, planners and developers are quite focused on assets when thinking about investments in jobs, housing, and enhancing safety. When speaking to developers, arts organizations would benefit from using more data about arts assets and linking those assets to urban resources − for instance, thinking about public art and transit routes. Arts impact measurement would also reap rewards from recognizing constraints, considering the arts as a contribution to a particular result rather than a cause, using longitudinal studies (the paper cites approximately six to eight years as ideal), and finally, utilizing specific data about arts participant behavior and preferences that is more sophisticated and nuanced than that being used presently. When these requirements are satisfactorily met, quantitative methodologies across participation, public opinion, and cultural or economic impact, to name a few, will become powerful tools for the arts sector (RMC, 14-19).

<u>"Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts"</u> (RAND Corporation, 2004)

Within the context of our literature review, this paper serves as a transition point between the previous three sources and the forthcoming exploration of intrinsic benefits withi the arts. The authors of "Gifts of the Muse" propose that benefits of the arts are too co   o nly characterized only as instru ental, define   s "indirect outco es of arts experiences" that lead to positive outco es in other areas (i.e. test scores, social standing, economic growth), rather than a combination of instrumental and intrinsic (RAND, 3). Intrinsic qualities in the arts, defined as "inherent" and "valued for themselves rather than as a means to something else," have been proven not only to provide value for individuals but also to accelerate the public good (RAND, 3, 69). Examples include art's ability to illustrate shared cultural values or speak for those who have no voice. The paper concludes that intrinsic benefits are deeply ingrained in the realization of instrumental benefits; individuals must connect to the arts, find pleasure in the arts, or otherwise relate to the arts before the arts will catalyze change.

The paper also asserts that research behind instrumental benefits in the cultural sector has been disregarded primarily for three reasons. They are (1) unsophisticated data collection and analysis methodologies, (2) lack of specificity, and perhaps most importantly (3) the lack of recognition of opportunity costs. In other words, quantitative studies on benefits of the arts generally fail to acknowledge that benefits generated from the arts could possibly be generated by other means, at times more directly or efficiently, such as through projects in infrastructure and education (RAND, xvi). At the same time, policymakers often only condone public spending if the issue at stake is aligned with their public priorities, and arts funders remain unconvinced by intrinsic evidence. Thus, arts initiatives feel pressure to prove their unique ability to enhance civic priorities and their advocates strategically avoid mentioning more straightforward alternatives to improve urban life. The key moving forward will be finding a way to illuminate instrumental benefits within a larger context that includes benefits considered to be qualitative or intrinsic.

Finally, the paper highlights that individuals are likely to gain the most from the arts through consistent lifetime involvement rather than sporadic exposure. Therefore, policy should shift away from improving the supply of the arts by bolstering or expanding nonprofit arts offerings, to instead nurturing demand for the arts and Americans' lifelong commitment to the cultural sector (RAND, 62-64). The concluding recommendations for arts organizations to successfully capture and broadcast their impact are to create a widely accepted vocabulary of intrinsic benefits, to publicly acknowledge the shortcomings of research methodologies and findings around instrumental benefits, to encourage people to begin engaging with the arts as early as possible in order to instigate a lifelong commitment, and to continue forming environments where the arts can thrive (RAND, 72-73).

Measuring the Arts Through Intrinsic Benefits

<u>"How to Capture Consumer Experiences: A Context-Specific Approach To Measuring Engagement"</u> (Journal of Advertising Research, 2015)
In a ffort to fin   ays to move beyond the nherited limits of our field an   ind novel ways of combining instrumental an   ntrinsic measures of value, we looked at studie   eyond the arts sector that outline a framework for measuring consu   r engagement an   atisfaction. This paper propose   procedure for measuring consu   r ngagement based on individuals' interactions with and perceptions about using certain brands and products, and we thought it could be creatively adapted to many arts settings. This paper compares and contrasts three studies that analyze individuals' engagement while listening to jazz music in a live setting, reading the newspaper, or watching television programs. Researchers captured five categories of engagement within qualitative observations: *interaction, transportation, discovery, identity,* and *civic orientation* (JAR, 2). The authors conclude that a combination of engagement observations with more traditional measurements like scales of satisfaction makes for the most robust findings.

Based on our focus in the arts, the most relevant study was Study 1 on the Chicago Jazz Festival. The research question was, "Can a measure of engagement composed of context-specific experiences predict consumption?," and the two independent variables were how probable it was for an attendee to be in the audience again next year and how many other arts outings that person attended that year, including museum visits, performances or concerts (JAR, 5-6). The study finds that engagement, defined as "the sum of intense, qualitatively rich experiences," and deduced through a flexible qualitatively-inclined research process, has both a positive and significant effect on frequency of cultural experiences (JAR 5-6). In other words, those who experience rich arts events are more likely to attend more, and measuring engagement rather than satisfaction has the potential to reveal important consumption habits. The authors perhaps explain this best through a comparison of the terms hedonia, meaning bringing life pleasure, and eudaimonia, meaning making life meaningful through experiences. While it is crucial for audience members to "lean back" and reflect overall on their gratification or hedonia, sometimes the act of "lean[ing] forward" and focusing on engagement or eudaimonia is the more important action in an experience product like the arts (JAR, 12).

<u>"Assessing the Intrinsic Impacts of a Live Performance"</u> (WolfBrown, 2007)
Digging deeper into the act of "leaning forward" or understanding the nuances of engagement types, the objective of this report is to uncover the ways in which audiences are most impacted by live performances. The three hypotheses that the authors are testing are: (1) that intrinsic impact is somehow quantifiable, (2) that various performance types result in various types of impact, and (3) that a viewer's openness to receiving the art affects that person's level of impact (WolfBrown 2007, 2). By measuring these assumptions with straightforward questionnaires and

presenting a framework in which to view the outcomes, the authors create a method for theater companies to select programming based on the magnitude and type of impact they wish to achieve. We believe this can be applied to many different art forms.

The analysis for this study took place in 2006, when 19 performances across music, dance, and theater were surveyed in two ways – first, a questionnaire was distributed to audiences moments before the curtain to measure psychological preparedness, and then a second mail-in questionnaire was distributed post-production to measure audience reactions. The authors organized measures of *readiness* into categories of *context, relevance,* and *anticipation* and measures of *impact* into categories of *captivation, intellectual stimulation, emotional resonance, spiritual value, aesthetic growth,* and *social bonding* (WolfBrown 2007, 9).

First, the authors discuss the implications of the *readiness* results. The "context" score, or the audience member's prior knowledge of the production and performers, does not result in greater impact, but the two are positively correlated. The "relevance" scores are generally high because that's likely what gets audience members in their seats in the first place. "Anticipation" is strongly affected by marketing efforts and whether the ideologies and themes of the play complement an audience member's interests. The authors then shift to discussing intrinsic *impact* results. More significant than the other five, the authors refer to "captivation" as the "lynchpin" or "pre-condition" for every other form of impact, boasting the highest correlation with overall satisfaction (WolfBrown 2007, 11). However, captivation can depend on many uncontrollable factors such as audience's comfort in certain spaces, their ability to see all of the actors, and their interest in the material – thus, captivation can differ for the same production in separate theaters or presented to audiences of different ideological or demographic backgrounds.

Connecting measures of readiness and impact, WolfBrown found anticipation most predictive of captivation; they found context to be related to captivation, intellectual invigoration, emotional connection, and spiritual connection; and relevance to predict intellectual invigoration and aesthetic reverberance (WolfBrown 2017, 18). While these findings help prove the authors' first two hypotheses, the third hypothesis about readiness affecting impact is not fully proven. The authors conclude that there are too many variables affecting the desired outcome.
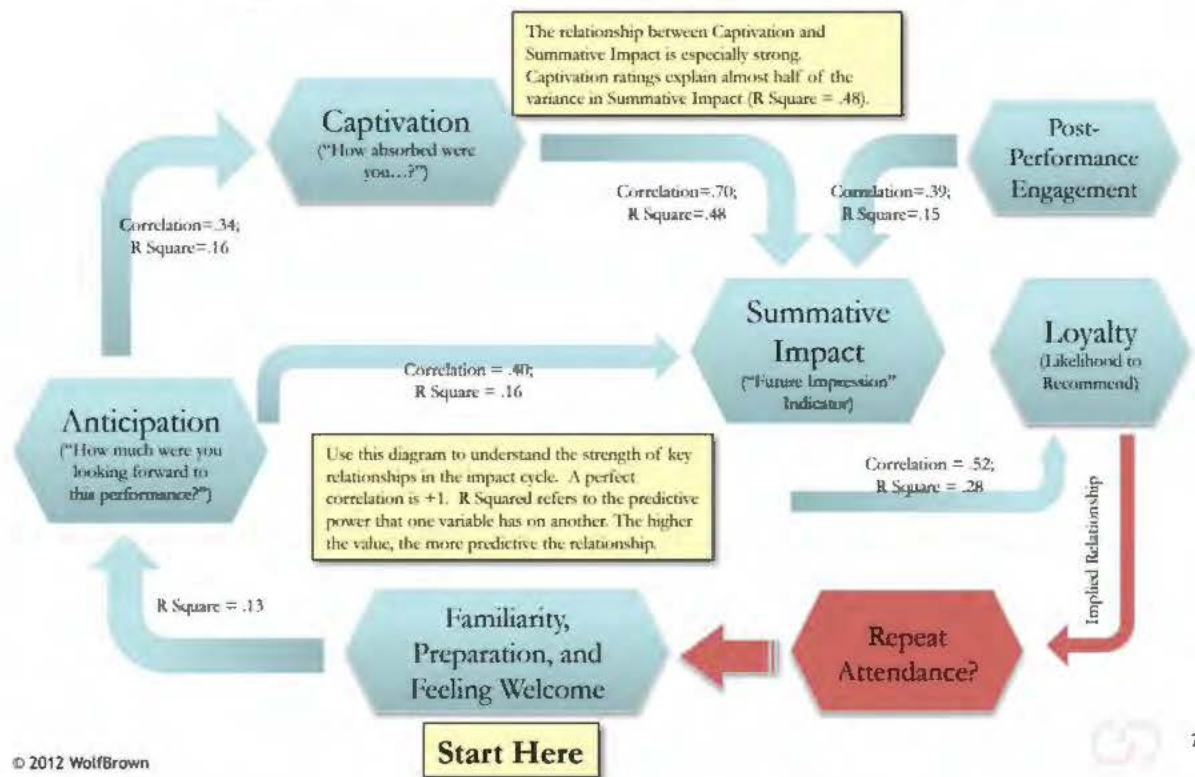
While the paper sets out with lofty goals, its main recommendations yield direct lessons for arts marketing. WolfBrown encourages presenters to spend more energy before they get audience members through the door, since anticipation correlates so powerfully with captivation and thus with intrinsic impact (WolfBrown 2017, 20). They also recommend thinking about the comprehensive audience experience beyond just what's on stage (such as lighting, social bonding opportunities during intermission, theater comfort levels, etc.). By examining specific reaction

indexes instead of just overall satisfaction, theater companies can more specifically identify opportunities for experience improvement and hopefully audience retention.

"Understanding the Intrinsic Impact of Live Theatre" (WolfBrown, 2012)

A continuation of WolfBrown's work on intrinsic impact, this report identifies a key sub-indicators that together form a model for the "summative [intrinsic] impact" of live theater (WolfBrown 2012, 6). These indicators follow customer touch points from the time one hears about a production, through the performance itself, to the customer's decision to attend again in the future. The diagram of WolfBrown's model of summative impact is included below:

Readiness and Intrinsic Impact: Progression of Key Associations

The relationship between Captivation and Summative Impact is especially strong. Captivation ratings explain almost half of the variance in Summative Impact (R Square = .48).

Captivation ("How absorbed were you...?")

Correlation=.34; R Square=.16

Correlation=.70; R Square=.48

Correlation=.39; R Square=.15

Post-Performance Engagement

Summative Impact ("Future Impression" Indicator)

Loyalty (Likelihood to Recommend)

Correlation = .40; R Square = .16

Anticipation ("How much were you looking forward to this performance?")

Use this diagram to understand the strength of key relationships in the impact cycle. A perfect correlation is +1. R Squared refers to the predictive power that one variable has on another. The higher the value, the more predictive the relationship.

Correlation = .52; R Square = .28

Implied Relationship

R Square = .13

Familiarity, Preparation, and Feeling Welcome

Repeat Attendance?

© 2012 WolfBrown

Start Here

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The authors recognize that pleasure or satisfaction does not guarantee a return to the theater and explore what further indicators might be helpful for a theater company to consider when building a comprehensive strategy. The following are several highlights:

- The top three motivations for theater-goers are relaxing or escaping day-to-day life, feeling emotionally moved, and encountering new material and ideas.
- Social motivations are powerful for theater-going. Within WolfBrown's survey, 35% of respondents went to a show because they received a direct invitation. However, the "inviter" generally experiences a greater level of impact seeing a show.
- Women make the independent decision to attend theater more often than men (46% versus 33%). This may correspond with the fact that women demonstrate greater anticipation for theater and feel more emotionally stimulated following productions.
- People who attended the theater once or bought tickets for a particular show were more likely to feel a greater impact than those with season tickets. The report suggests that regular audience members may be more difficult to impress.
- Different theater forms have varying results. For instance, plays result in intellectual awakening and social cohesion, while musicals report captivation and emotional response. Comedy – which induces group laughter – can bridge social gaps.
- Marketing efforts that build familiarity with the narrative plot generally increase anticipation more than marketing centered on the playwright or actors

(WolfBrown 2017, 17, 22-24, 36, 84)

WolfBrown's surveys received a response rate of 45%, which is noticeably high, indicating that audience members are eager to give feedback on their engagements with the arts. The authors advocate for arts leaders and marketers to collect reactions to their productions and use those observations as actionable data. The report concludes with recommendations on how theaters may collect comparative data, showing juxtaposition in impact for two productions of the same play, the same play across different audiences, various plays by one playwright, and more. A comparison across companies demonstrates that an experimental theater's productions have impacts that vary wildly, while more traditional theater companies tend to produce shows that yield the same impact profile.

Creative Placemaking: Moving Community Arts Research Forward

A final and important advancement in the field of arts policy and research is the development of the "creative placemaking" framework spearheaded by ArtPlace America. Founded in 2011 as a joint project of various institutional funders of the arts, ArtPlace advocates for the inclusion of arts and culture projects in community and civic planning efforts through research demonstrating their ability to "strengthen the social, physical, and economic fabric of communities" (Ross, ii). Building on the existing field of place-based community development and the previous work of the Urban Institute indicators project, ArtPlace identified ten sectors in which arts and culture intersect with community planning, including Economic Development, Housing, Immigration, Workforce Development, and others. ArtPlace is commissioning a "Field Scan" for each of the

sectors to catalogue existing research on and practice of artists and arts organizations intersecting with each of the sectors. The intent is to form a broad foundation of understanding of the impact of arts activities in fields of value to community leaders in order to develop arguments for their importance and measures of their impact

To date, three of the Field Scans have been completed, examining the intersection of arts and culture with Housing, Transportation, and Public Safety. Each Field Scan begins uses a comprehensive literature review, a survey of stakeholders, and a series of in-depth interviews, to identify recurring genres among existing programs. For this literature review, we have chosen to share the genres identified in the Field Scans, as they play a key role in our thinking about how to analyze the varied impacts of arts programs. Within these genres, the researchers explore how arts and culture programs contribute to the desired outcomes of the intersectional field of interest, list relevant measures currently of value to that field, and suggest opportunities for future collaboration between the fields.

"A Creative Placemaking Field Scan: Exploring the Ways Arts and Culture Intersect with Public Safety" (ArtPlace, 2016)
In the case of Public Safety, the researchers found that arts and culture programs engaging with life in and around the criminal justice system have been on the rise i recent years, often in connection with a shift from punitive to restorative models of justice in individual comm nities an jurisdictions. The Field Sca   dentifies five generic types of programs at the intersection of arts and culture and public safety:

- Art promoting empathy and understanding
  - Ex. bringing rival gangs or police and community members together to make art
- Art influencing law and policy
  - Ex. Protest art advocating specific legal changes
- Art providing career opportunities
  - Ex. skills-development programs for incarcerated populations
- Art supporting well-being
  - Ex. Using art-making as a way to help incarcerated people imagine a life outside the negative cycles they have previously experienced in order to spur personal change.
- Art advancing quality of place
  - Ex. murals and repairing blight to transform neighborhood environments

The paper continues by identifying Public Safety indicators related to each of the program genres. For illustration, these indicators include education, self-efficacy, civic engagement, collective efficacy, physical and mental health, economic development, and neighborhood

livability. The researchers advocate for developing metrics that measure arts and culture impact in these indicator areas and suggest a research partner in the Public Safety field for future work. Such a partner would have the skills to base this work in language and practices already native to the Public Safety field, thus giving advocates for creative placemaking tools built on shared language between the fields.

<u>"A Creative Placemaking Field Scan: Exploring the Ways Arts and Culture Intersect with Housing" (ArtPlace, 2016)</u>
The Field Scan examinin th intersection of creative placemaking and Housing highlights several different initiatives designe t ace and overcome housin hallenges. The paper delves into the ontext of such work and trending issues in affordable housing, includin omelessness, racial discri ination in rental agree nts, and millennials' housin abits. The author then categorizes creative place aking projects that address these issue into six genres of competency and opportunity, describing projects that:

- **Articulate** unspoken dynamics and unaddressed issues; start dialogue
  - Ex. lighting up vacant homes to emphasize abandonment in "Breathing Lights" by artist Adam Frelin and architect Barbara Nelson. This project Albany, Schenectady, and Troy, NY was accompanied by a summit focusing on how the artwork could lead to contiguous economic growth.
- **Nourish** the soul and make sure housing promotes emotional well-being
  - Ex. bringing artwork into formerly homeless person's new home
- **Organize** people around a mission and spark action
  - Ex. gather people in mural creation around housing topics
- **Bridge** gaps between cultural differences; break down barriers
  - Ex. Host art show in a low-income housing complex to attract non-residents
- **Stabilize** people who are at risk of being displaced
  - Ex. Setting aside historical housing through preservation program for artists of color in areas being gentrified
- **Generate** attention for otherwise ignored neighborhoods; demonstrate feasibility and benefits of investment
  - Ex. Team up with arts organizations to develop affordable housing; success proven to attract new developers

The paper shows that these interventions have implications for real estate developers investing in housing, the policymakers and funders measuring program success, and the artists and community organizers leading placemaking efforts. ArtPlace's research demonstrates that those developers "who use creative, culturally relevant housing strategies that commit to specific communities in place over long periods of time can attract attention, capital, and achieve

important outcomes" (Sherman, 25). The paper calls for policymakers and funders of influence to change their reporting tactics in order to "incentivize and provide technical assistance for qualitative, longitudinal, and impact reporting that incorporates overall wellbeing, the arts, and cultural relevancy in key measures" (Sherman, 26). ArtPlace advocates for and generates data that empowers artists and community leaders to break down barriers and expose ingrained behaviors of prejudice and biases in existing housing practices.

<u>"Arts, Culture and Transportation: A Creative Placemaking Field Scan" (ArtPlace, 2017)</u>
The final ArtPlace Field Scan begins with the premise that art, culture and transportation have intersected for many years, but that most often artists are brought in to beautify public spaces such as subway stops and railway platforms only after the transportation infrastructure has been established. This study aims to prove that transportation would benefit from involving artists as thought-partners at the inception of projects. It explores the most significant problem in U.S. transportation today and points towards the unique capability of the arts to solve them. For the purposes of this study, transportation is considered to be "by foot, bicycle, personal vehicle, rideshare, bus, light rail, trolley, and heavy rail" (Transportation for America, 9).

The paper illuminates the high stakes of work in transportation due to its broad intersection with other societal issues. Harvard researchers looked at factors impacting economic mobility and found that "commuting time has emerged as the single strongest factor in the odds of escaping poverty" (Transportation for America, 23). Urban freeways, built in the mid-20th century to facilitate suburban living and shorten commuting time for the white middle- to upper-class, almost always run through poor and minority neighborhoods. Furthermore, poor planning for pedestrians contributes to a lack of safety in those neighborhoods, as "people of color, especially African Americans, are disproportionately killed while walking on streets that are dangerous by design" (Transportation for America, 6).

To aid in addressing issues like these, the authors identify seven challenges in U.S. transportation that can benefit through the involvement of artists and arts projects (Transportation for America, 8)":
- **Generating creative solutions for entrenched transportation problems**
  - Ex. Using historical Art Deco streetcar trolleys to build new interest around public transportation
- **Making streets safer for all users**
  - Ex. Using dance to help residents of a neighborhood divided by a six-lane highway to tell the stories of their experience and advocate for changes that promote a community safety
- **Organizing transportation advocates** who will achieve investments in community transportation to address mobility and safety equity

- o Ex. Artists organizing opportunities to bike as a community through the Bronx, then advocating for better bike paths, traffic signs, and other safety features
- **Engaging multiple stakeholders for an inclusive process**
  - o Ex. The GoBoston 2030 transportation planning community engagement initiative, which activated graphic design and performance to communicate ideas
- **Fostering local ownership**
  - o Ex. Locally sourced and culturally specific arts and design in stations, bus shelters, and along pedestrian pathways to give community a voice and create a sense of belonging
- **Alleviating the disruptive effects of construction**
  - o Ex. a manual full of recipes, songs, and other solutions for community members to reference while they encounter disruptive and unpleasant effects of construction on their daily commute
- **Healing wounds and divisions** resulting from highways and disruptive or segregating transportation mechanisms
  - o Ex. The Greensboro, NC *Over.Under.Pass* which transformed a decrepit railway underpass into a cheerful connecting pathway between black neighborhoods and the downtown area

To move forward effectively with these ideas, the Field Scan recommends defining clear metrics for evaluation, creating awareness around disruptive technologies such as rideshare and autonomous vehicles that are changing transportation in the U.S., and building training programs for artists to become well-versed in discussions about transportation.

II. Moving the Field Forward: Generic Categories of Arts Impact

Our review of the literature on arts impact measurement demonstrates that the field has moved beyond the strictly economic measures of the 1990s and early 2000s. Arts advocates are increasingly making the case that arts and culture have an important role to play in a wide variety of fields and functions across American society. The majority of this literature, and some of the most inspiring, is designed to help policymakers understand the impact of the arts across whole communities, fields, or economies. Researchers on these kinds of projects are increasingly looking to more sophisticated methods of data collection and analysis in order to make their arguments more relatable and convincing to decision-makers in other fields. In a world increasingly interested in social impact assessment, impact investing, and venture philanthropy, it is this research that most aligns with philanthropic trends. A smaller portion of the literature is designed to give individual artists or arts organizations tools to compete for donor dollars and

ticket sales. However, this literature, though improving, still lacks the relatability of the more intersectional studies.

This latter literature also falls into a trap first identified in the RAND report "Gifts of the Muse" and repeated in the further research sections of some of the ArtPlace materials: it fails to account for opportunity cost. In other words, artists and arts organizations need to prove not just the value of their projects, but their *relative* value, recognizing the dollars they compete for can be directed to other causes that might create social value more efficiently. None of the literature we read directly addresses the choice of an individual donor to allocate dollars among projects, nor does it address how to assess the success of a philanthropic investment. We think that scholarship on this topic in an arts context would be useful. One can imagine research that proposed measurement frameworks influenced by existing concepts like SROI that very much take opportunity costs into account. Waiting for these papers to be written, as they undoubtedly will be, should not be required for fundraisers in the arts to see that they need to start answering these kinds of questions. This section represents a small step in that direction. We believe the topic offers many opportunities for future research and is sure to be a line of inquiry in our own careers in the field.

In order for a program's relative value to be measured, it must be assessed using a standard set of measures that can also be used for potential alternative investments. Historically, the impact of the arts has been difficult to articulate or measure in a standard way. The nature of the work resists the language of the social studies that today dominates policy and funding spaces. However, areas of research like creative placemaking illustrate that the field has come a long way since "Gifts of the Muse" first identified the instrumental/intrinsic impact dichotomy. In that paper instrumental really meant economic, and intrinsic meant everything else. While placemaking goals like community cohesion and legal advocacy are technically instrumental measures - the art in question supports a goal other than itself - it is clear that researchers can now articulate non-economic arts impacts with far greater precision than previously. The dichotomy is breaking down, and a great deal of the literature suggests frameworks mapping the various impacts of arts projects to support different policy goals. In this section we synthesize repeated ideas from across the existing frameworks to suggest a list of generic categories for arts impact. Our hope is that categories like these can help individual donors understand what kinds of potential projects align with their interests and help individual artists and arts organizations understand on what dimensions they compete for funding. With additional research, we hope that these categories could be developed into a standard toolkits of measures that could be compatible with calculations like SROI.

A Flexible Toolkit to Assess the Impact of Arts Projects

Most existing impact metrics propose one set of criteria to measure the impact of many different kinds of art. However, just as each arts organization's mission and values vary, the expected outcome – or how success is defined – also vary fro   ne organization to another or even one piece to another. Using a one-size-fits-all measurement may overlook the most important impacts of a particular organization or project. For example, if we apply the six constructs proposed by WolfBrown's Intrinsic Impact research to a Christian Choir group, the form of its performances may not challenge its audience and therefore the group may score low on Aesthetic Growth. But the Christian Choir group's goal may not be to stretch the audience aesthetically at all; Captivation and Emotional Resonance may be of more value to them.

For some companies, a one-size-fits-all approach may even have negative impacts. If, for example, a major foundation starts to use metrics of community engagement to assess all its grantees, a theater that it funds known for producing elaborate and classical productions of Shakespeare may be tempted to drift from its mission. The theater's managers might attempt to quickly launch education programs at multiple elementary schools to chase the funding without considering whether it has the competencies to deliver high quality education within its current staff. Such an effort may take resources away from the company's core productions, thereby eroding what it does best.

For arts organizations, the existence of Baumol's cost disease generally rules out cost leadership as a viable competitive strategy. This leaves differentiation as the best strategic course, and no organization should try to be all things to all people. Yet many organizations suffer mission creep and whole industries can become disastrously homogeneous, as in the case of the Seattle Theater Industry. An inflexible measurement standard in the hands of funders exacerbates this problem.

This calls for a flexible approach for arts organizations and funders to measure their impact using metrics tailored to their specific needs. However, measurement schemes cannot be so flexible as to prevent the comparability required for the assessment of opportunity cost. To address this, we propose a standard toolkit of impact categories that those making assessments can choose among. This way impact is not articulated in new bespoke ways for every individual project organization. Rather, like programs can consistently be assessed using like measures.

The following toolkit of six generic categories of arts impact is developed from a list of common themes present in the existing literature, including resources provided by a program officer of Bloomberg Philanthropies not listed in the Literature Review section:

Intrinsic: • Captivation (WolfBrown) • Intellectual stimulation (WolfBrown) • Emotional response (WolfBrown) • Spiritual value (WolfBrown) • Aesthetic Growth (WolfBrown) • Well-being/self-efficacy (AP Public Safety) • Nourishing emotional well-being (AP Housing)	**Social cohesion:** • Social bonding (WolfBrown) • Social cohesion (Bloomberg) • Bridging gaps for cultural differences (AP Housing) • Healing wounds/divisions (AP Transportation) • Empathy and understanding (AP Public Safety)
Place and Purpose: • Perception (Bloomberg) • Quality of place (AP Public Safety) • Fostering local ownership (AP Transportation) • Alleviating disruption of construction (AP Transportation)	**Innovation:** • Creative solutions (AP Transportation) • Creative economy (NEFA)
Advocacy: • Participation (Bloomberg) • Government (Bloomberg) • Law & Policy (AP Public Safety) • Articulating unspoken dynamics (AP Housing) • Organizing around mission (AP Housing) • Streets safer for all (AP Transportation) • Organizing advocates (AP Transportation) • Engaging multiple stakeholders (AP Transportation)	**Economic:** • Economic (Bloomberg) • Career opportunities (AP Public Safety) • Stabilizing communities (AP Housing) • Generating investment and attention for underserved communities (AP Housing) • Size of industry (NEFA) • Industry growth over time (NEFA) • Total direct spending (NEFA) • Visitor attraction and indirect spending (NEFA)

While some research, such as WolfBrown and NEFA's papers, measure impact along purely economic or intrinsic lines, few arts projects are "pure" in reality on either end of the spectrum. Rather, different kinds of impacts are interrelated and should be understood as part of a complex system. To visualize that system, we developed the chart below by arranging the generic categories of arts impact along two axes. The x-axis puts economic impacts at one end and spiritual impacts at the other. Here we use the word "spiritual" to represent non-material benefits of the arts that can be either instrumental or intrinsic (given the more precise articulations of arts impacts recently developed). The y-axis organizes impacts that more affect individuals versus those that collectively affect whole communities.

Our hope is that a tool like this chart can lead to better matching between arts programs and funders. By identifying which categories of impact are of particular interest or competency, a funder can choose among projects and an organization can better conceive their marketing strategy. We hope that further research might provide standardized metrics within each category, thereby helping funders craft better evaluation systems that are both tailored to specific missions and comparable across organizations, helping to avoid setting unreasonable deliverables. We also hope it can be a tool for arts programs to understand their impacts and therefore make it easier to say no to new initiatives that might address real needs but not align with current competencies.

To conclude this section, we provide a few examples of how this chart might be used. First, a government entity might have a funding interest that looks like this:
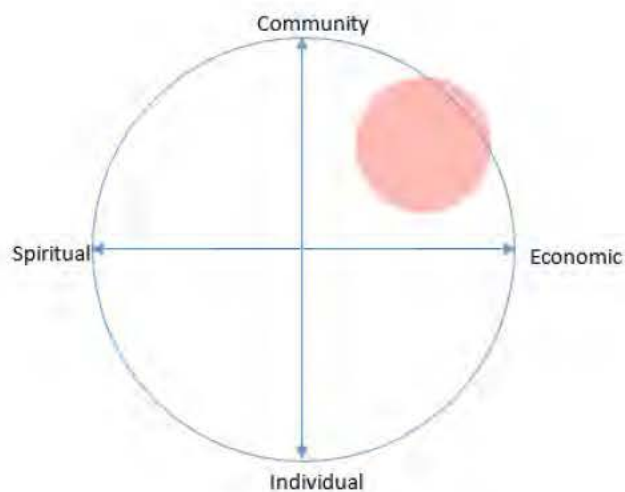
A private foundation led by an arts lover might want to fund programs that expand an audience's aesthetic horizons, giving it a funding interest like this:
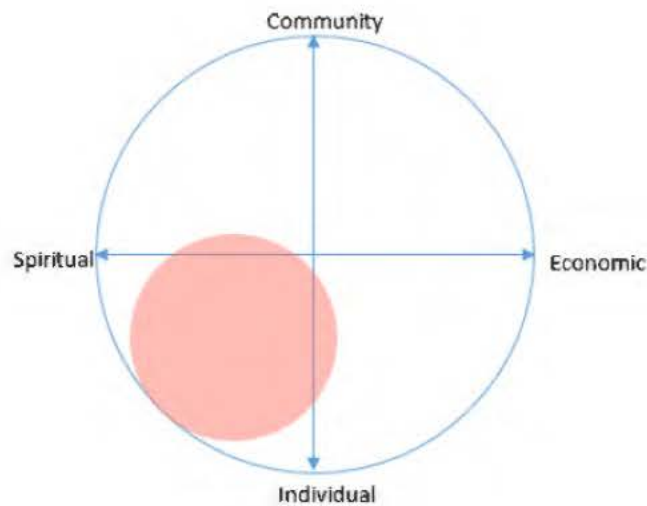
Some funder's interests may fall in multiple areas. A philanthropist interested in reducing recidivism among incarcerated populations might turn to arts projects that both teach employable skills and community values. Such an organization might have a profile like this:
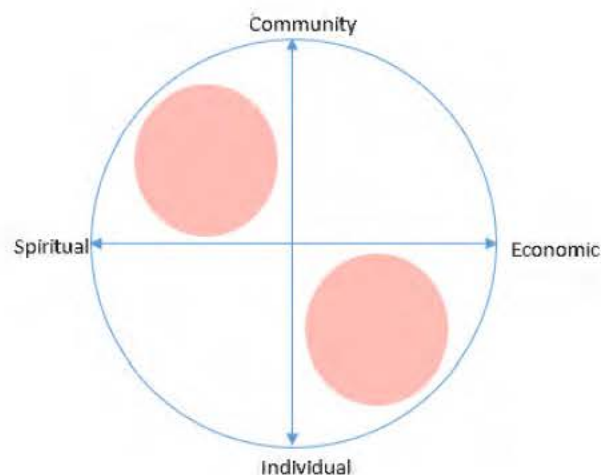
III. Mini-Case Studies: Artspace and the Dwight/Edgewood Project

As a further example of how our framework might work in practice, we compare the relative impact profiles of two New Haven arts programs: Artspace New Haven and the Yale School of Drama's Dwight/Edgewood Project. The comparison is based on survey data from participants in both programs and is meant to illustrates the way the framework can be used to clarify strategic

fundraising decisions. It also illustrates that the profile exercise and its strategic implications become more complicated when a single organization runs multiple programs, and that local arts programs in the same market that might typically compete for the same funding might in fact produce very different impacts and so should be considered separately.

1. City-wide Open Studios (Artspace)

Artspace New Haven is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting New Haven's contemporary artists and building an extensive and diverse audience for their work. Their flagship event is the fall City-Wide Open Studios (CWOS) festival, which invites 350+ artists to open up their homes and workspaces and share their art with thousands of visitors. Since CWOS is the highest engagement period for its constituents, Artspace also follows the Open Studios event with an online survey sent to participating artists to measure the organization's impact on artists' lives. In Helen Kauder's, the Executive Director of Artspace, words, "it's a way of asking artists: do you see Artspace as being a partner to you in your success; where are we in the continuum that describes conditions under which artists can thrive?" (conversation on December 7, 2017).

While the 26-question survey, which had 40 participants this year, addresses many ways in which Artspace coordinates with and empowers artists – a central part of Artspace's mission – we identified the following responses as the most relevant to our study:

Q7: Accessibility
Equal numbers of surveyed artists (37.5% each) think that:
1. Artspace's efforts to address accessibility and inclusion challenges include measures such as program scholarships, peer learning, subsidized space for temporary studios, and other technical assistance/support. *(framed as second-best possible scenario in list of options on survey)*
2. Artspace's services and programs support all artists in our community through rigorous and constant work on equity, inclusion and accessibility. *(framed as best possible scenario)*

Q8 & Q18: Engagement with Outside Community
Q8: 63.6% of surveyed artists think that:
> Artspace has capacity and interest to support artists and community members in exploring expectations and roles for artists working with community, and we seek to engage and coordinate with service providers that are outside the arts sector.
Q18: 50% of surveyed artists think that:

Artspace has robust capacity to be in the community to learn and talk about matters of race, equity and diversity, and our strong feedback loops for systems change in relation to these matters are under continuous improvement.

Q16: Consciousness and Intention

52.94% of surveyed artists think that:

Artspace has a high level of consciousness, love, and intention and a record of action to build open, culturally relevant and competent programs and offerings based on shared power, the lived experience of the communities we are a part of, artist self-determination, and the expertise within the community. We honor and generate the resources to support this work, and we commit to ongoing learning.

Q19: Feasibility

53.3% of surveyed artists think that:

Artspace's programs and offerings often incorporate a growing range of options related to geography, time of day, transportation, child care, affordability, learning differences, etc.

For both Accessibility (Q7) and Feasibility (Q19), the majority of artists indicated that Artspace has strong capabilities for supporting and propeling individuals forward in an economic sense. Artspace does so by sourcing scholarships, subsidizing studio space, or otherwise supporting artists in their investments (accessibility), as well as by timing or placing its programs in a way that makes them available to people with varying privilege and outside commitments (feasibility). For these reasons, Artspace could be placed in the lower right quadrant, improving individuals' economic circumstances.

Another set of responses – those from Engagement with Outside Community (Q8 & Q18) and Consciousness and Intention (Q16) – demonstrate Artspace's ability to bring cohesion and spiritual centeredness to its community. Artists feel supported by the organization in creating artworks with these types of themes, and the organization has both the credibility and resources to introduce and untangle complex topics within the community, playing a significant role in New Haven's social cohesion. Communities feel honored and improved by their connection to Artspace, certainly one of the benefits of CWOS, which by its sprawling nature is embedded in the community spaces themselves and ties them together.
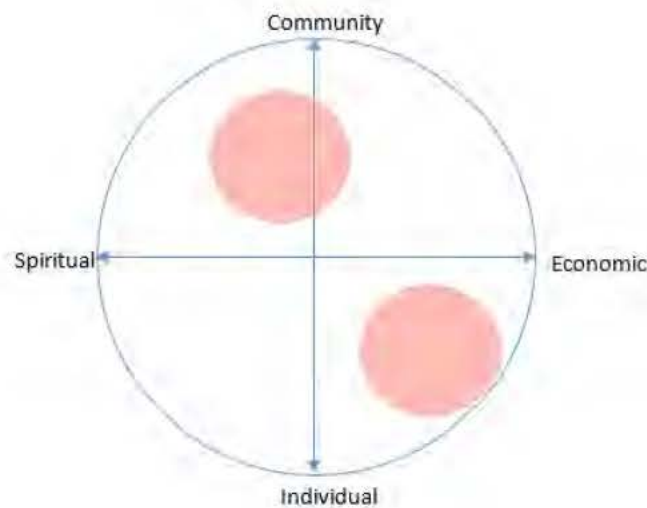
Though there are programs and actions that Artspace could argue places them in all four quadrants of our matrix, in order to be seen as a partner in critical infrastructure and development (thus receiving funding that's related) *and* have a seat at the table among the big local systems such as Yale University, the public school system, and the city government (a desire than Helen Kauder expressed), we propose that Artspace accept its position in these two quadrants and build its narrative and programming to reinforce these core strengths. In future survey design, Artspace could dedicate more questions to these areas to first identify room for improvement and second generate qualitative evidence for economically-focused grant applications and other funding efforts. After all, building authority and impact in just two quadrants leaves much to accomplish given that Artspace must also uphold its primary mission to support artists and reach audiences.

Source: https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-8TRBV86W8/

2. Yale Repertory Theatre's Dwight/Edgewood Project (D/EP)

The Dwight/Edgewood Project is an annual after-school program run by Yale Repertory Theatre and students from the Yale School of Drama that mentors New Haven public middle school students in the writing and producing of original plays. Through theater games, writing exercises, an overnight outdoor retreat, and a condensed rehearsal and production process, students are given creative control over all aspects of their plays under the supervision of a graduate mentor. The program's goals are to "foster self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-respect" (Yale Repertory Theatre website), and the success of those goals is measured each year through a participant survey administered after the plays have been performed.

While the survey data is limited - the questions are fully open-ended and do not lend themselves to quantitative analysis - they still clearly illustrate the kinds of impacts the program achieves and provide an interesting contrast to Artspace.

Three years of qualitative data surveying the experiences of 22 young playwrights are synthesized into the following word cloud displaying words appearing repeatedly in the surveys:

One can see in this graphic the challenge of the writing process as well as the outdoor and personal nature of the camp. Three of the surveyed playwrights said it was their first time camping, and many reported that writing sessions outdoors unlocked their creativity:

> "Sitting at the Chapel with my mentor and being surrounded by chipmunks and caterpillars inspired my play."
> "The nature influenced my play, like the caterpillars."
> "The character I really like was inspired by the lake."

The young playwrights report that the experience of being away from their usual environment allowed them to be themselves free from their accustomed social pressures. They report feeling understood and connected with others:

> "The mentors and staff actually get me."
> "It felt like I belonged somewhere."
> "I got to write a play and hang out with mentors and friends and be loud and most importantly I can be myself."

Perhaps more importantly, the participants report that the program helped them have confidence in themselves, and organizers are hopeful that this and other arts experiences will influence their lives far into the future:

> "To be confident in yourself from your ideas and always be true and perfectly imperfect."
> "The play was so good I worked so hard on it."
> "I'm glad to feel that I'm a great writter [sic]."
> "This program makes me want to go to school and wait till the end of the day."
> "I used my ideas in my brain and wrote it and Yale is acting it out!"
> "It told me that I can be something one day and to continue writing."

Based on the articulated goals of the program and the support for their successful accomplishment in the qualitative data, you can understand D/EP's impact profile to look like the chart below, which is likely common for many education programs:
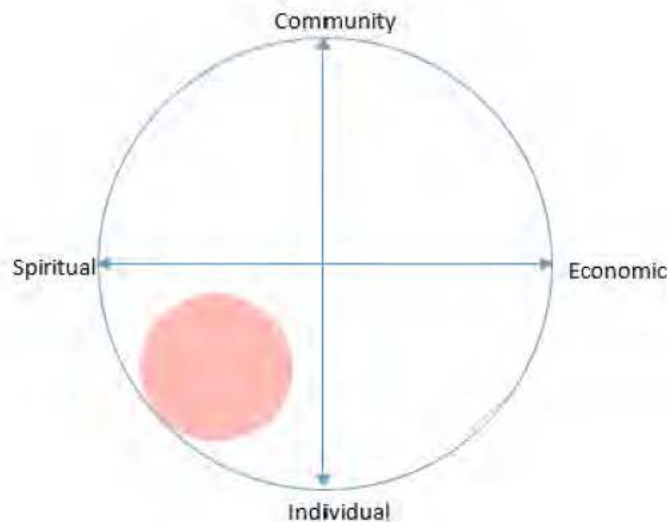
The D/EP example shows an interesting caveat, which is that this framework is at its most specific when analyzing an individual arts program or project. D/EP is a program of Yale Repertory Theatre, which is a program of the Yale School of Drama, which is a program of Yale University, all of which have increasingly diverse desired and achieved impacts. It is important to match the level of analysis with the level of interest of a funder, which often also lies at the level of a program.

To improve the evidence for the impact of D/EP, the organization could be more rigorous about the survey questions. The qualitative responses from the 12-14 year olds paint a vivid picture, but were the program to find itself in a competitive funding environment it might consider asking questions that could be quantitatively pegged to standardized measures of impact. A longitudinal study of alumni would likely be the most convincing, to see whether participants retained some

of the empowerment and self-efficacy they felt in the aftermath of their plays and whether they continued to participate in the arts.

Finally, it is instructive how different the profiles of D/EP and Artspace are. One might think that organizations in the industry of community arts programs within the same local market all produce the same impacts, and indeed many local funding structures are set up as if they do. It follows from that assumption that those impacts should be assessed with the same metrics. However, this small analysis of New Haven organizations makes clear that the goals and impacts of these two community arts organizations are very different. Their success should be measured by different standards, and in an efficient market they would likely not compete for the same funding.

Conclusion

Through a review of the trajectory of arts advocacy literature in the last 15 years, we identified a trend away from a binary analysis of economic and non-economic factors toward an analysis that more precisely defines the way the arts work in the world and intersect with other social impact fields. We also identified a clear need for arts impact assessment, which is the ability to rigorously consider opportunity cost among alternative projects. To move toward this goal while still allowing for the diversity of purpose among arts projects and organizations, we combined commonly cited measures among the existing efforts to taxonomize arts impacts into six generic impact categories and provided examples of how this framework could be used to profile different priorities among funders and different competencies among arts makers. Further research might integrate the granular metric projects within our source material to develop comparable and standard metrics within each category. This would allow comparisons of effectiveness among projects that share the same profile, thereby allowing an analysis of opportunity cost and hopefully leading to a more efficient marketplace for arts funding.

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