Cultural Collaborations

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR ARTS PARTICIPATION

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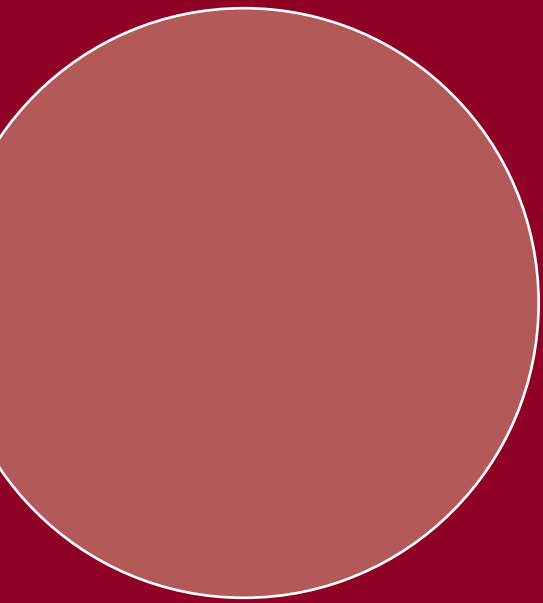
Contents

Introduction

Since 1997, the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds have awarded nearly $9.5 million in grants to 10 community foundations to strengthen local participation in arts and culture across the United States. This five-year initiative, Community Partnerships for Cultural Participation (CPCP), extends the Funds' ongoing work to help build committed and engaged audiences for the arts.[1] The Funds commissioned the Urban Institute to examine efforts to build arts participation in the communities supported by the initiative. This monograph explores how cultural organizations in the CPCP initiative used partnerships to enlarge participation in myriad ways and for multiple constituencies. Drawing on personal interviews, grant applications, and reports, it examines the experience of CPCP participants, guided by the following questions:

o In what ways did partnerships among cultural organizations strengthen participation?

o Why and how did partnerships help strengthen participation?

o Whose cultural participation was strengthened through partnership?

o What types of partnerships proved beneficial to enhancing participation?

o What were the major challenges and obstacles of using partnerships to build participation?

o How can cultural organizations and their supporters employ partnerships more effectively to strengthen participation?

[1] For this and additional information on the CPCP initiative, see the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds web site, www.wallacefunds.org.

Partnerships proved to be an effective tool for enhancing participation in varied and sometimes surprising ways. Yet the most significant benefits of partnerships often were unanticipated, while intended goals often were not achieved. The overarching lesson here is that partnership offers a powerful tool for strengthening participation– but both grantmakers and grantees need to better recognize its possibilities and limitations so that it can be used more effectively. Sometimes, partners missed opportunities to use partnerships' full potential to enhance participation. At other times, partnerships experienced overly high or misplaced expectations. Moreover, while cultural organizations and funders alike value partnerships, grantees often felt that grantmakers did not always support partnerships in a realistic way that responded to their needs.

Although partnerships rarely endured beyond the life of the grant, most grantees felt they had achieved at least some of their goals, and at least half reported warm relations and ongoing contact of some type with their former partners. The study results outlined in this monograph should help cultural organizations, funders, and others who seek ways to strengthen cultural participation and collaboration to use partnerships more effectively.

Partnership offers a powerful tool for strengthening participation – but grantmakers and grantees need to better recognize its possibilities and limitations.

About This Study

Various terms – "alliance," "joint venture," "collaboration," "strategic restructuring," "partnership," and others – have been used to describe cooperative behavior among organizations, but so far, no common terminology has evolved (Kohm et al. 2000). As used here, "partnership" means a coordinated collaboration between two or more parties to achieve a common goal. In principle at least, each participant also commits resources, such as financial assets, organizational capacity, public image, and constituency characteristics (Walker et al. 1999, 2). Resources brought by cultural organizations to partnerships in the CPCP initiative included:

o connections to, and understanding of, a target audience (e.g., ethnic, geographic);

o connections to artists;

o administrative expertise;

o artistic expertise;

o volunteers' time;

o fundraising and financial capabilities;

o space in which to present cultural activities; and

o overall knowledge, experience, and/or information that was needed, but not possessed by, other organizational partners.

"Cultural participation" is defined here in a broad way that includes the CPCP initiative's multiple goals of "broadening, deepening, and diversifying" participation: engaging more of the same types of people in cultural activities, deepening the experiences of those already engaged, and engaging new groups of people (see McCarthy and Jinnett 2001; Moore 2001). It encompasses engaging people in multiple forms and roles, such as creators of culture, audience members, donors, and volunteers. Importantly, in the case of partnerships, it also includes the ways in which organizations strengthen their own capacity to create, provide, and preserve cultural services, artifacts, and traditions.

To gather data on participants' experiences and perceptions as CPCP partners, personal interviews were conducted with grantees and the staff of the five community foundations that funded multiple partnerships among cultural organizations.[2] Together these foundations funded some 38 partnerships among cultural organizations, each of which involved two to ten or more partners. Of these, 19 partnerships in various sites and of various goals, types, and success levels were studied. This sample also captures multiple partnerships between large and small organizations. In all, 45 organizations were interviewed. In 16 of the 19 partnerships, all partners were questioned, and the majority of partners were interviewed in two of the three other cases.[3] Most partners (34) were arts organizations or art departments of larger institutions, including 10 theater companies, eight arts presenters and promoters, four musical performing groups, three performance venues (e.g., a theater), three dance groups, one cinema, a university music department, a community art center, the department of a school system responsible for art programs, a filmmaker with his own company, and a group dedicated to linking art and technology. The 11 others were cultural and humanities

organizations, including eight historical museums and societies, a library, a language school, and a children's museum. Six were African-American organizations (e.g., a museum of African-American history), and five were Latino organizations (e.g., an organization dedicated to advancing Latino art and artists). Four organizations were in multiple partnerships.

It is important to keep in mind that since all CPCP participants and the Urban Institute research team were funded directly or indirectly by the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds a positive bias may have been present during the interviews. Still, to protect confidentiality and invite candor, the names of interviewees and their organizations will not be identified in this report, and people were often surprisingly frank.

The 19 partnerships studied cover an array of types, and many fall within more than one category. Among the primary partnership types were:

o Partnerships between organizations in different cultural/artistic fields (15)

o Partnerships between large and small organizations (11)

o Cross-ethnic partnerships, which brought together organizations presenting art and/or drawing audiences from different ethnic groups (8)

o Venue-related partnerships, in which one partner provided a venue/space for cultural participation-building activities (8)
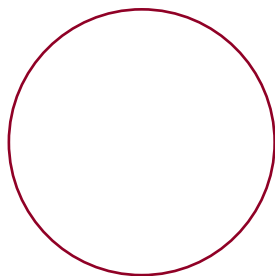
Most partnerships were organized around creating a particular activity, product, program, or event (see appendix). Thus, in 14 cases, the partnership resulted in artwork, a performance, or an exhibit. Others produced a cultural calendar, a joint marketing brochure, and a music academy. In some cases, partners joined to produce new cultural programming (e.g., exhibit the work of Latino artists) while in others partnerships aimed to bring programming to new venues (e.g., theaters performing in libraries). Yet whatever the types of organizations, partnerships, or specific projects concerned, all participants sought to broaden, diversify, and/or deepen their audiences' experiences.

CPCP project grants were intended, among other goals, to "support innovative efforts that build arts participation through collaborations" ("Community Foundations" 1999) and many are of interest precisely because they offer new approaches that other organizations may find worth trying as well. Keep in mind that these partnerships were supported by a grant, and most would not have occurred otherwise. Furthermore, although observations made in this monograph may prove true of other participation-building partnerships, any generalization of the results awaits future research. However, the experience of CPCP participants provides valuable insights that should prove useful to cultural organizations, funders, and other interested parties as they develop and refine their own participation-building strategies. ●
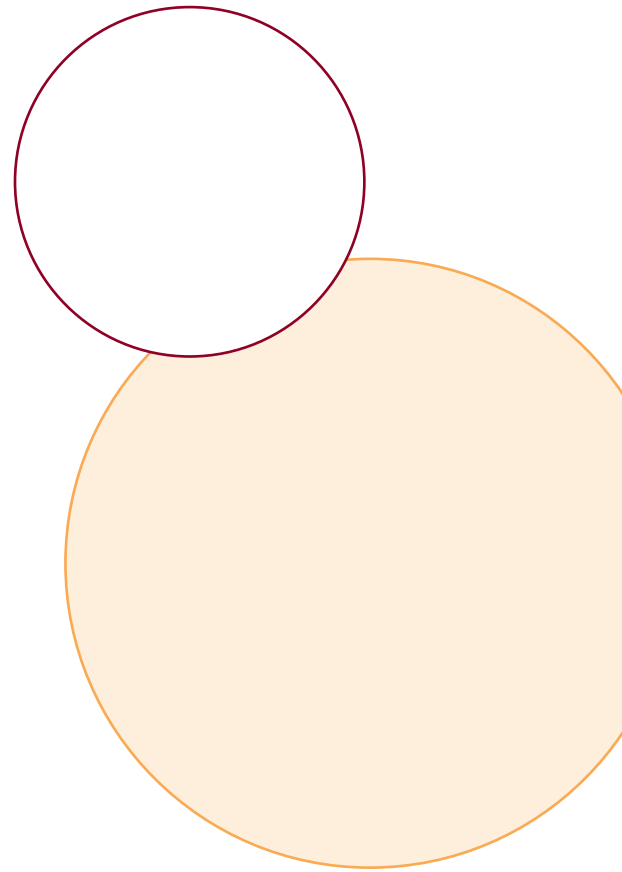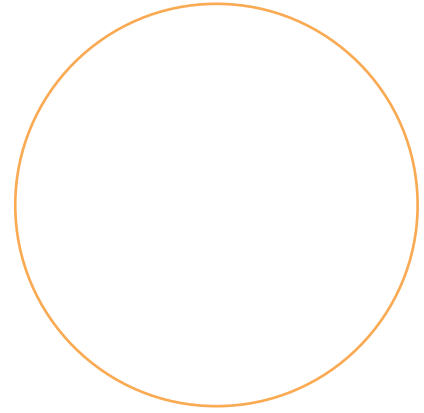
Strengthening Cultural Participation through Partnerships

Partnerships in the CPCP initiative helped strengthen cultural participation in multiple ways and for multiple constituencies. Partnerships:

o Expanded and strengthened artistic programming and services;

o Engaged new audiences;

o Expanded and strengthened the participation of artists;

o Engaged donors with cultural organizations; and

o Expanded organizational relationships that facilitated future participation-building activities.

Expanding Programming through Partnership

Partnerships allowed organizations to develop new programs and/or strengthen existing ones. In some cases (including the first example below), organizations found a partner who was able to provide financial, administrative, physical, and/or artistic resources that they did not possess, but which were necessary for the new or joint program. In other cases (as in the second example below), working with a partner with a different approach and focus influenced an organization to expand its programming for the duration of the partnership, and sometimes beyond.

How a Small Organization Used Partnership to Develop a New Program

A small, volunteer-run organization that performs classical African-American music developed a new program by using partnership to establish a preparatory music academy. The organization wanted to "level the playing field" by providing talented teens from underprivileged families with professional music training, performance experience, and college admissions preparation. A site for the academy was obtained through partnership with the music department of a historically black college, which provided space on campus – a venue well suited to the academy's college-preparatory goals. The new academy was launched, 40 students were accepted, performances were arranged, and "mock auditions" prepared them for college entrance exams. All music academy seniors were accepted to college and received some financial assistance. The college also benefited from the presence of the music academy, which brought additional cultural activities to the campus that faculty felt were badly needed, helped the music department rebuild its string program, and provided college students with opportunities to perform.

EXAMPLE:
A Historical Museum Expands Its Arts Programming

Several cultural and humanities organizations strengthened the artistic component of their own programs through partnership with arts organizations. In one case, a historical museum partnered with an African-American performing arts presenter to create a living history show. The museum's goal was to increase African-American visitorship, but an unanticipated benefit was that the museum was "challenged" by its partner to expand its horizons to incorporate the arts. The resulting show produced by the partners incorporated poetry and music, used built sets, and was longer than the shows that the museum produced on its own. Pleased with the results, the museum plans to develop more shows of this type as part of its regular programming and is building an amphitheater for this purpose.

Partners can benefit by keeping an open mind to the new and unanticipated opportunities for strengthening participation that arise in partnerships. In this case, the museum went from early wariness about the compatibility of its partner's arts emphasis with its own historical orientation to praising its strengthened programming capabilities as a primary benefit of the partnership.

Partnerships allowed organizations to develop new programs and/or strengthen existing ones.

Engaging New Audiences

Finding the right partner helped organizations engage audiences that they found difficult to attract on their own, when:

○ The partner had a greater understanding of the target audience and how to appeal to it;

○ The partner had more extensive networks in the target community; and

○ Partners were willing to listen to the more knowledgeable partner's advice, and adapt as necessary to engage the target audience.

Strengthening Participation through Partnership by Knowing the Target Audience

A partnership involving a cinema, a language school, and a filmmaker sought to rekindle Franco-American culture with a festival of films from Quebec. The director of the cinema had tried for years to attract more Franco-Americans to the theater, but said he was unsuccessful because he did not have the "right contacts" or "knowledge of [the] people . . . and language skills." His partners did, however, and together they designed a project to deepen Franco-Americans' involvement with their cultural heritage and language and attract them to the theater, which they hoped would become a "cultural space" for that community. The partners explained that locally French culture and language had become stigmatized and

almost invisible, even to Franco-Americans, who had encountered prejudice as they immigrated to fill working-class jobs. In addition, Franco-Americans felt embarrassed about having poor French language skills compared with French taught in schools or spoken by Quebecois.

The partners mounted the film festival followed by discussion, food, and music. To make people feel comfortable, the festival was not publicized to certain groups (e.g., French teachers) who might make them ill at ease. A well-liked member of the Franco-American community was recruited to urge people to attend. The partners solicited input from their intended audience. When members of the Franco-American community cautioned that the elderly would not attend films in the evening, the festival was rescheduled to Saturday morning.

The emotion-laden event was a success. A participant in his fifties who initially claimed that he could not speak or understand French delivered a speech in French several showings later. The films gave younger groups who learn French as a second language in school a feel for their grandparents' lives and a connection to their culture. Even when an admission charge was introduced the second year of the festival, attendance remained high. The project spawned unanticipated benefits, including an effort to start a museum dedicated to Franco-American culture. At the time of the interview, partners were seeking funds to duplicate their success in other communities.

> Finding the right partner helped organizations engage audiences that they found difficult to attract on their own.

As successful as it was in other ways, however, the project did not bring this new audience's patronage of the theater's regular programming to the hoped-for level. The difficulty in translating participation gains from special initiatives into involvement with an organization's overall program was a wider problem for CPCP partnerships.

CONTRASTING EXAMPLE:
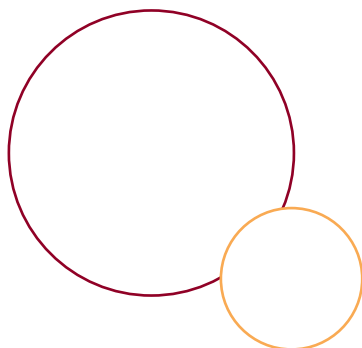**A Partnership That Failed to**
Engage Its Audience

Used correctly, partnerships can help organizations understand and approach their target audiences. Partners who do not attend to their project's requirements and the needs of those they wish to reach, however, are unlikely to have any more success in partnership than they would on their own. This fact was illustrated by a partnership designed to engage "at risk" youth in creating an artistic product that would be displayed in the lead organization's institution, an undertaking beyond its normal activities and audience. The lead organization's staff reported severe attrition and considerable discipline problems among the youth. Wherever the blame lies (and these staff put it squarely on another partner), it is clear that the lead organization itself had not really thought through target audience realities and needs and project demands. If organizations use partnerships to go beyond their typical activities, they must ensure that they have fully engaged a partner with the necessary expertise.

Engaging Artists through Partnership

Several partnerships resulted in engaging more artists with the partnering organizations, creating opportunities for artists to gain greater exposure for their work, and/or in engaging artists in different ways.

EXAMPLE:
Promoting Artists' Work
through Partnership

An organization dedicated to advancing Latino artists and art wanted to start a gallery for Latino artists who, the director explained, "have a tough time getting into the regular galleries." The goal was beyond the administrative and financial resources of this small, volunteer-run organization, but through a partnership with a larger, professionally staffed community art center, it was able to establish the gallery. The art center provided space for the gallery as well as financial and administrative resources. In turn, partnership helped the art center, since the volunteer group had more connections with artists, which it used to find artists for the gallery. Additionally, the volunteer group provided the time of its members to help with shows and publicity. Art center staff also said that since they serve multiple constituencies, having a partner whose focus is the Latino community helped the project "remain true" to its purpose. In short, partnership helped one organization better serve artists, already a core constituency, helped another organization engage artists, helped artists gain exposure for their work, and provided the public with an opportunity to see that work.

Expanded engagement of artists was also a component and/or by-product of several other projects. For instance:

○ A small theater gained a new casting employee through its partner, a large theater, an addition which staff said "helped boost the quality of our actors." The small theater also used the larger one's prestige as a draw by informing actors that the staff of the large theater would be in the audience and see their performance.

○ A partnership to expand cultural participation among African-Americans created a gospel ensemble for a production. The ensemble enjoyed critical acclaim and went on to become an independent organization.

○ A partnership between a large museum seeking to attract more Latinos and a small Latino theater conducted a "cultural mapping" of talent in the Latino community, and identified and paid local artists to perform at the partnership-sponsored event.

○ Partnership expanded the work of the film-maker in the Franco-American partnership, who made a documentary about the project.

○ Through a partnership with a group focused on linking art and technology, a dance group learned how to use digital video technology in its work.

Engaging Donors through Partnership

Partnerships helped some cultural organizations expand their fundraising capabilities and attract new donors. Two small organizations were encouraged to use a professional fundraiser, and in both cases successfully increased their ability to attract funds. Many small organizations felt that partnering with a larger organization increased their visibility, legitimacy, and success with funders. A trustee of one small presenting organization reported that its high-profile part-nership with a large organization resulted in its first invitation to apply for a capital grant from a foundation – a critical step toward its goal of starting a cultural center. In comments consistent with small organizations' perception, staff at a community foundation in the CPCP initiative explained that their board more readily supports small organizations if they have large and estab-lished partners.

As some grantees frankly acknowledged, they entered a partnership solely to get a grant. In such cases, participation-building projects suf-fered, either because they were not the genuine goal or because grantees were pressured to pursue a project in partnership that was not gen-uinely suited for partnership. For example:

○ A foundation that requires partnership made a grant to a group of organizations for audience-building purposes. Efforts to date have been disappointing and partners are skeptical about future success. One explained, "I'm not sure that [the] partnership paradigm works…We don't have the same needs. All of us need audi-ence but our sophistication level and [how] we respond are not the same. How we go about it is not necessarily the same."

○ An organization partnered to build participation among a target population that it does not ordinarily serve and has no desire to serve in the future. Staff acknowledge that they did so only for the grant. Unsurprisingly, efforts to engage the target population yielded disappointing results.

○ An organization partnered to obtain a cultural participation-building grant. The organization really wanted money to pay a staff member, but felt partnership funds would be easier to obtain (and indeed the foundation requires partnership). Not surprisingly, the organization had little information about the value their project provided to the target audience, since participation building was not really the goal.

All five community foundations in the study encouraged partnerships, and three made it a condition of at least some grant categories. Foundation staff say that they do not want to fund "in name only" partnerships designed to get a grant, but it is also clear that, despite foundations' intentions, cultural organizations are using partnership as a strategy to obtain funds. When foundations make partnership a requirement, they spark "in name only" collaborations

that may work against their own participation goals. When a grantee seeks to secure funds rather than partner to build participation, the results are unlikely to be greater participation. As we can see, not only partnerships but grants made for partnerships can have unintended consequences.

Although most cultural organizations reported positive experiences with partnerships and the community foundations, they also said that in their experience, grantmakers (including those not in the CPCP initiative) overemphasize partnerships, making it difficult for them to obtain funds for internal organizational needs and operations. Cultural organization staff did think that foundations should encourage but not explicitly or implicitly require partnerships.
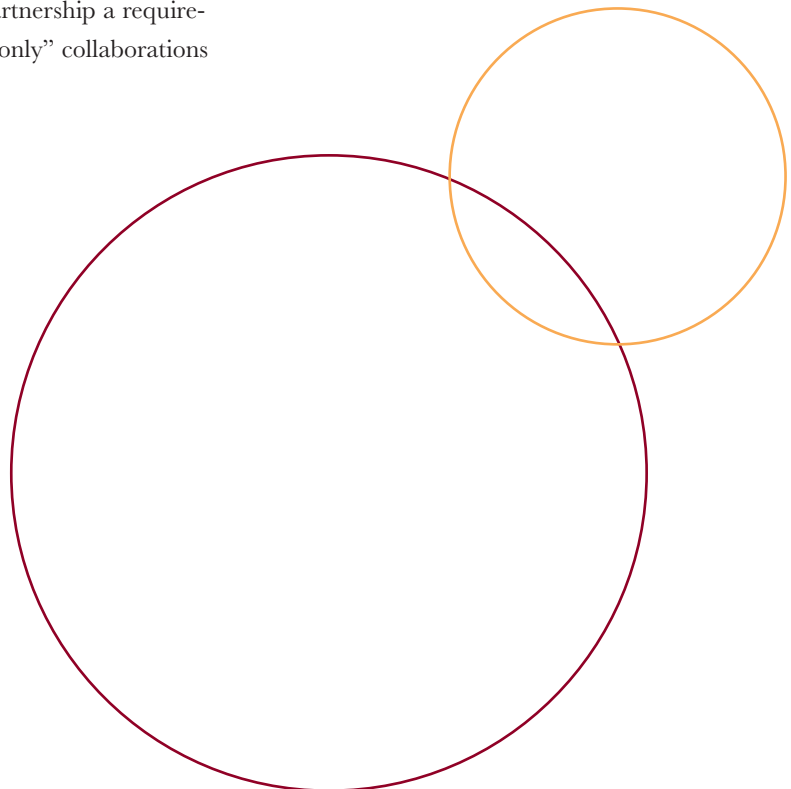
Expanding Organizational Networks and Relationships

Many partners remained resources for one another even after the conclusion of their formal partnership. For instance, the head of one small theater borrows props and gets references for lighting designers from his former partner, a director of a large theater. The head of the large theater, in turn, calls his former partner for information about performing groups in the Latino community.

Partnerships also enlarged organizations' networks beyond their immediate partners – a valued and often unanticipated benefit. In some cases, contacts made through CPCP initiative partners resulted in new partnerships. For instance, during a partnership with a library, a theater connected with a group that brings writers to the community and the two later partnered to bring in a playwright. Staff at another arts organization reported that their partnership helped them make "new friends to draw on." One of those "new friends" was an inner-city school, which the organization then turned to for testing a pilot outreach program for schools.
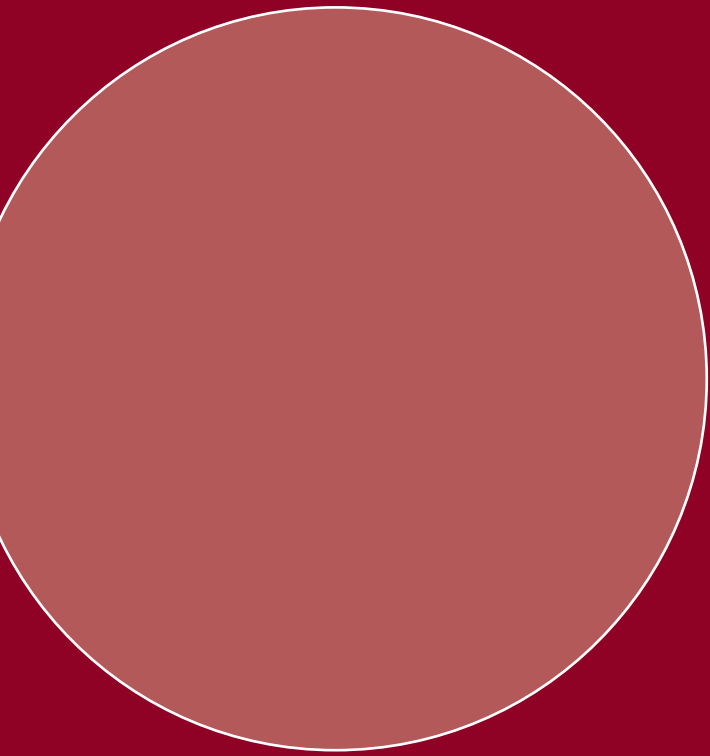
Sometimes, expanding organizational relationships is the partnership's intended goal rather than its by-product. This was true of occasional grants made by one community foundation that seeks "to build the capacity of arts providers by helping them forge strategic relationships." One such grantee was a theater attempting to attract programming and audiences for when it opens in a new community. The theater built relationships vital to this goal by forming a consortium of arts organizations that produced a calendar of local cultural events and a joint mailing list. Through the partnership, the theater director developed numerous new contacts, which she also used to help connect other arts organizations. For instance, she brought together two organizations, one with a predominantly Latino audience, and the other with a predominantly white one, to collaborate on a festival.

> Partnerships enlarged organizations' networks beyond their immediate partners – a valued and often unanticipated benefit.

Cultural organizations valued the relationships brought by partnerships and the opportunity to make contact with potential partners. Although requiring partnerships often results in precisely the type of "in name only" collaborations that foundations want to avoid, foundations can help to encourage productive partnerships by creating opportunities for cultural organizations to meet one another. Grantees welcomed such efforts. For instance, the director of one organization commented that a foundation staff member had originally "hooked us up" with a partner, and that he "can't overestimate the contribution" that that staff member had made. Indeed, by connecting participants in the arts world with one another, community foundations can also contribute to a greater overall level of cohesiveness in the arts community and foster the "social capital," or connections and trust, that can help facilitate coordinated action toward mutual participation-building goals (Putnam 1995). ●

Types of Partnerships

CPCP participants engaged in varied and overlapping types of partnerships. Cross-ethnic partnerships also joined large and small organizations, and most partnerships were between organizations in different cultural fields of activity. Partnerships were often enriched by such overlaps, and by partnering organizations' multiple assets and characteristics. Recall the example of the large history museum that collaborated with an African-American arts presenter. The museum sought a cross-ethnic partnership to help attract more African-American visitors, but, because it cooperated with an organization in a different field of activity, also enjoyed the unanticipated benefit of increased artistic programming capacity. Typically, partners in the CPCP initiative pursued participation-building activities by joining forces with different organizations and making use of those differences. In only four

cases were partners drawn exclusively from the same field of cultural activity. The following discussion examines prevalent types of partnerships that united different organizations.

Those individuals and organizations interested in building cultural participation naturally want to know which types of partnerships are more likely to yield the desired participation benefits. Given the small number of cases and the fact that so many cases fall into overlapping categories, we cannot make too detailed a comparison and should not generalize. For instance, are partnerships between large and small organizations with the same ethnic constituencies more beneficial, less beneficial, or beneficial in different ways than those between large and small organizations that cross ethnic lines? It is a question worth pursuing, but one that awaits an expansion of the present analysis to a larger number of

cases. Still, the rich case studies available from the CPCP initiative offer some strong insights into how certain types of partnerships benefited their members that may help others seeking to expand cultural participation now, or conduct future research.

Partnerships between Large and Small Organizations

Partnerships between large and small organizations characteristically offered an exchange: Small organizations benefited from the greater administrative and financial resources of their larger partner, and large organizations benefited from their smaller partner's connections to a desired target audience and greater ability to work at the community level. These partnerships were designed to extend the scope, exposure, and legitimacy of both large and small organizations, but to different target audiences. For instance, many small organizations sought the wide visibility gained through partnering with an organization with a larger audience, while many large ones sought to attract a particular constituency (usually a specific ethnic group) served by the smaller organization. While issues of fairness, influence, rewards, and mutual respect are important in all partnerships, they are particularly sensitive in large-small partnerships because of the discrepancy in organizational resources. For this reason, staff at small organizations approached partnerships with large organizations cautiously. Yet it was surprising how often both small and large organizations found such partnerships mutually beneficial and emerged pleased with the outcomes.

Small and large organizations often found partnerships with one another mutually beneficial.

EXAMPLE:
Reaching New Audiences at the Community Level

A large museum joined forces with a small Latino theater to produce a series of events with food and entertainment to attract Latinos to the museum. Museum staff said they knew how to conduct "large-scale" marketing, but this partnership allowed them to reach out to neighborhoods and to develop relationships with local Latino performers and organizations. The theater director, for example, suggested that they map local talent by sending a Latino staff member to administer a survey at churches, a Spanish language library, and an employment training organization. Local artists performed at the bilingual events, which were hosted by a Latino emcee referred by the theater director. Through this partnership, the museum developed new relationships, such as one with a local puppet group who performed in exchange for use of museum space. Hundreds of Latino members of the community attended the events. A museum staff member readily acknowledged that the museum would not have been as successful alone because the theater director brought expertise and connections that neither she, "a white girl wanting to do this project," nor the museum possessed.

The theater director agreed that the partnership was successful and accomplished a "great job of outreach in the community." He commented further that the partnership was a fair one, in which his contributions were acknowledged and

respected. The organizations engaged in joint marketing and the museum publicized the theater in its well-circulated newsletter. Museum staff "championed" the theater, offered it space, and attended performances. While the partnership is over, the museum conducts the events on its own (the theater's preference), and warm relations and contacts continue. Interestingly, the head of the theater reported that this partnership made him more open to partnering with "mainstream organizations." Said he, "I think that mainstream and multicultural organizations can learn from each other." He has collaborated again, is more open when approached on new partnership projects, and more actively reaches out to other organizations.

EXAMPLE:
Expanding Organizational Capacity

In the previous example, the small organization was the expert. This same organization, however, also participated in another partnership in which it sought expertise from a large organization. In partnering with a larger, professional theater, the small but fast-growing Latino theater learned ways to strengthen its own operations and adapt to growth. For instance, as the Latino theater grew, staff realized that their accounting system was no longer adequate. In this case, a partnership helped the organization develop its organizational capacities to support expansion of

its artistic mission and services, and to engage donors and trustees in a way that reflected its new needs. The director of the theater, who handles most of his organization's needs, received valuable suggestions about accounting, marketing, and development from the various specialists at the large organization. He subsequently implemented changes in accounting procedures, hired a professional grant writer (who has successfully brought in grants), and learned about how a large organization uses its board for fundraising. The smaller theater did not merely emulate the larger one, but adapted its practices and ideas. Ironically, the smaller theater also decided to limit future growth: The exposure prompted management to conclude that getting too large would interfere with the theater's artistic identity and mission. For its part, the larger theater exchanged mailing lists with the smaller one, and has reported some success in attracting additional Latino audience members. The formal partnership is over, but a friendly relationship remains and the smaller theater continues to borrow props and get referrals from its former partner.
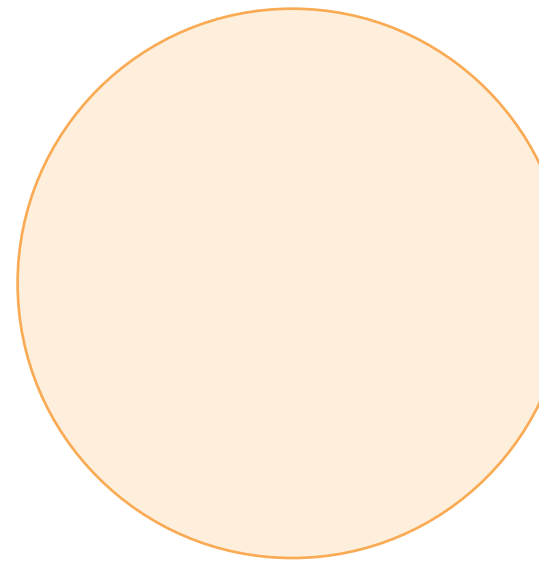
Difficulties of Partnerships between Large and Small Organizations

Although large and small partners benefited from each other's differences, the disparities in their resources, culture, and structure also caused problems. The challenges springing from these disparities warrant special discussion, and must be recognized by those supporting or participating in this type of partnership. Sources of major difficulties included:

○ Discrepancies in staff size and consequences for coordination and administration;

○ Differences in the needs and outlook of volunteer-run and professional organizations; and

○ Issues of mutual respect and influence.

Discrepancies in Staff Size and Professionalization

Partnerships between large and small organizations, with their unequal financial and administrative resources, pose distinctive problems. Setting up meetings between a large organization with professional staff and a volunteer-run organization is particularly difficult. Paid staff expect to meet during the day, but that requires a small organization's volunteers to take time

off from their jobs. After a couple of meetings, this situation became difficult for the director of one volunteer group. Although the partnership was in part created so he could "shadow" professional personnel and see how a large institution functions, he could not take the time off from his job to fully use that opportunity. The head of another small grantee organization expressed her wish that foundations could develop different approaches to supporting grassroots organizations, such as providing fellowships that would allow volunteer directors to take time off from their jobs and spend more time at the larger organization.

Even when all partners have paid staff, discrepancies in staff size can create difficult logistical issues and produce frustration. This sometimes occurred when an organization with many professional staff partnered with a smaller organization whose director – as one of the few (or only) paid professional staff members – alone handled the partnership. The directors of the smaller institutions were frustrated because handling different aspects of the partnership might require them to meet with five different staff members in the larger institution – and sometimes it was a challenge just to find out who in that organization was in charge. On the other hand, larger institutions expressed frustration that only one person at the smaller organization was available to deal with partnership issues. Thus, if that individual was unavailable, progress came to a standstill.

Staff at larger institutions also said that partnerships with small institutions cost disproportionately more time and money because the larger institution typically assumes the primary

> Large and small partners benefited from each other's differences, but the disparities in their resources, culture, and structure also caused problems.

Partnerships between organizations that typically attract members of different ethnic groups can be a powerful tool for overcoming obstacles to diversifying audiences, but they must be mutually beneficial.

coordinating role. Smaller organizations experienced additional administrative burdens while in partnerships because of significant strains on their scarcer resources. For the director of one small organization that partners with large ones, a major lesson learned was to make sure that the high administrative costs of partnerships are covered in future grants. During the previous year, he reported, partnership funds covered less than 60 percent of what the partnership project actually cost his organization. These findings suggest that grantmakers consider providing additional funds for small organizations so that their organizational capacities are not unduly strained by partnership.

Problems of Mutual Respect and Influence

Issues of mutual respect and authority, present more widely in partnerships, are particularly sensitive in partnerships between large and small institutions, and in partnerships that bring together organizations with predominantly white boards, staff, and audience with those whose board, staff, and audience are predomi-

nantly drawn from other, minority communities. In one such arrangement, the director of the smaller (predominantly minority) organization felt that he had to struggle to establish his organization's equality in a partnership with a large institution. By contrast, the large (predominantly white) institution questioned why the smaller one felt it had to be equally involved in everything, since it lacked the institutional resources to carry through. Each organization believes that it contributed more to the partnership than the other.

Representatives of minority organizations emphasized that care must be taken to ensure that the minority institution – which is also likely to be the smaller partner – will receive some benefit and be treated respectfully. The director of a Latino grassroots organization commented that while Latinos are now "in" and "everyone is breaking down the door to attach to Latino things," most partnerships are not "win-win." She fears that large organizations will seek minority partners in order to satisfy a funder, but that the rewards of the grant will not be shared. Therefore, she believes that foundations should encourage partnerships, but only if both the small and the large organization benefit.

In fact, her organization experienced a very positive partnership with a large organization whose staff and audience are predominantly white. Significantly, she attributed their success in part to a time-intensive planning process in which participants had a chance to get to know one another. Consequently she did not feel that her comments were dismissed because she was the "little guy" in the partnership. That said, it is important to note that this planning process was supported by a planning grant, which was mandatory for receipt of the implementation grant. Had that not been the case, the partners would probably not have undertaken the time for planning; however, it proved "invaluable."

Cross-Ethnic Partnerships

Diversifying audiences (and donors and volunteers) is one of the major challenges facing cultural organizations today, and is a goal that many large organizations with predominantly white boards, staff, and audiences have found quite difficult to achieve (McCarthy and Jinnett 2001; Ostrower 2002). The experiences of CPCP participants confirm that partnerships between such organizations and other, typically smaller organizations with strong ties to other ethnic communities can be a powerful tool for overcoming obstacles to diversifying audiences. As representatives of minority organizations emphasized, however, these partnerships must be mutually beneficial – and when they are, they can also serve the interests of the minority partner. For the minority partner (in the current study, either African-American or Latino) those interests included not only gaining greater access to white audiences, but also to the types of partnership benefits described in the previous section.

We saw earlier how a museum used partnership to help attract more Latino visitors. As that example underscored, partnership helps organizations approach populations they have been unable to reach on their own. In another case, partnership with a small African-American organization helped a large museum overcome its image as unwelcoming to African-Americans and, in the words of its own staff, "kicked us out of [our] lethargy" about marketing techniques. With their partner's help, museum staff reached out to churches, libraries, and community organizations, and learned about artistic resources in the African-American community previously unknown to them (e.g., a collection that their African-American partner enabled them to borrow for a project). For its part, the African-American organization felt the undertaking was successful because it gained the ability to create and present programming on a scale that exceeded its capacity as a small organization, reached larger audiences with African-American cultural programming, expanded its mailing lists, provided opportunities for African-American artists, and, in the process, increased its own visibility (e.g., through publicity by the larger organization).

The following example illustrates not only the multiple strengths of cross-ethnic partnerships, but also the limitations comparatively short-term partnerships place on organizations' often ambitious participation-building goals.
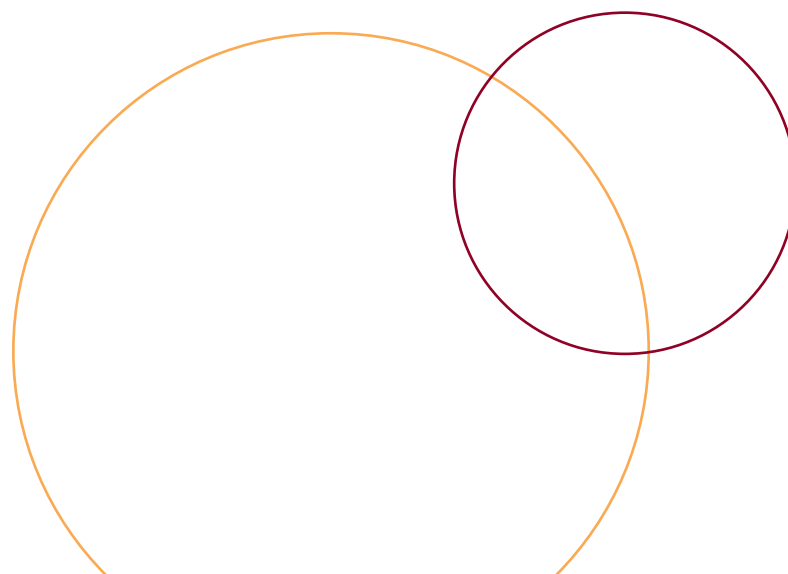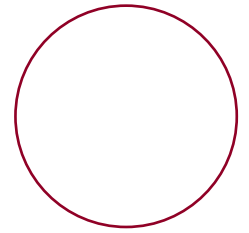
EXAMPLE:
**Successes and Unmet Goals in
a Cross-Ethnic Partnership to
Expand Diversity**

A multipurpose partnership involving a ballet and several small Latino organizations resulted in several participation-building outcomes. The partnership established scholarships in the ballet's school for talented young Latino dancers. Latino partners used their connections to arrange and publicize auditions, while the ballet used its connections to obtain free dancewear for scholarship recipients. As a result, a group of talented young Latinos were given the opportunity for professional training, and a step was made toward changing what ballet staff termed the art form's image as "a white, upper-class enclave." Through its partners, the ballet company was invited to perform at Latino festivals. One of the Latino partners, a small folkloric group seeking to grow and expand its reach to Latino and non-Latino audiences, "shadowed" ballet staff to see how a large professional organization runs and, in addition, obtained the ballet's mailing list. The ballet provided free tickets to performances, and Latino dancers spoke with groups of young Latinos to try to make them feel comfortable at the ballet.

All partners agreed that their collaboration was successful, but that many goals were not met. Scholarships continued, but the goal of audience diversification was not achieved (nor were some other goals, such as a joint performance of a Latino dance group and the ballet). The partners themselves acknowledged that audience diversification could not realistically be accomplished in the short grant period. Although the partnership was intended to be long-term, and the door remains open to future collaborative efforts, the formal partnership, like so many others in the initiative, ceased when the grant ended.
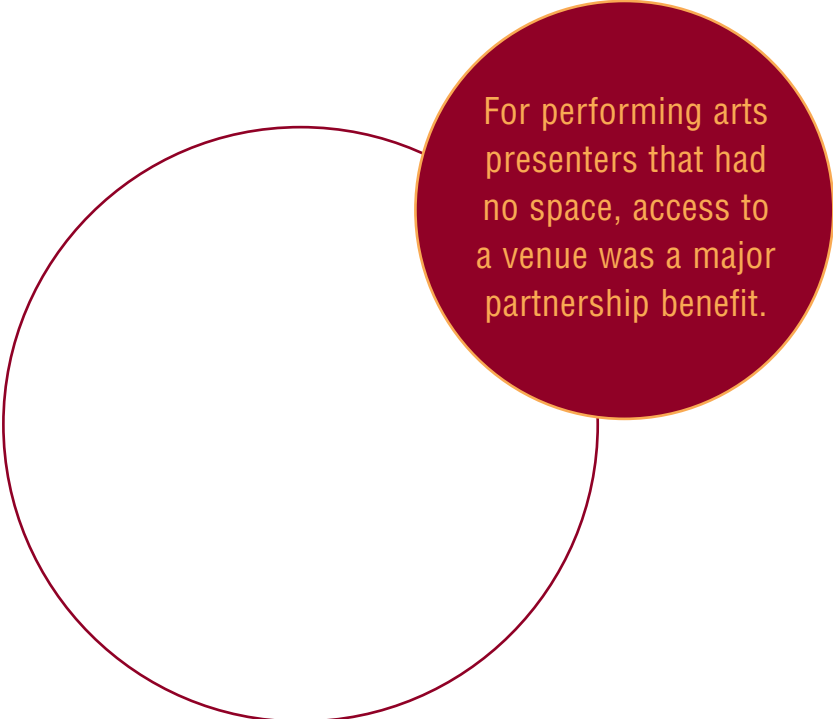
Partnerships between Organizations in Different Cultural Fields

All but four of the 19 partnerships involved organizations in different fields of cultural activity. By bringing together organizations focused on different cultural forms and themes, such partnerships helped these organizations expand and extend their programming. This pattern was evident in several partnerships involving history museums/societies and arts organizations, as illustrated in the earlier example (see page 14) where a history museum strengthened its own artistic component as a result of partnership. In two other cases, history museums partnered with arts organizations in hopes of attracting new audiences. Although that goal was not successful, the process made trustees and volunteers more receptive to integrating fine arts into the museum's programming. In another case, an archival organization acquired and restored a theater and subsequently found itself in the very different business of managing and establishing programming for an arts organization. The arts program division of the public schools helped by identifying talented jazz bands available to perform and getting them to the theater. Through this partnership, the theater got programming and the students gained a place to perform.

Venue-Related Partnerships

In several cases, the partnership's participation-building goals were related to one partner's ability to provide space. For performing arts presenters that had no space, access to a venue was a major partnership benefit. One such partnership was organized around a new use of existing space. In this case, a library partnered with five theater groups, which performed in library branches, and in turn received the library's administrative and fundraising support. Performers were deliberately sent to branches in different neighborhoods, seeking to expose people to theater by bringing it to them for free, and giving theaters access to new audiences. For instance, a Latino theater gained additional exposure to non-Latino audiences, while a theater from an affluent suburb performed in an inner-city neighborhood. One member of the partnership to rekindle Franco-American culture (discussed earlier) commented that one important reason for the venture's success was the type of space offered by the cinema. These partners declined an offer to use a multiplex cinema to bring their project to another community, arguing, "It's completely commercial, and you can't make the atmosphere [in that setting]."

Venue-related partnerships, such as the one between the library and theaters, often had a distinct geographical component. For instance, one partnership aimed to bring new programming to a theater as a way to attract more people to that neighborhood and further its economic development. Another partnership brought performing groups (that had their own space) to a performing space in another geographical community. Typically, though, the partner that provided the venue also provided other services, such as administrative and marketing assistance. When space alone was the contribution (unless there was something truly distinctive about the venue), some organizations felt that the space-giving institution was not fully engaged as a partner.

For performing arts presenters that had no space, access to a venue was a major partnership benefit.

The outcomes of venue-related partnerships, however, should serve to caution those seeking to use partnerships to build participation. In some cases, these partnerships were extremely successful. A common thread was the appropriate venue coupled with efforts to attract the particular target audience to the venue and its events. For instance, a partnership among two large organizations seeking to diversify their programming and audiences and a small African-American organization successfully presented programming with African-American themes, attracting large African-American audiences to a venue not previously seen as welcoming to that community. Additionally, one of the partners (from another town) was able to expand its services to the host city.

Finding a venue or programming for a venue does not ensure that people will attend, and attendance in some cases was disappointing. In these cases, the organizations had not adequately publicized the events or determined what would attract people to the events in the first place. For instance, initial success in attracting people to a venue was followed by disappointing attendance the following year. All partners agreed that staff changes hindered the partner charged with marketing from adequately doing its job. Another partnership found a venue in a youth organization well suited to its project purpose – engaging young people in theater. The partners did not anticipate, however, the challenge of sparking and retaining the children's interest in the program. One partner acknowledged the organizations did not realize how much competition there is for children's after-school time. As this shows, when partners seek to engage a particular audience, their efforts must be rooted in a firm understanding of that audience. ●
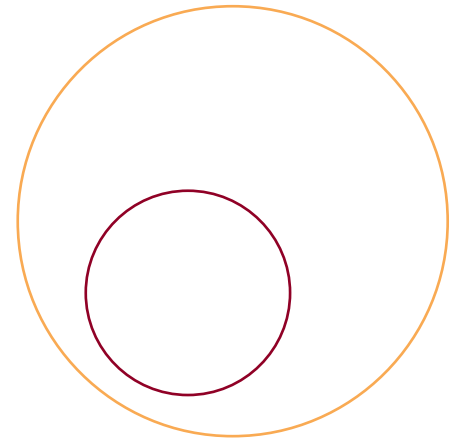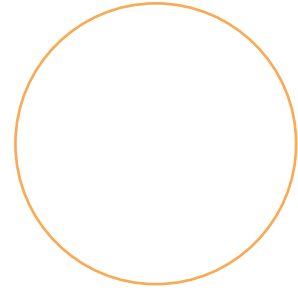
Sustainability of Partnerships

Most of the partnerships in this initiative would not have existed without a grant, and most, including those intended to be long-term, did not last beyond the grant period. In fact, only two interviewees indicated that their partnerships would have been formed without a grant.[4] In only one case did a partnership remain intact to continue to expand the project beyond the grant period. In two other cases, partnerships endured in a changed form.[5] In two striking cases – including one still operating within the grant period – partners themselves had different understandings about whether their partnerships endured.[6] Furthermore, in none of the other (six) ongoing partnerships did all members express a desire to continue, and one had already suffered attrition among some partners.[7]

[4] In a third case, they said it might have happened. This information was not available for one partnership.

[5] One partnership, which began as a partnership among cultural and educational organizations, evolved into an ongoing partnership among only the cultural organizations. In another case, a partnership that was formed to present a joint performance by dancers from different countries did not achieve that goal. However, that partnership did present a well-attended performance by culturally diverse local artists. Although the grant period recently ended, the partners plan to repeat the performance in at least one more local venue. In one case, the partnership ended (by mutual agreement), but one of the organizations continued the project. In another case, a partnership deemed unsuccessful by both members ended, but one partner may accept an invitation (with funding) to continue the program alone.

[6] In one case, a member said its partnership continues because the other partner cannot successfully continue the project alone. Yet, that partner said that the partnership was over because they *can* do the project alone and thus do not feel it is worthwhile to spend time on maintaining the partnership. In the other case, the grant period had not ended and the project had not been completed, but some partners nonetheless believed that both had reached their conclusion. These examples attest to just how difficult it can be to establish and maintain good communication, clarity, and shared expectations in a partnership.

[7] For instance, a member of one partnership wants to continue, but staff at the partnering institution are ambivalent, and wonder if they should have worked with a different partner.
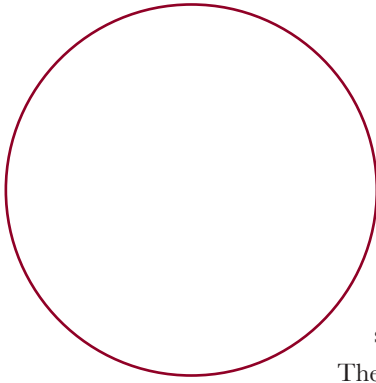
Why was it so difficult to
sustain active partnerships?
The primary reasons follow:

o Funders did not provide sufficient financial
support to sustain partnerships until they
achieved their goals and/or became self-
sustaining or obtained other funding.

o One or more partners did not view the partici-
pation-building project as central to its core
mission and priorities.

o The logistics of maintaining the partnership
were seen as too great relative to the returns.

o Partnership was pursued solely for the grant,
and therefore, when the funds ended, so did
the partnership.

As these reasons suggest, partnerships often were
not sustained even when their members were
interested in seeing them continue. Interestingly,
interviewees did not report ending partnerships
because all members agreed they had been suc-
cessful and no work remained to be done.
This may be partly due to the ambitious goals
set by many partners, but may also reflect the
limited size of the present sample. Research
on additional partnerships might well discover
examples that ended for this reason.

EXAMPLE:
Lack of Sustained Financial Support
The partnership between the library and
theaters, which brought theaters to perform in
library branches, was intended to be a long-term
arrangement. Nonetheless, and despite the fact
that all members were pleased with the results,
the partnership ended after its second year
when required matching funds proved too diffi-
cult to raise. Potential donors repeatedly said
that they did not want to support a library to do
theater. The head of one theater attempted to
continue the project on her own. Once she start-
ed talking to staff at the library branches, howev-
er, she realized that the project was too much for
her small organization to handle alone, nor did
she have sponsorship for performance costs.
According to a staff member at another theater,
the project could have succeeded if the partners
had been given five years to build the program;
another complained that projects do not receive
adequate multiyear funding because foundations
are always looking for something "different,
better, [or] unique." As for the library, it shifted
its focus back to authors, having decided that
"you can't be everything to everyone."

In another city, a museum and a performing arts presenter partnered to try to expand and diversify audiences by reaching out to faith-based groups, including churches, synagogues, and mosques. Curators showed these groups how to preserve and display their own artifacts. The pastor of a church with a long history said the project had been a "great venture" but frustrating because it was set up to maximize the number of congregations included by bringing in new congregations each year. He wished the partners had worked with fewer churches over a longer time to allow them to get their projects functioning at a sustainable level. Both funders and cultural organizations alike must be willing to make long-term commitments if they are to achieve ambitious participation-building goals.

Relationship to Core Mission and Logistical Costs

A large organization with a predominantly white leadership and audience and a group of small minority organizations partnered to diversify participation, intending to do so on a long-term basis. All members were pleased with the partnership and felt good things had been accomplished. They also believed that some goals, like diversifying audiences, required more time than covered by the grant period. However, while the possibility of future collaboration remained, once the grant ended so did the active partnership. Partners cite time, logistics (e.g., arranging meetings), and lack of funds as the primary reasons. Furthermore, a staff member at the large organization expressed uncertainty about wanting to continue the partnership, not only because of time and administrative burdens, but because outreach programs, important as they are, "are not our mission, which is to provide the best [artistic presentations]." He feels that it is easier for him to justify taking some of his time away from fundraising and other mission-related activities to spend on outreach
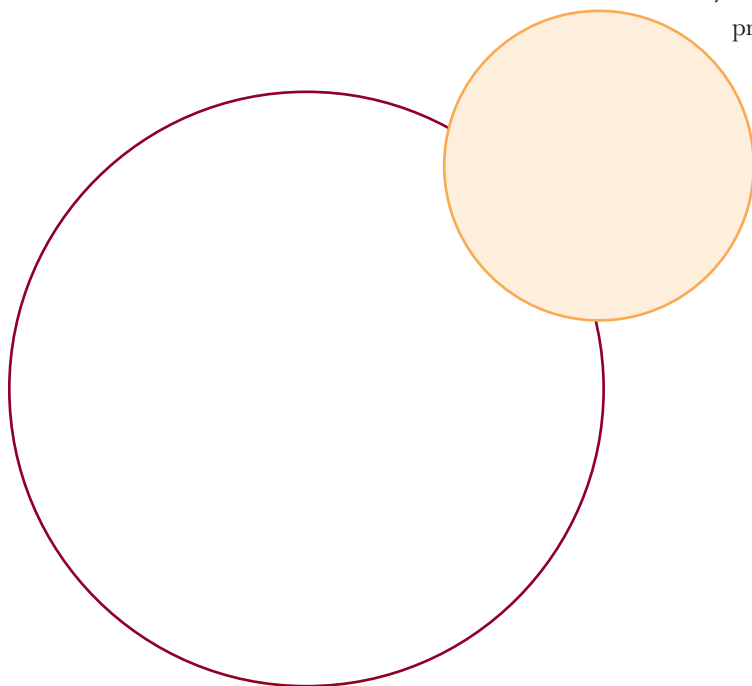
programs when they are supported by a grant. In addition, although they do not want to be a "white, elitist" organization and they value outreach programs, they also would not want funders to support outreach at the expense of their core programs. Staff of the minority organizations said that this collaboration had been a good "first step," but their ambitious diversity goals required long-term work and funding. One such staffer commented that foundations should encourage partnerships, but not look for "quick and dirty victories."

Other types of organizations also discontinued participation-building projects that were not seen as central to their core artistic mission. For instance, the head of a small minority organization said he engaged in a partnership to conduct a "community venture" that proved successful; however, his organization decided not to continue the partnership because of other ventures and their desire to focus on the art and artists that they present.
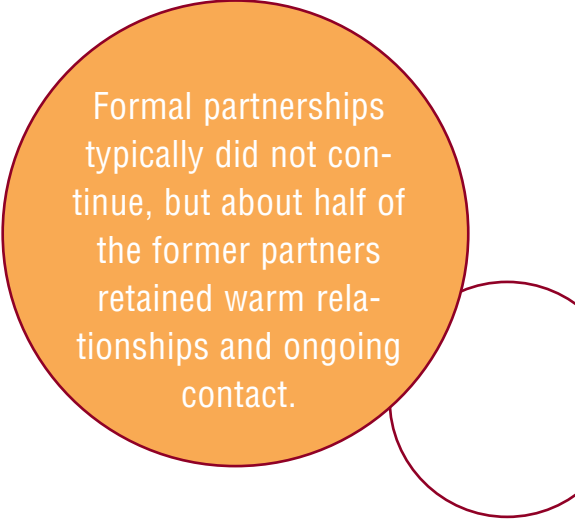
EXAMPLE:
Lack of Purpose Other than a Grant
In a case mentioned earlier, an organization sought a grant and therefore partnered for a participation-building project aimed at a target audience it had no plans to serve. When the grant period ended, so did this organization's participation. Reflecting on the experience, a staff member at the other partnering organization commented that when foundations require a partnership you don't get "a genuine one, which is maybe what happened in our case." That organization, which *does* serve the target audience, may continue the project on its own having concluded that it has no need for a partner. In an interesting twist, however, the partnership originally initiated to obtain a grant to pay for a staff member's time did engage its members and endured – but the staff member left.
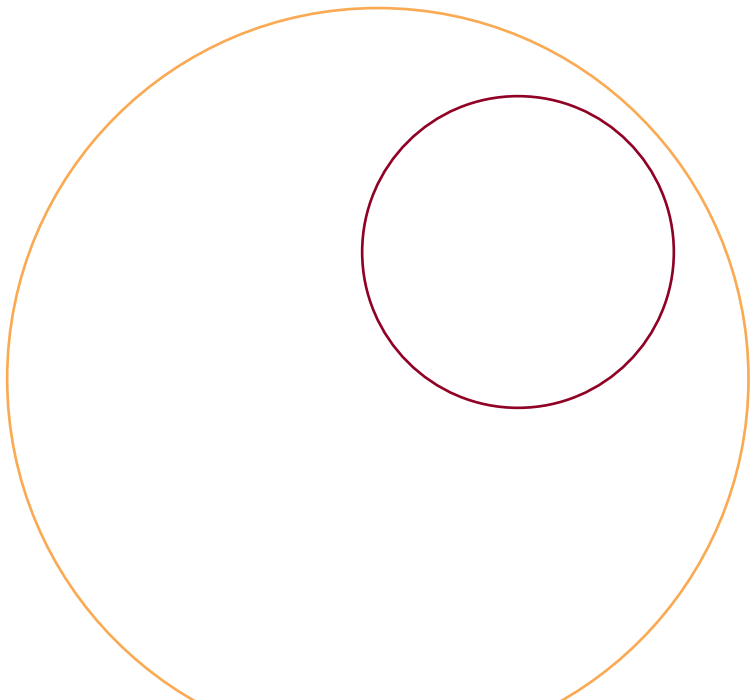
Few partnerships appeared to be motivated *solely* by the availability of grant funds. In one partnership, however, most members agreed that the grant was the only basis for remaining in their partnership. The audience-building efforts of the project were disappointing, and the partnering organizations felt it served no real function in relation to their mission. Although the partnership funding continues, some partners have already dropped out because they found it too costly even with a grant. It seems unlikely the partnership will endure. As one member put it, they have a partnership formed for resources looking for a purpose. The supporting community foundation requires partnerships, believing one of its major successes has been to change attitudes toward partnering. While that may be true for some grantees, this example clearly demonstrates that others remained in partnerships solely because of grants.

Although formal partnerships typically did not continue, about half of the former partners retained warm relationships and ongoing contact. This is indicative of the fact that partnerships did not usually end because partners did not get along with one another. It also reinforces the earlier point that partnerships lead to expanded networks among cultural organizations beyond the formal partnership. ●
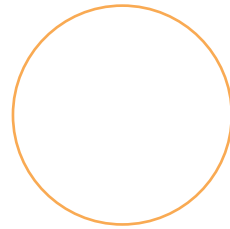
Formal partnerships typically did not continue, but about half of the former partners retained warm relationships and ongoing contact.
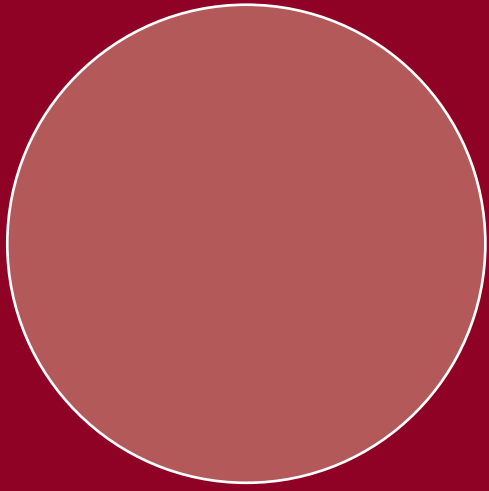
Conclusion

The experience of CPCP participants has a great deal to offer in response to the questions posed by this monograph about the nature, benefits, mechanisms, types, and challenges of partnerships. In the CPCP initiative, partnership helped strengthen cultural participation in various ways and for various constituencies. Organizations with relevant and complementary resources could achieve participation goals that they could not achieve as well on their own. Partnerships also expanded organizations' connections beyond their immediate partners, and those new contacts became resources upon which to draw in future participation-building activities. As the examples show, cultural organizations have many resources to offer one another – connections to a target audience, administrative expertise, artistic expertise, volunteer time, fundraising and financial capabilities, space, and,

generally, knowledge and experience that another organization needs but does not possess. Nonetheless, partnerships are just a *tool*, and like all tools, they are not good for every task; when used incorrectly they will not work properly. Partnerships will be most effective when participation goals are clear and realistic, when partners are genuinely committed to the participation goal, and when they have thought out why partnership advances that goal. For instance, as we have seen, partnerships can help organizations better understand and reach target audiences that they have been unable to connect with on their own – but only if they are genuinely committed to serving that audience; willing to engage, respect, and listen to a partner with the expertise they need; and adapt their behavior accordingly.
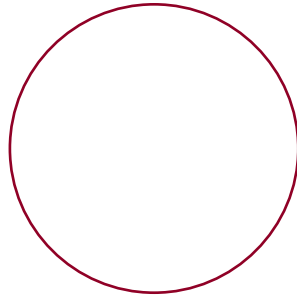
It is particularly important for partners to be very clear about their goals, their commitment, and the appropriateness of partnership for attaining those goals, because partnership is by no means an easy or cost-free tool. Partnerships in this analysis were often time-consuming, energy-absorbing, required more money than grants provided, and were sometimes contentious. In addition, partners must be honest about their relative commitment in order to set realistic goals. Ambitious and long-term goals should be established only if the organizations are willing to make a long-term commitment – otherwise the partnership will flounder and likely dissolve before achieving those goals.

Toward that end, organizations considering partnerships to help build participation should clearly identify where a potential partnership's participation goals stand in relation to their own core mission and priorities. Is partnership going to further that core mission? Or, is it a way to pursue participation goals seen as valuable but

tangential to basic priorities? These questions are central to determining how ambitious a goal to pursue, the chances that partners will succeed, and whether or not the organization will feel that the partnership warrants the time and resources needed to succeed. This is not to say that organizations should never enter partnerships outside their central mission – some such partnerships were quite beneficial – but rather they should have a clear rationale for doing so, and be straightforward with their partners about what they are willing to contribute to the partnership.

Organizations also need to bear in mind that there are different types of partnerships, which bring their own rewards and challenges. Partnerships between large and small organizations are a case in point because of the discrepancies in participants' financial and administrative resources. A surprising finding of this study was how useful such partnerships proved for small and large participants. At the same time, issues of fairness, influence, and mutual respect, while common to all partnerships, are particularly sensitive in large-small collaborations. For organizations entering this type of partnership, it is essential to establish arrangements at the outset that will assure influence, benefits, and mutual respect to all parties. In addition, if one of the organizations is run by volunteers, attention must be given to how the partners will accommodate the very different cultures and schedules of the different organizations. A careful planning process, important to all partnerships, is critical for large-small ones.

For funders, the findings have parallel implications. Funders are understandably interested in supporting partnerships that will achieve their participation goals. In the CPCP initiative, grants enabled many organizations to pursue successful ventures. On the other hand, some grantmaking practices are apparently ill-suited to achieving their participation-building goals. For instance, mandating partnership invites the very "in name only" partnerships foundations want to discourage. Funders as well as partnering grantees should also be clear about their level of commitment, and realistic about matching resources to goals. If foundations want to pursue and successfully support ambitious participation-building goals, then they must be willing to provide the higher level and more sustained funding needed to accomplish those goals. This includes considering the planning and administrative costs associated with partnership, and the special needs of smaller organizations for which partnerships can be very taxing administratively. The findings also suggest that foundations carefully consider the number and types of partnerships that they can most effectively fund and monitor, and target their grantmaking accordingly. Moreover, while grantees do not believe that foundations should require partnership, they welcome foundation efforts to play a facilitating role that brings cultural organizations together. This role is time-consuming, but one that community foundations are well positioned to play.

If partnerships and the organizations that support them are to achieve their participation goals, then both cultural organizations and foundations need to keep in sight the intended external beneficiaries of their efforts. Cultural organizations often exhibited flexibility and creativity in reaching out to engage people with their institutions, but sometimes the interests, needs, and preferences of the audiences they ostensibly sought to serve appeared to be forgotten. Similarly, foundations provided organizations with welcome assistance, enabling them to pursue valued projects, but sometimes overlooked grantees' pressing needs and realistic capabilities.

A final lesson learned from the CPCP initiative: Sometimes the most valuable rewards of partnerships were those that partners did not (and sometimes could not) anticipate. Thus, even as they plan and establish clear goals, cultural organizations will benefit by keeping an open mind to new possibilities and opportunities that emerge over the course of a partnership. ●

Sometimes the most valuable rewards of partnerships were those that partners did not (and sometimes could not) anticipate.

Appendix: The CPCP Partnerships

Type of Partners[8]	Partnership Project	Partner Resources	Participation Goals
Library and theaters	Bring theater performances to library branches	Administrative; artistic/program; venue	Engage audiences; expand programs
African-American historical society and art programs division of public school system	Bring high school jazz bands to perform in theater run by historical society	Administrative; artistic/program; venue	Engage audiences; expand programs; expand partner networks; engage youth as performers
Theater and numerous local arts organizations	Produce a calendar of local cultural events and pooled mailing lists	Administrative; connection to audiences	Expand partner networks; engage audiences
Musical organization dedicated to performing and preserving African-American classical music and music department of predominantly African-American college	Create a music preparatory academy for youth primarily from disadvantaged families	Administrative; artistic/program; venue	Expand program; engage audiences; engage and develop artists
Historical museum and African-American arts presenting organization	Produce a living history exhibit at the museum	Artistic/program; connection to audience	Expand program; engage audiences; engage artists
African-American history museum and African-American arts presenting organization	Outreach and programming activities to engage churches, mosques, and synagogues	Administrative; artistic/program; connection to audience	Engage audiences; engage donors; engage faith-based organizations in cultural preservation; engage staff in outreach
Arts presenter, African-American arts presenter, and opera house	Present and commission cultural and educational programming dealing with African-American themes	Administrative; artistic/program; connection to audience; venue	Engage artists; engage audiences; engage donors; expand programming; expand partner networks

8 The partner awarded the CPCP grant and serving as fiscal agent is listed first. In the two mentorship/partnerships, both parties received grant monies directly.

Type of Partners	Partnership Project	Partner Resources	Participation Goals
Performing arts center, ballet, opera, symphony, and theater group	Bring performances to the performing arts center to build audiences; joint audience/market research	Artistic/program; venue	Engage audiences; expand programs
Community art center and organization dedicated to promoting Latino art and artists	Gallery to exhibit work of Latino artists	Administrative; connection to artists; connection to audience; venue; volunteers	Engage audiences; engage and promote artists; expand programs
Ballet, folkloric dance group, two organizations dedicated to promoting Latino culture	Audience development, scholarships for Latino youth in ballet school	Administrative; artistic/program; connection to audience; fundraising; technical expertise	Engage audiences; engage donors; engage youth as performers; expand partner networks; engage artists
Two theater groups	Engage youth in acting	Administrative; artistic; connection to audience; venue	Engage audiences; engage youth in performing; expand programs
Language school, cinema, filmmaker	Rekindle Franco-American culture and connect Franco-Americans to the cinema through film festival and discussions	Artistic/program; connection to audience; venue	Engage audiences; expand programs; rekindle target audience's engagement with own culture
Historical museums and societies	Joint marketing; produce brochure	Administration; information about own program; volunteers	Engage audiences; expand organizational networks
Museum and Latino theater	Present events with food and performances at the museum to attract members of the Latino community	Administrative; connection to audiences	Engage artists; engage audiences; expand program; expand partner networks

Type of Partners	Partnership Project	Partner Resources	Participation Goals
History museum, theater group, and artist	Engage "at risk" youth in creating a mural in connection with a museum exhibit	Administrative; artistic/program; connection to audience	Engage audiences; engage volunteers; engage youth as creators of art; expand programs
Large theater, small Latino theater	Mentorship/partnership to build capacity of small organization; exchange of mailing lists etc. (not project based)	Administrative; connection to audience; fundraising and financial	Engage audiences; engage donors; engage trustees; expand programs
Large theater, small theater	Mentorship/partnership to build capacity of small organization; exchange of mailing lists etc. (not project based)	Artistic/program; connection to audience; fundraising and financial	Engage audiences; engage donors; expand programs; strengthen organizational administration
Group dedicated to linking art and technology and dance group	Joint performance of dance groups, simulcast on the Web	Administrative; artistic/program; organizational networks; technical expertise	Engage artists; expand programs
History museum, an organization dedicated to promoting African, African-American and Caribbean culture, and an experimental music organization	Program series combining panel discussions, performances, and literary programs	Administrative; artistic/program; connection to audience	Engage audiences; expand programs; expand partner networks
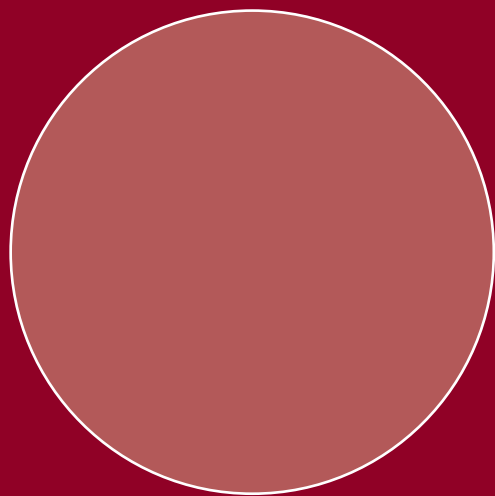
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