Culture Matters
Understanding Cultural Strategy and Measuring Cultural Impact
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE CULTURE GROUP

The Culture Group produced this research, with support from Open Society Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the McKay Foundation.

The Culture Group (TCG), a collaboration of social change experts and creative producers, joined together formally in September 2010 to advance progressive change through expansive, strategic and values-driven cultural organizing. TCG identifies, studies and deploys effective models for increasing the creative industries’ and individuals’ participation in the progressive movement.

The Culture Group is:

Jeff Chang
Ian Inaba
Alexis McGill Johnson
Brian Komar
Liz Manne
Erin Potts
Favianna Rodriguez
Yosi Sergant
Jessy Tolkan

For more information about The Culture Group or this research, please contact Erin Potts (erin@atctower.net).

Thanks to:

Ann Beeson
Patricia Jerido
Maya Harris
Darren Walker
Jenny Toomey
Rob McKay
Mary Manuel

Special thanks to:

Alexis McGill Johnson
Erin Potts
Liz Manne
Jan D’Alessandro
Tiffany Tsai
Lucy Horns
John Bare
Scott Nielsen
Cara Mertes
Danny Goldberg
Jason Drucker
Jenny Toomey
Rashad Robinson
Michael Skolnik
Lisa Witter
Maria Teresa Kumar

Images not otherwise attributed are in the public domain.

Design: kenjiiu.com
CONTENTS

Executive Summary V
Literature Review 1
The Culture Group Interviews 23
The Role of Culture in Reducing Implicit Bias 33
Culture Before Politics 39
Cultural Products and Strategies 47
Appendix: Literature Review 87
In recent years, we have seen changes in public opinion about LGBT and racial issues lead to the development of policies that lean toward full-inclusion. Conventional wisdom suggests that cultural shifts precede political shifts, but how do we prove causation? There are plenty of abstract arguments proving that culture does play a significant role in informing and engaging the public about specific issues. However, those of us who are investing in social justice movements need something more concrete. How do we measure the impact of adopting a cultural strategy? How do we compare and evaluate the effectiveness of different types of projects? What are the most useful metrics to use?

During this last year, The Culture Group sought to understand how to better answer these questions by conducting multiple research projects, including a review of extant literature about the measuring cultural impact in social justice campaigns, interviews with cultural strategy experts, and an investigation into sustainable revenue models through cultural strategies. In addition, we have added an investigation on cutting-edge research about the power of culture to influence not only our conscious values and beliefs but our unconscious ones as well. Based on our findings, we believe that a cultural strategy has the great-
est impact on changing people’s hearts and minds, which helps lead to shifts in public opinion, political discourse, and policy. We have also discovered that culture can and has been organized in the past to influence perception and public opinion. To shift culture, however, we need to reach out to communities outside of the social justice arena to reach a larger audience. We must work collaboratively with mainstream and local artists, cultural influencers, and members of the media to learn more about culture work, develop a thorough theory of change, and adopt the most effective practices. Moreover, we must define the space that culture work inhabits for future organizations by building a strong cultural network that convenes regularly, clearly defining terminology used in culture work, and standardizing methods of evaluating social impact.

This research also found that culture work today is vastly underfunded and generally commissioned somewhat haphazardly for two reasons. First, cultural strategies are often conflated with communications strategies. For many social justice organizations, a communications strategy translates into short-term messaging for a specific project. A cultural strategy is more complex; it creates a meta-frame that organizes and connects multiple projects together to target a larger audience. By using a cultural strategy, organizations can view their work as part of a larger, collaborative movement toward social change. Second, many funders and social justice organizations find it difficult to invest in cultural strategies because the field lacks consistent documentation and evaluation methodology. To date, there is simply no way to quantify the bang for the buck. We believe that to effectively evaluate cultural strategy we need to first be able to evaluate multiple and intersecting levels of impact. In grassroots projects, organizers are able to measure their impact on a target audience more clearly because of the small audience. In a cultural strategy, however, there are several levels of
impact, and standards for measuring at each level must be discussed and developed. The Culture Group hopes that the research contained in this packet will help us jumpstart a conversation around these issues.

A. LITERATURE REVIEW

In our literature review, we focus on current methods of measuring social impact. Although we cannot prove causality directly, we learned that we can document when a project has reached a specific, intermediate benchmark that is essential for social change. To complicate things, though, many organizations currently define social impact in different ways and don’t take into account that there are varying levels of social impact and that not every organization’s project has the same end goal. As a result, there is a lack of consensus on how to measure social impact. To help resolve this issue, we suggest working as a community to standardize our evaluation methods based on the level of social impact, which can be determined by the goal of the campaign and the target audience. By increasing transparency and collaboration among organizations, we can conduct further research to create a comprehensive list of the most effective metrics to use for each specific type of campaign. The collaborative development of such a model would not only streamline the process of evaluating social impact but also reduce unnecessary or redundant spending by pooling our resources.

B. THE CULTURE GROUP INTERVIEWS

In this document, we examine information collected from interviews that we conducted in 2011-2012 with several influencers or organizers who focus on culture work. The interviewees include: Cara Mertes, Danny Goldberg, Jason Drucker, Jenny Toomey, Rashad Robinson, Lisa Witter, Maria Teresa Kumar, and Michael Skolnik. When
We must invest in making artists better advocates by consistently communicating with them and inviting them to participate actively in retreats, trainings, and meetings.

As asked about examples of successful cultural strategies, many interviewees referred to the LGBT rights movement, the civil rights movement, and the environmental movement. All our interviewees agreed that progressive organizations needed to invest more in culture work, but they also recognized that there are many obstacles along the way. Their responses illuminated some of the tensions that currently exist at the intersection between culture and social change.

Based on our interviews, one issue in the field is the lack of collaboration among local and mainstream artists, advocates, influencers, and organizers. During successful past social movements, organizers developed and sustained relationships with experts across fields to brainstorm and work toward gradually shifting perceptions. Collaboration with artists was especially important because artists could meet people where they were and introduce them to new or foreign concepts. Today, many organizations reach out to artists to deliver messages to the public on a project-to-project basis, but little effort is made to develop a long-term relationship with the artist or to connect the artist to expertise about issues. This leaves many artists feeling used and mis-utilized and they stop working with social justice organizations altogether. We must invest in making artists better advocates by consistently communicating with them and inviting them to participate actively in retreats, trainings, and meetings.

C. THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN REDUCING IMPLICIT BIAS

We believe that it is important to increase our understanding of the way culture impacts our society. AVI’s research about implicit bias demonstrates the importance of funding research on the periphery that complements our understanding of culture. Unconscious biases in the
human mind develop from stereotypes and images that are perpetuated by our culture and the media. Implicit bias research supports the Culture Group’s beliefs about the integral role that culture plays in shaping people’s minds and opinions. Currently, many Americans explicitly support egalitarian beliefs but internally hold onto negative perceptions and stereotypes about marginalized groups. Implicit bias leads people to speak, act, react, and vote in ways that harm marginalized groups. Through a series of studies, AVI has discovered that teaching people about implicit bias reduces racial anxiety to a statistically significant degree. Although more research must be conducted, these initial results suggest that educating people about the existence of implicit bias may help open up conversations about race. Furthermore, this research reminds us that there is much that we still don’t know about the impact of culture, particularly visual culture. As a result, we must invest in research about culture to improve our understanding of it so that we can consistently adjust our cultural strategies based on new information.

D. CULTURE BEFORE POLITICS

In this article, published in *The American Prospect* in November 2011, Culture Group members Jeff Chang and Brian Komar argue that cultural change comes before political change. The authors define culture as the space in our national consciousness filled by music, books, sports, movies, theater, visual arts, and media; the realm of ideas, images, and stories; the narrative in which we are immersed every day. “It is where people make sense of the world, where ideas are introduced, values are inculcated, and emotions are attached to concrete change. Cultural change is often the dress rehearsal for political change. Or put in another way, political change is the final manifestation of cultural shifts that have already occurred. Jackie Robinson’s 1947 Major League Baseball debut

Through a series of studies, AVI has discovered that teaching people about implicit bias reduces racial anxiety to a statistically significant degree.
preceeded Brown v. Board of Education by seven years. Ellen DeGeneres’ coming-out on her TV sitcom preceded the first favorable court ruling on same-sex marriage by eight years. Until progressives make culture an integral and intentional part of their theory of change, they will not be able to compete effectively against conservatives.”

E. CULTURAL PRODUCTS AND STRATEGIES:
THE POTENTIAL FOR EARNED INCOME

In this paper, we discuss the potential for cultural products and experiences to target new audiences and generate revenue for social justice programs. Based on our research, we discovered that cultural products not only earn income but can also reinforce and even enhance the brand identity of the campaign that it supports. Currently, there are two categories for cultural products: physical products (t-shirts, posters, artwork) and experiential products (concerts, retreats, movie screenings). Both of these products lend themselves to increasing issue awareness and are capable of garnering more support for social justice issues. However, each one has different challenges and requires more study in order to maximize its effectiveness in fundraising and movement building. In our report, we also examine a number of case studies—The Manifest Hope campaign in support of Barack Obama as well as the (RED) campaign for AIDS relief in Africa, among others—and develop a set of suggestions for guiding future cultural product projects. The success of a campaign depends heavily on strategic planning, the quality of the creative content itself, and the authentic involvement of a creative leader. In addition to working with artists in a collaborative manner, it is also essential to engage with non-artistic professionals to develop a strong infrastructure for the campaign or project. These experts can help programs grow more quickly by relying on their existing networks in business, manufacture, or distribution. Finally, we must
also remember that earned income campaigns are profit-driven and should be run as a business with profit margins in mind.

**CONCLUSION**

Oftentimes, in the process of conducting research, you end up drawing out more questions than answers. In this particular set of research, more tensions were revealed than resolved. We found tensions in determining whether cultural shifts are led best by local and grassroots artists or mainstream and commercial artists, the transactional nature of “using” or leveraging artists for social justice purposes, and, of course, major concerns about whether a cultural strategy is simply a front for propaganda. Furthermore, although culture does encompass much of our lives, we must understand that it is not a silver bullet for social justice campaigns. Cultural strategies are not for every organization or movement. Just as it is not necessary for every organization to invest in an interactive website, not every group should add a line item for cultural strategy development.

As we move forward with our work, we must continue to ask ourselves questions about how we can strategically invest in progressive culture work. We know that we need to work collaboratively to help define the field of culture work and to standardize our evaluation methods. Ironically, as we were conducting our inquiry, we discovered that members of the private sector were also concerned about current methods of evaluating cultural impact. These individuals conducted their own research, which similarly lay out the issues with current disjointed efforts to measure social impact and emphasized the need for organizers to share best practices and models to decrease redundancy in the field. We hope that our research as well as that of the private sector will help advance and guide
future investments in culture work. A concrete next step might be to convene major thought leaders around evaluation in both the public and private sectors to share insights on metrics and the best way to works towards a common standard and practice. Such a gathering would bring deeper and needed rigor, imagination, and accountability to the conversation about evaluation but also would build a unique community around its thinkers.

Besides conducting further research about measuring social impact and understanding the way culture functions in our society, we must also remember to work with influencers and artists in a united effort. To increase collaboration, we hope to build a permanent cultural infrastructure that connects us to each other and allows us to convene regularly. Since each organization or person plays a specialized role in a cultural strategy, transparency of information and amplification of important work is essential. Effective methods of sharing information can range from creating a listserv to planning regular retreats and meetings. Culture is a space where people can not only imagine social change but also make it inevitable. If we can come together to build a stable cultural infrastructure, then we can reach a broader audience and generate more support for progressive policy changes. ■
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The power of culture is often underestimated within the field of social change. Culture is the realm of ideas, images, and stories; it is where people make sense of the world, where they find meaning and forge community. Culture alters the way people think about—or choose to ignore or reject—an issue or policy. It helps determine which issues are brought to the forefront of the discussion and which are quickly written off as irrelevant. It affects how people think, interact, react, speak, write, and vote. Culture often seems like a natural, uncontrollable entity. Over the years, we have seen companies and entrepreneurs use culture for their own benefit. They send messages through influencers, the media, television, and print advertisements to push for their own products or even policies that guarantee the continued growth of profit for their businesses. The use of culture to drive consumerism has been well documented, but it is less understood how culture drives social change. Thus, many social justice organizations believe that investing in culture is a gamble and stick to more conventional programs. In assessing current methods of evaluation in this literature review, we ask how can we best document the impact that culture has on effecting social change.

Over the years, we have seen companies and entrepreneurs use culture for their own benefit. They send messages through influencers, the media, television, and print advertisements to push for their own products or even policies that guarantee the continued growth of profit for their businesses.
Based on our analysis of the current literature, we have developed three recommendations for proceeding with culture work. First, organizations, artists, advocates, and influencers must share information with each other and work collaboratively to reach a larger audience in social change campaigns. This could be done by creating a listserv for cultural organizers and strategists, or planning regular retreats and conferences, which will help connect people to each other and amplify important work. Second, we must develop a complex theory of change that is more specifically geared toward cultural strategy to help structure and even evaluate our current methods. Third, we must also focus on developing a standardized method of measuring social impact in various campaigns. By consistently documenting and evaluating current cultural work, we can prove the importance of culture work in social change and develop more effective strategies to organize culture for various social change campaigns.

In an age where the lines of distinction between media strategy, communications strategy, and cultural strategy are often blurred, it is becoming more important for the social justice field to have better methods of evaluation to delineate their differential impacts. The Culture Group believes that cultural strategies allow organizations to view their work as part of a long-term, broad, and collaborative effort to create social change, whereas communications strategies seek primarily to develop messages for particular groups and moments in time.

A cultural strategy allows us to view social impact in a more nuanced and genuine way. Through culture, we can interact more closely with individuals and communities, we can meet people where they are, educate them, and reach their hearts as well as their minds. And without the support of the individual the community as a whole cannot push for policies that actually effect change. Thus, it is
important for us to not only recognize the significance of culture but to also invest in culture work.

**INTRODUCTION**

Over the last twenty years, both public and private organizations have become increasingly invested in finding ways of quantifying the social impact of their programs, thereby providing more immediate feedback with which to improve. Furthermore, as foundations have begun to push for more accountability from their grantees, they have pushed for more measurable outcomes. The threat of decreased funding and possible project termination has forced nonprofits to step up and begin using more sophisticated methods for evaluating their programs and projects across the board. For organizations whose focus is primarily direct service, measuring social impact is not complicated. For those who experiment with broader methods of engaging populations around social justice issues, however, the challenge can be great.

In reviewing the literature at the intersection of cultural strategy and social change, it is clear that there are a number of obstacles we must consider when attempting to develop an approach to measuring social impact: defining a clear theory of change, identifying clear and specific metrics, creating reasonable timelines for measurement, and allocating sufficient resources toward evaluation.

Obstacles notwithstanding, the push towards defining social impact has generated positive developments. Researchers now recognize that measuring social impact in its final iteration is often impossible so they are instead focusing on intermediate benchmarks and “tipping points” (events that mark a significant shift in culture) along the way to full-blown social change, which are more tangible and measurable. This shift in focus additionally helps or-
We must advocate for transparency and increased collaborative efforts between public as well as private organizations so that we can develop a cultural strategy that informs our creation of a new, more standardized method of evaluating social impact.

Many nonprofit organizations have developed theories of change to help guide their projects, but as a whole the literature documenting this work is disjointed. Most studies do not recognize that there are varying levels of social impact and only define social impact based specifically on one project’s mission. As a result, these studies do not necessarily lend themselves to standardized methods of measuring impact. In addition, although a complex theory of change may guide project development in its initial phases, the intermediate outcomes predicted in a theory of change may not always occur. The anticipated demographics of target audiences also do not always match up with actual demographics because of limitations in data analyses.

The recent rise in collaboration between documentary filmmakers and nonprofit organizations has contributed valuable information to this research. A number of documentary-centered campaigns have created valuable visuals demonstrating different tiers of social impact as well as sample metrics to measure them. Although these impact models lead us a step closer to streamlining the process of measuring social impact, more research must be conducted to determine which practices and metrics are the most relevant and effective for measuring social impact in campaigns that are not built around a documentary or that do not view altering public opinion as their end goal. We must advocate for transparency and increased collaborative efforts between public as well as private organizations so that we can develop a cultural strategy that informs our creation of a new, more standardized method of evaluating social impact.

THEORY OF CHANGE AND CULTURAL STRATEGY

Many nonprofit organizations have developed theories of change to help guide their projects, but as a whole the literature documenting this work is disjointed. Most studies do not recognize that there are varying levels of social impact and only define social impact based specifically on one project’s mission. As a result, these studies do not necessarily lend themselves to standardized methods of measuring impact. In addition, although a complex theory of change may guide project development in its initial phases, the intermediate outcomes predicted in a theory of change may not always occur. The anticipated demographics of target audiences also do not always match up with actual demographics because of limitations in data.
collection. In situations like these, organizations need to be prepared to adjust and revise their theory of change based on what actually occurs. Lastly, due to lack of funding or other limitations, many campaigns last less than seven years, which is too short to effectively achieve and document social change.

To bridge the gap between expectations and what actually occurs, organizations must commit to longer timelines so that they can consistently review and revise their theories of change in light of the measured intermediate outcomes, as well as fine-tune the metrics used to measure future intermediate outcomes. However, before we address these challenges, we must first define what a theory of change is and determine what components it should contain to maximize its effectiveness in social justice campaigns.

In “The Challenge of Assessing Policy and Advocacy Activities,” Guthrie et al. trace the origins of the idea of a specific “theory of change” and define the term. A theory of change is a conceptual framework that shows how an organization’s strategy and activities lead to its goal of social change. Originally intended to guide the process of program development, theories of change were later re-appropriated to provide structure in program evaluation. For example, artist Rha Goddess’s theory of change revolves around using “the creation and presentation of art to leverage new ways of thinking and being about self, community, and the world at large, and to increase the capacity of individuals and communities to approach pressing social issues from a place of vision versus victim” (Rha Goddess, 2011). In her performance, LOW, Rha Goddess follows her theory of change by attempting to engage audiences in a way that increases their understanding of the relationship between self and community and that strengthens their resolve to address social issues. Theo-
To develop more thorough theories of change, we must invest in research that determines the most effective metrics that can be used to evaluate intermediate outcomes in different social justice campaigns. Theories of change play an important role in guiding organizations like this one as they work toward their goals.

However, not all organizations develop theories of change that maximize project and evaluation efficiency. While some organizations create intricate theories of change with a strategic, step-by-step outline of the process, others create theories of change that are significantly shorter and simpler, which mainly summarize the group’s mission (Guthrie et al., 2005). Although both versions of theories of change specify a desired outcome, the simplistic theory of change does not necessarily include or plan for evaluating intermediate outcomes. This inconsistency reveals a lack of consensus in our field on how to define a theory of change and how it should affect the process of measuring social impact. Organizations that create simplistic theories of change are not allowing the theory to be used at its full potential.

To develop more thorough theories of change, we must invest in research that determines the most effective metrics that can be used to evaluate intermediate outcomes in different social justice campaigns. In a paper prepared for the Accounting for Culture Colloquium, Nancy Duxbury discusses the use of cultural indicators in measuring “community indicators,” which are essentially intermediate outcomes or lower levels of social impact. She believes that there is not a theoretical construct that explains how these cultural indicators actually signify that an intermediate outcome was achieved (Duxbury, 2003). For instance, the Urban Institute’s Arts and Culture Indicators Project lists a number of ways that the arts can contribute to different degrees of positive impact, but this information is only helpful if there is a theoretical framework that grounds it in practice. In addition, Duxbury discusses the need for organizations to consider what mediums are most effective for bringing about specific types of social
change and to include this information in their theoretical framework. Although Duxbury’s paper provides a sense of the different types of social impacts that an arts project can have on a community (for instance, supporting civic participation and social capital, bridging cultural/ethnic/racial boundaries, or transmitting cultural values and history), there is, again, a lack of knowledge about the intermediate benchmarks that lead to these levels of impact as well as specific methods of measuring them effectively.

In “The Limits of Nonprofit Impact,” Alnoor Ebrahim and V. Kasturi Rangan discuss the complexities of social change campaigns and highlight the importance of developing a thorough theory of change. To the authors, there are actually two types of theories of change: a focused theory and a complex theory. The focused theory of change has a linear notion of cause and effect. The complex theory of change, on the other hand, has a less definitive notion of cause and effect and recognizes that many casual factors outside of the project’s reach are also at play (Ebrahim et al., 2010). For instance, in a focused theory of change, an organization may state that increased art education in schools will lead to more creative students. In this organization’s project, if students who receive more arts education are surveyed and shown to be more creative than students who don’t, the organization believes that it has completed its mission. In a complex theory of change, however, this same organization will also recognize that there are other factors at play, factors that may not be within the project’s control.

Organizations working toward social change should adopt complex theories of change rather than focused ones because they cannot prove causality with total certainty—too many exogenous factors come into play. These theories again serve to guide the project and can assist in determining types of metrics that would measure intermediate
outcomes. Based on the complexity of the organization’s theory of change and operational strategy, the authors categorize organizations into four different groups: niche, integrated, institutional, and ecosystem. These categories help clarify the difference in scope and mission among public and private organizations. This is useful because social impact is defined differently by each of the organizations in these categories. If we can categorize campaigns in a similar manner, we may be able to standardize our field’s understanding of the different levels of social impact and thus make it easier to share the best practices and metrics for specific types of campaigns.

Although much research already emphasizes the need to develop theories of change that help determine how to measure social impact via cultural indicators or intermediate outcomes, many organizations continue to commission work that oversimplifies the process of evaluating impact. In 2008, The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation commissioned a paper that advocated for the Population Program’s outcome-driven grantmaking (ODG), which focuses on maximizing “philanthropic impact for a given investment.”

ODG has four steps:

» set a measurable outcome and scope,

» research the field and players,

» establish a logic model, metrics, and targets, and

» compare the expected social return of potential investments.

In ODG, theory of change is replaced with a logic model in the third step. A logic model generally maps out the parts
of a program graphically but does not necessarily explain why or how they work together to lead to social impact. However, the logic model in ODG is intended to help “keep an eye on the big picture by setting overall goals and linking smaller activities back to these goals” (Redstone Strategy Group, 2008). Although the ODG model presents a basic structure for measuring the social impact of a project, it does not take into account the complexity of social change campaigns and the various degrees and levels of social impact. Moreover, as the paper also recognizes, more research must be conducted to determine what metrics and targets are most useful for specific types of campaigns.

In order to move forward in the field of measuring social impact, we must work collaboratively to develop a standard methodology for analyzing social impact and a shared language that defines the different levels of social impact in each type of campaign. A few researchers in arts-invested organizations have contributed to this standardization of analysis.

In “Culture Counts in Communities,” authors Maria Rosario Jackson and Joaquín Herranz agree with this sentiment and believe that “without the integration of community values and realities with corresponding data about community conditions and dynamics, cultural and community-related policies cannot expect to be successful.” To address this gap in knowledge, the authors developed a list of the domains of inquiry and dimensions of measurement in the arts:

» presence (existence of creative expression in a community),

» participation (ways people can partake in these creative expressions,
impact (community-building outcomes), and

systems of support (resources that inspire/lead to creative expression) (Jackson et al., 2002).

This list defines four levels of impact within the arts community and provides us with a conceptual foundation to build upon.

Joshua Guetzkow also addresses the lack of consensus on defining impact as well as community in “How the Arts Impact Communities: An Introduction to the Literature on Arts Impact Studies.” He also develops an intricate logic model for mapping arts-based campaigns. Based on a typology by Kevin McCarthy, Guetzkow’s chart presents the different mechanisms of arts impact. There are three types of social impact:

» direct involvement in arts organizations,

» participation in arts as an audience member, and

» presence of arts organizations in the community.

These three levels of impact are divided into impact on the individual and impact on the community as a whole, and then those two categories are subdivided into specific types of effects on the individual (material, health, cognitive, and interpersonal) and on the community (economic, cultural, and social) (Guetzkow, 2002). This chart is one example of a successful, intricate mapping of the levels of impact in a particular campaign, which can be further expanded and explained through a complex theory of change.

In a 2008 briefing paper for Animating Democracy, Christine Dwyer joins in the conversation and advocates for
Table 1: Mechanisms of Arts Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Involvement</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Builds interpersonal ties and promotes volunteering, which improves health</td>
<td>Increases sense of individual efficacy and self-esteem</td>
<td>Builds individual social networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increases opportunities for self-expression and enjoyment</td>
<td>Improves individuals’ sense of belonging or attachment to a community</td>
<td>Enhances ability to work with others and communicate ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces delinquency in high-risk youth</td>
<td>Improves human capital: skills and creative abilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience Participation</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increases opportunities for enjoyment</td>
<td>Increases cultural capital</td>
<td>Increases tolerance of others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relieves Stress</td>
<td>Enhances visuo-spatial reasoning (Mozart effect)</td>
<td>Improves school performance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presence of Artists and Arts Organizations &amp; Institutions</th>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increases individual opportunity and propensity to be involved in the arts</td>
<td>Increases propensity of community members to participate in the arts</td>
<td>Improves community image and status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increases attractiveness of area to tourists, businesses, people (esp. high-skill workers) and investments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fosters a “creative milieu” that spurs economic growth in creative industries.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greater likelihood of revitalization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This grid further develops a typology proposed by Kevin McCarthy (2002).
the development of a broader conceptual framework that maps the “flow of influences” and explains how different civic engagement initiatives might unfold using the framework. She believes that the implementation (choices and actions) of a program can have three tiers of impact: on the individual, on the collective, and on the community (Dwyer, 2008). Dwyer’s model includes a middle tier—the collective—that Guetzkow’s model does not account for. In addition, Dwyer recognizes the need for a conceptual framework that situates and guides civic-engagement initiatives within the broader movement. Therefore, although a complex theory of change is an essential part of this framework, there is also a top layer to the theory that must incorporate both other theories of change and the larger social change movement within which the project orients itself. This layer is directly linked to cultural strategy because it creates change by shifting culture itself. To map out what a cultural strategy with intermediate benchmarks and cultural tipping points, however, we must determine which tiers of social impact and which complex theories of change are essential components of larger social change.

Although developing a complex theory of change is an important component for guiding a social justice project, we must also recognize the limitations of our current methods of evaluation. For one, many of the people surveyed within a campaign for evaluation purposes are part of an insular and similarly biased community. Other relevant groups of people may be left out entirely (Guetzkow, 2002). Both public and private organizations need to be aware that relying on interviews, polls, and surveys as methods for gathering evidence on reaching intermediate outcomes may produce inflated results. In “Minding the Gap,” the authors suggest that organizations include a “gap check” in their studies to ascertain the actual demographics of targeted communities relative to the anticipated ones and to adjust strategies based on that information. Instead of
only documenting successful outcomes, they believe that we should also document unsuccessful outcomes, especially if they target and impact significant subsets of the population (Martinez et al., 2010).

In “Two-Way Mirror: Ethnography as a Way to Assess Civic Impact of Arts-Based Engagement in Tucson, Arizona,” Maribel Alvarez also recognizes the issues with our current methods of evaluation. She believes that program managers should adopt an ethnographic method of evaluation to collect data that is more complex and specific to the context of the target audience. An ethnographic method requires that the evaluator “immerse herself in the same field of social and creative action that the people she hopes to learn from experience in their everyday lives.” Alvarez supports her claim by mentioning that many large corporations such as Microsoft and Sony hire ethnographers to conduct research because they recognize that what people say in a study may not always match what they actually do or believe in reality, which is especially relevant to culture work where our focus is shifting perception.

There are, however, several disadvantages of this form of evaluation. For instance, the results of a study can be narrow in scope because of its focus on a specific community, and conducting ethnographic research can also be extremely time-consuming (Alvarez, 2009). Whether we choose to use a gap check and/or adopt an ethnographic method of evaluation, it is important that we design our projects with these evaluative limitations in mind.

In addition to these issues, most project timelines are too short and do not allow for in-depth analysis of a project’s long-term social impact. Many organizations develop projects that last 7 years or less, but in order to actually create and document possible social change, organizations need
to commit to a multi-decade campaign (Martinez et al., 2010). Currently, many arts impact organizations focus on collecting cross-sectional data because of short time-frames. Cross-sectional data is information aggregated from many communities during different time periods without regard for time as a variable. This form of data collection can be used to make inferences about the possible effects of a project, but it does not measure actual, long-term impact, which is essential for evaluating culture work (Guetzkow, 2002).

In “Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate about the Benefits of the Arts,” the authors also acknowledge that researchers today can only measure intermediate outputs for short periods of time. Since it takes a long time for an individual to be impacted on a level that is noticeable within the larger community (public discussions, voting, activism, etc.), we cannot evaluate shifts in perception and opinion or the effectiveness of our projects in simply a few years (McCarthy, 2004). In culture work, permanent, sustainable infrastructures and longer timeframes for projects are necessary to shift perception and opinion. If we want to foster social change, we must recognize the need for long-term investment.

Finally, measuring social impact is not only a complicated process but also an expensive one. In order to lower some of the costs, organizations must begin to work collaboratively with other groups. Increased transparency of and access to research about measuring social impact will also allow organizations to learn and share useful information without using as much funding.

**DOCUMENTARY-CENTERED CAMPAIGNS**

During the last few years, an increased number of documentary filmmakers have collaborated with nonprofit
agencies to contribute to this inquiry about effective methodologies for measuring social impact. By organizing a social campaign around the screening and release of a documentary that addresses a specific social issue, these nonprofits have been able to generate broader awareness outside of their normal reach about topics relevant to their missions and target communities. Each of these campaigns was composed of multiple different organizations and projects, but the involved organizations had messages and purposes that allowed them to work synergistically with the documentary to promote a common social cause. As a result, the methods that these organizations used to measure social impact required a more specific, categorical mapping of the various degrees of social impact. So instead of focusing on one complex theory of change, this collaborative campaign used an overarching cultural strategy to inform and guide their work.

Although nonprofit organizations have been interested in measuring social impact for decades, documentary filmmakers have only become invested in social-impact research during the last several years. In 2008, the Fledgling Fund created a chart that defined the dimensions of impact in a documentary-centered campaign and suggested sample measures for each dimension (see page 16). Since this type of campaign depended on multiple complex theories of change, the Fledgling Fund used broader levels of impact compared to Guetzkow’s chart. These were:

» quality film or project,

» increased public awareness,

» increased public engagement,

» stronger social movement, and social change.
Figure 3. Sample Measures for Dimensions of Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why Important?</th>
<th>Sample Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Quality Film or Media Project | • Festival Acceptance  
• Theatrical Release  
• Broadcast/Internet  
• Awards  
• Film Reviews/ Online “buzz”  
• Sales |
| Increased Public Awareness | • Audience Size  
• (By Distribution Segment)  
• Diversity of Audience  
• (geographic, age, faith, etc.)  
• Press Coverage  
(including online) |
| Increased Public Engagement | • Participation in/Response to:  
• facilitated dialogues  
• Blogs  
• Social network sites  
• Take Action Campaigns  
• Website Hits  
• Op/Eds and response letters |
| Stronger Social Movement | • # of advocacy organizations utilizing film  
• Collaboration among org.  
• Viewer Part. in movement  
• Screenings w/decision and policy makers  
• Mention in Policy Discussions and legislative press  
• Longevity of the film/media |
| Social Change | Ultimate Goal | • Policy/Legislative Change  
(International, national, state, and local)  
• Behavior Change  
• Shift in public dialogue |
Not only does this chart build a foundation for developing a more intricate cultural strategy, but it also provides specific metrics for measuring social impact at each level of impact. For instance, a few sample metrics for measuring the first dimension of impact—quality film or media project—are festival acceptances, awards, online buzz, film reviews, and sales numbers. Sample metrics for the second level, increased public awareness, are press coverage, audience size by distribution segment, and diversity of audience. For measuring increased public engagement, sample metrics include website hits, editorial responses, and the amount of participation in and responses to online blogs, facilitated dialogues, and social network sites. For the next dimension of social impact, a stronger social movement, the paper suggests documenting the number of advocacy organizations that utilize the film, the amount of collaboration among organizations related to the topic, number of screenings with policymakers, and the overall longevity of the film/media project. Finally, for the ultimate goal of social change, sample metrics include actual policy and legislative change (on the international, national, state, and local levels) as well as shift in public dialogue (Barrett et al., 2008). Channel 4 BRITDOC Foundation’s “The End of the Line: A Social Impact Evaluation” even uses The Fledgling Fund chart to document and measure their campaign’s overall social impact. Despite this progress in evaluation research, the chart presented by the Fledgling Fund only focuses on one medium—social issue documentaries—for instigating social change. We must further this research by investigating mediums used by other types of campaigns and determining what sample metrics can be used to measure each unique dimension of social impact in them. We suggest similar ones be drawn up for other mediums.

In 2011, Center for Social Media commissioned Jessica Clark and Barbara Abrash to analyze several case studies

This research reinforces the importance of developing complex theories of change that specify intermediate benchmarks and target audiences in order to guide projects. From these studies, the authors also created a strategic design for social-issue documentaries. Instead of a tiered chart, they used a circular one to demonstrate how engagement and network building inform all phases of a campaign. These strategic phases were: quality, engagement, reach, network building, and influence. Each category was linked to a specific goal/level of impact, and a few metrics were listed for collecting evidence for measuring social impact (Clark et al., 2011). This paper introduces a new method of conceptualizing a campaign and understanding how different phases of a campaign (which can also be seen as different levels of social impact) may affect other phases in a non-linear way. Instead of relying on a top-down chart, this paper shows that it may be useful to investigate other ways of mapping the relationships between different levels of impact and incorporate this information into the overarching cultural strategy.

**CONCLUSION**

Currently, culture work is not well funded nor well-documented, even though it is an integral component of achieving social change. Based on our research, we recommend that organizations, advocates, influencers and artists sup-
port transparency in information and continue to seek new ways to work collaboratively in social change campaigns. Moreover, we believe that it is essential to study and document these and past campaigns thoroughly. We can use this research to develop a more thorough, complex theory of change concerning culture work and to help streamline the process of evaluating social impact—both of which are essential for generating awareness about the importance of investing in culture work.

Even though the research commissioned by organizations mentioned in our literature review have expanded our understanding of measuring social impact, there is still a dearth of information about which practices and metrics are most useful for different types of campaigns within a given cultural strategy. Not all campaigns have the same end goal. Some may only want to influence perception while others may want to increase public engagement or change public policy. While each of these goals is an essential part of a cultural strategy, we need to categorize these campaigns based on their ultimate goal and also map out the tiers of social impact within each of them.

Instead of focusing on the final tipping point, we should consider what the intermediate tipping-points are in each situation and determine what metrics we should use to measure them. We should also investigate the methodologies and metrics used by marketing companies and media outlets, which have a longer history of attempting to evaluate the impact of their campaigns. For instance, studies about Barack Obama’s Hope campaign as well as other marketing strategies in politics or social justice campaigns that led to shifts in attitude would help us determine intermediate tipping points in similar campaigns as well as how to measure them efficiently.
While expanding this research will certainly help streamline the process of measuring social impact for different campaigns, we must not forget that precisely quantifying ultimate social impact is a myth. Although we may not be able to prove direct causality, we can attempt to shorten the distance between correlation and causality. Ultimately, measuring social impact should be seen as a tool for improving the effectiveness of our work rather than as definitive proof of success or as an end goal in itself.
In the fall of 2011, Erin Potts and Alexis McGill Johnson conducted a series of interviews to increase our understanding of the role of culture in social change. We believe that cultural change precedes policy change because culture creates the associations that determine how people hear messages, what they advocate or oppose, and how they vote. Many companies and organizations already use media to alter culture and sway public opinion for their own benefit, and it is now time for the progressive community to embrace this strategy. To understand the private sector’s tactics and develop effective cultural strategies that lead to actual policy change, we interviewed several organizers and influencers who are knowledgeable about or focus on culture work. The interviewees included: Cara Mertes, Danny Goldberg, Jason Drucker, Jenny Toomey, Rashad Robinson, Michael Skolnik, Lisa Witter, and Maria Teresa Kumar. This report summarizes the insights that we gleaned from this research.

THEORY OF CHANGE

During these interviews, we asked several people about their theory of change concerning culture work in order to further our understanding of the role of culture. All of the interviewees believe that culture plays an important role in
guiding policy change. However, culture itself is not actually capable of writing legislation or acting as a substitute for policy. Culture is a megaphone, a “popularizer” of ideas that influences public opinion and behavior. To generate more permanent support for progressive policies, we must first focus on reaching the hearts and minds of the people.

Currently, many campaigns are unable to build or sustain broad, long-term support because they do not think about culture strategically. To maximize the reach and effect of our campaigns, interviewees suggested that we invest in research about the baseline norms of different communities and use that information to help develop cultural strategies specific to each campaign. What people see on television, watch in films, and read in newspapers or online news sources affects everyday behavior and decisions in the community and in the home. In some communities, women are the drivers of cultural change because they are statistically more likely than men to share information with others, buy products, and vote. In other communities, the power dynamics are different. We need to keep all these factors in mind as we develop our campaigns. Besides considering the target audience, we should also ask ourselves what our message is and how deep or layered it can be. How can our message be used to address a broader social issue? For instance, when we think about messaging for the Trayvon Martin case, how do we effectively transition into talking about racial profiling or implicit bias? Finally, we must think intentionally about how to define what success looks like and how to document it. Keeping these cultural strategy questions in mind during the planning phase will help us to strengthen the reach and sustainability of a campaign. By investing in cultural strategies that help alter or reduce negative cultural beliefs in target audiences, we can actually begin to change the behavioral patterns that lead to disparities in our society.
As part of a cultural strategy, interviewees thought that we must also work collaboratively and consistently with local and mainstream artists, influencers, and members of the media to move issues into the mainstream. In particular, artists have a tremendous impact on cultural beliefs at the individual level. Politicians, on the other hand, generally do not control culture; they follow it. Thus, politicians can be seen validators of actual cultural change and used as metrics or indicators of what the progressive movement seeks to achieve. Artists are able to open up conversations about social issues in a way organizers and politicians can’t. They can create narratives that engage people who may not be attuned to certain issues, and they can make these issues personal. Moreover, artists can help make social change a fun experience, especially for young audiences (for instance, listening to music or attending an event). These fun activities can actually help encourage people to bond over and advance certain causes. Working with artists and other influencers to develop and strengthen a campaign can help move social issues into the mainstream.

SUCCESSFUL CULTURAL MODELS

By studying successful cultural models and working with individuals who are already invested in culture work, we hope to learn from these organizations’ mistakes and develop a more standardized method of organizing culture for a campaign. When asked about successful cultural campaigns, many interviewees mentioned the civil rights movement. Martin Luther King and Harry Belafonte were great believers in the power of culture to move people and create social change. Interviewees also referred to the LGBT rights movement, which has garnered a lot of support through culture work to help change perception and reduce the demonization of the LGBT community.
One organization that focuses on developing cultural strategies in support of LGBT rights is the Gay & Lesbian Alliance against Defamation (GLAAD). GLAAD sifts through culture and media and amplifies narratives and news that supports its mission. GLAAD also works with artists and promotes new storytellers who can strengthen this cultural movement. Furthermore, members of GLAAD focus on connecting different groups of people to each other to build successful networks of support.

Planned Parenthood and other pro-choice organizations, additionally, have helped increase awareness about and support for women’s issues. They work with celebrities and artists to engage young people. These organizations also used non-traditional media, such as blogging, to create a space for conversation.

Finally, interviewees also mentioned the environmental movement and its attempts to influence policy through culture with limited success. The main problem according to several interviewees is the lack of consistency in defining environmental ideals. A number of environmental organizations are funded by people and companies with varying agendas that are not always beneficial to the environment. Many environmental goals are translated into policies that are not always explained to the public. Thus, it is difficult for the public to understand or adopt beliefs that are in line with actual, positive environmental change.

**COLLABORATION WITH ARTISTS**

To influence culture, many interviewed thought that we need to identify and work with artists that support their missions. Artists are important influencers in culture work; artists meet people where they are and introduce them to new concepts and ideas in ways that advocates and organizers may not understand. Thus, they are essen-
tial voices to listen to when developing a cultural strategy to sway the public.

Our interviewees cautioned that we must recognize that artists are not message-makers in the same way that advocates are because they are not outcome-focused. Artists come in with different worldview; they have a different creative process and sense about what their outcomes are. To garner the support of artists, we must also understand how their perspectives align with our goals. Advocates and organizers need to learn how to work with and treat artists with equal respect and understanding. Many political advocacy groups have approached people in the creative community in a transaction-focused manner, which often turns artists off. Other groups have asked artists to support a particular event or project without attempting to build a long-term relationship. Interviewees felt we need to provide artists with more information about our mission and offer them a chance to work in a partnership with us rather than only calling artists when there is a benefit concert. One interviewee currently works with artists to develop the music and scripts for their PSAs to make their messaging campaign more authentic. We must also invest in hiring and training people to become liaisons between artists and organizers so that we can maintain a strong cultural infrastructure.

BUILDING A CULTURAL COMMUNITY

A cultural strategy cannot exist without an infrastructure and community to lift it up. As a result, it is important that cultural advocates develop an infrastructure that connects people to each other, amplifies important work, and, most importantly, defines the cultural space. Currently, people define cultural advocacy in different ways, which leads to a lot of confusion for people in the field as well as funders.
Several individuals interviewed suggested planning regular retreats and conferences to allow organizers, influencers, advocates, and artists to build stronger relationships with one another and develop new ideas and projects to further their goals. One interviewee added that commercially-focused professionals should also be invited to these retreats and conferences. However, we need to figure out what the relationship is between content creators and for-profit organizations in order to develop more efficient systems of evaluation for our work. Another interviewee said that we should organize a best practices meeting once or twice a year for people who focus on cultural work, while another said that there should be quarterly meetings for people who work in different spheres but are involved in the same, specific issue. Another person suggested bringing organizations together for a conference to decide what the ten to twenty big ideas are that need to be amplified. People could then narrow down this list to the top five issues and commission work that centers on these issues.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although culture is an important tool in influencing policy change, there is a lack of investment in developing cultural strategies and a progressive cultural infrastructure. Many investors believe that culture is something that cannot be controlled, that it simply happens without much intention. Most of the interviewees assert that this is a myth. Culture can be organized and has been organized successfully. To ensure that a cultural strategy produces results, however, investors must be prepared for long-term investment and labor.

Progressive culture work today is severely underfunded, and the work that is actually commissioned is completed.
in a haphazard, un-strategic way. To increase support for culture work in both social justice organizations and funders, interviewees suggested that we must help define and emphasize the importance of cultural entrepreneurship. Because culture work requires long-term financial commitment, it must be communicated clearly to funders that the success of a project lies in its length. We must emphasize the difference between short-term and long-term successes to funders and organizers to allow them to view cultural investment in a positive way. We should also focus on developing more effective methods of measuring social impact and determining performance indicators. Currently, most organizations use data from polls to examine public opinion and perception. Others collect anecdotal evidence or look to television and other media to gauge where the conversation is. Developing effective methods for evaluating and documenting our successes will help us convince funders about the importance of culture work.

In addition to financial investment, interviewees thought we must invest in the capacities of individuals to become part of this field. It is important to note that certain artistic forms are more suited for social change than others. For example, documentaries can lay out an issue thoroughly and shape a narrative that personalizes the issue; humor can open up conversation for topics that are otherwise difficult to discuss; music can help draw in new audiences quickly and evoke empathy. With this in mind, we should invest in and help amplify the work of these artists. Moreover, we should also consider training and recruiting individuals who specialize in marketing or have experience working in the for-profit world. Corporate America has already spent millions of dollars on research on how to understand how people think. Working with marketing experts and re-appropriating their research and tools for social change can help reduce our expenses.
Finally, since the field is still nascent, we need to understand that some projects may not be successful. However, these ineffective projects are opportunities for us to learn from our mistakes and develop more effective ones. Thus, it is also important for us to invest in documenting our work and developing a system for sharing our research and best practices with each other.
INTRODUCTION

In many respects, our nation has made great progress toward full inclusion of its diverse communities. Egalitarian norms prevail and exert a strong pressure against judging people according to race, gender, national origin, and sexual orientation. Although 85% of Americans consciously, expressly believe they are egalitarian, our society’s structural practices and cultural portrayals of members of historically marginalized groups often contradict these values. For instance, since most Americans consider themselves to be good-hearted, fair-minded people, they have adopted what they consider to be a fair, rational explanation for why people of color persist in the same social conditions: personal responsibility. However, this explanation overlooks many other social and economic factors that come into play.

While these disjunctures may seem to suggest blatant hypocrisy or to provide evidence that the supposedly egalitarian values hide more insidious values, the mind sciences suggest an alternative. Social scientists have developed a complex picture of the interplay between our conscious values and our implicit biases—the underlying associations and anxieties that our culture has created around marginalized groups.

WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

Implicit bias is not the same as old-fashioned bigotry, which is conscious, intentional, and explicit. Rather, it lives in the subconscious of our minds and informs how we will behave socially and politically. As such, our implicit bias can be, and often is, at odds with our explicit values. Accordingly, there is an enormous chasm between people’s conscious values and ideals and their associations and practices. This chasm may seem counter-intuitive, but it is consistent with our brain’s functioning. Social psychologists and neuroscientists have concluded that we have conscious ac-
cess to only a fraction (approximately 5%) of our brain’s capacity. Vastly more work occurs at the implicit level, which tends to take its cues from visual imagery, practices, and otherwise existing stereotypes.

As a result, it has become abundantly clear that most Americans hold implicit biases and stereotypes about groups marginalized in our society. This research has also shown a marked discrimination against skin tone; people with darker skin fare less well in both tests of implicit bias and in empirical work on sentencing, hiring, and other measures. Indeed, significant percentages of members of lower status groups share these implicit biases as a result of the stereotypes we are all confronted daily in the media.

HOW CULTURE CREATES BIAS

“The cultural transformation of our time stems from the extension of the industrial-technological revolution into the sphere of message-production. The mass production and rapid distribution of messages create new symbolic environments that reflect the structure and functions of the institutions that transmit them. These institutional processes of the mass-production of messages short-circuit other networks of social communication and superimpose their own forms of collective consciousness—their own publics—upon other social relationships. The consequences for the quality of life, for the cultivation of human tendencies and outlooks, and for the governing of societies, are far-reaching” (Gerbner, 1970).

Developed by George Gerbner and Larry Gross, Cultivation Theory posits that media, especially television, influences and ultimately determines people’s perception of reality. Much research has been conducted in this field to study the effects of television on people but more recently, researchers have begun to study the effects of media on racial bias.

Although police arrest records and victimization studies prove that crime decreased throughout the 1990s, in a 1994 Gallup Poll, Americans revealed that they believed that crime had reached its highest point in history. In 1998, Romer and his colleagues decided to study the effects of local television news on one city’s perception of crime—Philadelphia. They discovered that the more men and women watched television news, the more often they identified crime as a major problem.

Following this project, Romer conducted another study in Philadelphia that focused specifically on the way 11 p.m. news broadcasts for three local stations depicted the relationship between race and crime. His findings were disturbing. He and his colleagues discovered that black people were more often shown as the perpetrators of a crime rather than the victims. White victims were also overrepresented as victims in news broadcasts when compared to
actual crime reports. In addition, although 10 percent of white victims were reported as murdered by black perpetrators in crime reports, the television news reported as if 42 percent of all white victims were murdered by black perpetrators.

Robert Entman and his colleagues conducted a similar study in 1992 in which they analyzed 55 days’ worth of local television news in Chicago. Their study revealed that black men were more likely shown being restrained by police officers than white men and that black men were less likely to be identified by name in the news clip than white men. Moreover, black men were more frequently shown as the perpetrators of crimes against white victims rather than black victims.

Building on this body of research, in 2006, Mary Beth Oliver published a study about news stories and how they affect racial biases in white people. She showed participants, all of whom were white, a news story about a murder that featured a wanted poster for either a black or white suspect. After viewing the clip, participants were shown a series of photos, and they identified which photos that they believed showed the same suspect in the news report. Most participants selected a black suspect, even if they had just watched a news story identifying a white suspect. Three months after the study, the participants were brought back. An increased number of participants, who had previously seen the image of the white suspect in the news clip, now choose the black suspect as the same person they had seen in the study months before.

Furthermore, in one physiology study, researchers observed the amygdala—the part of the brain that processes memories and emotions—using an MRI machine and monitored the heart and respiratory rates of study participants, while flashing images of black men. They discovered that these images increased anxiety levels in the human body, which went into either a flight or fight mode. Similarly, in another study, researchers flashed interspersed photographs of black men and white men and discovered that participants’ eyes were drawn more quickly to photos of black men. Although the photos were flashed so quickly that participants could not have consciously noticed who was in the photo, their brains reacted without pause. Researchers have called these negative, unconscious responses to images of black men “heightened vigilance.” This response is a function of the strong associations between black men and crime, violence, and danger promoted by the media and culture.

This disconnect between news reports and reality has not only increased an irrational fear of crime within the United States but also the belief that crime is committed more frequently by black people, which primes people of all colors to develop unconscious biases toward black people.
Unfortunately, the cultivation of racial bias is not limited to news reports or even television. Every day, people are inundated with various images and messages that reinforce racial stereotypes. Whether people are conscious of these biases or not, these stereotypes still affect the way people view and interact with each other. Since culture creates the associations that determine how people hear messages or see images, how they view or treat other people, in order to decrease implicit bias, we must focus on altering the way culture primes us for bias.

**HOW CULTURE CAN REDUCE BIAS**

Cultural change must precede policy change. To garner support for progressive policies that lead to the full inclusion of marginalized groups, we must first develop a long-term cultural strategy that brings attention to the negative perceptions and biases against marginalized groups and that also presents and amplifies effective counter-narratives.

In 2009, the American Values Institute commissioned a study that sought to determine whether teaching people about implicit bias has the effect of de-biasing and whether it has this effect when racial anxiety is triggered by a constructed racial event. The initial results suggest that information about de-biasing reduces racial anxiety to a statistically significant degree. In addition, preliminary results suggest that the power of information about implicit bias to de-bias may be inadequate to counter negative racial stereotypes when the two are simultaneously present. This latter finding illustrates the need for broader cultural work to decrease the constant barrage of negative imagery about disenfranchised groups.

Thus, by first educating people about the existence of implicit bias, we may be able to decrease racial anxiety and open up the conversation surrounding race to people who may otherwise not participate in it. Moreover, by presenting counter-narratives in culture, we can help prime people to see past the stereotypical representations of people of color in our society. For instance, if we can decrease the negative representation of black men in the media as criminals by showing images of black men as fathers, sons, and husbands, then we may be able to build an emotional foundation for people to view marginalized members of our society as regular human beings and thus decrease racial bias.

Currently, many organizations refrain from focusing on culture or building a cultural infrastructure because it seems too complicated or difficult to deal with. However, culture, itself, is actually very organized. Trends and popular beliefs, including racial stereotypes, are manufactured and perpetuated through a consumer-based infrastructure. This type of long-term messaging already primes people for developing racial biases. By ignoring the power of
culture, we prevent ourselves from pursuing a very real and effective method of affecting social change.

To decrease racial bias, we must first focus on shifting culture. By building a permanent cultural infrastructure through which messages and information can be disseminated to target audiences, we hope to change and open up the conversations that people are having on the ground level about racial inequalities and other social injustices.
On Nov. 3, 2010, progressives awoke to find that they had returned to 2004. Despite important legislative victories, Democrats had been outflanked. Republicans had successfully sold themselves as the party of economic growth, the party of the angry out-of-work American, and, most dissonantly, the party of change. They owned the narrative and won big.

It wasn’t supposed to be like this. In the dark days following George W. Bush’s re-election, frustrated progressives set out to build an enduring movement that would effectively advance and communicate their ideas, policies, and values. Funders and strategists created new institutions and scaled up existing ones, including think tanks, civic-engagement organizations, and media-watchdog groups. These institutions played a key role in the 2006 Democratic takeover of Congress, the 2008 election of President Barack Obama, and the passage of parts of the Obama platform in 2009 and 2010.

Yet as progressives watched Democrats suffer the worst election loss since the Republican collapse of 1948, they seemed to be back where they started. Just as in 2004, many have blamed the losses on ineffective Democratic campaign messaging. The problem, however, runs much deeper.

In freeing creativity, progressives can once again capture and carry forward our national imagination.
Cultural change is often the dress rehearsal for political change. Or put in another way, political change is the final manifestation of cultural shifts that have already occurred. Electoral and Beltway politics are episodic, short-term, and transactional. Movements, however, are long-term. “Public sentiment is everything,” Abraham Lincoln once said. “With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed. Consequently, he who moulds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions. He makes statutes and decisions possible or impossible to be executed.” In other words, movements must change hearts and minds in an enduring way. They must change the culture.

Culture is the space in our national consciousness filled by music, books, sports, movies, theater, visual arts, and media. It is the realm of ideas, images, and stories—the narrative in which we are immersed every day. It is where people make sense of the world, where ideas are introduced, values are inculcated, and emotions are attached to concrete change. Cultural change is often the dress rehearsal for political change. Or put in another way, political change is the final manifestation of cultural shifts that have already occurred. Jackie Robinson’s 1947 Major League Baseball debut preceded Brown v. Board of Education by seven years. Ellen DeGeneres’ coming-out on her TV sitcom preceded the first favorable court ruling on same-sex marriage by eight years. Until progressives make culture an integral and intentional part of their theory of change, they will not be able to compete effectively against conservatives.

Conservatives have long recognized the role that culture plays in shaping public sentiment and building movements. Created in 1938, the House Committee on Un-American Activities first aimed to discredit the arts program of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Works Progress Administration, then went on to blacklist hundreds of writers, public intellectuals, musicians, directors, producers, and actors. Glenn Beck and Andrew Breitbart’s attacks on
progressives in the arts, the media, and the federal agencies that impact those areas are a 21st-century echo.

The modern conservative movement built an infrastructure to deploy its own cultural strategy. In a famous 1971 memo, corporate lawyer (and later Supreme Court Justice) Lewis Powell argued that the time when a policy elite—the political leaders, wonks, and the chattering class—could advance ideas and shape debate was ending. Instead of catering to this elite, conservatives formed alternative media networks that bypassed mainstream-media gatekeepers and allowed them to communicate their stories to the American public directly. Beck, Rush Limbaugh, and Bill O’Reilly are the products of this four-decade investment. Now conservatives dominate both the top-10 cable news programs and the top-10 AM talk radio shows. The trinity of Limbaugh, Beck, and Sean Hannity commands 40 million radio listeners alone—an audience that eclipses CNN and MSNBC’s combined prime-time viewership.

Conservatives have used these outlets and media figures to mobilize their supporters, promote “traditional values,” and neutralize progressive ideas and thinkers with stories that are divisive. Think of Gov. Jan Brewer evoking fictional headless victims of the Mexican drug war in the Arizona desert, or the army of right-wing pundits decrying the “insensitivity” of “the ground-zero mosque” and “Obamacare’s” supposed “death panels.” These stories catalyze fears and pull people toward conservative values and a right-wing worldview. Shortly after September 11, Bush adviser Karl Rove met with more than 40 Hollywood leaders, including heads from Paramount, Viacom, the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, and the Motion Picture Association of America to discuss seven administration-approved themes. Rove avoided the word “propaganda.” “The word I like is ‘advocacy,’” one attendee said.
Far too many progressives still focus on speaking to a consensus-seeking policy elite—one that privileges objectivity, data, and argument—instead of pushing their ideas out to a divided public that responds to values, images, and stories. Andrew Rich of the progressive Roosevelt Institute has found that 77 percent of conservative think-tank leaders place a high priority on shaping public opinion, compared to 58 percent of liberal think-tank leaders. Rich concluded that left-leaning think tanks remain badly positioned to fight a war of ideas.

More than that, progressives cede the cultural terrain, allowing conservatives to shape the narrative. When election season rolls around, they spend huge amounts of money trying to change it. Progressives correctly lament that conservative stories—like outlandish speculations about Obama’s citizenship—often have no basis in facts. But facts are useless without a story. To take just one example, the Obama administration created the Recovery.gov website to showcase the success of the stimulus. Featuring lots of maps, charts, and dollar amounts—but no stories—the site quickly became just another data-heavy government website.

It doesn’t have to be this way. Progressives actually hold a natural advantage on the culture front. The latest neuroscience research suggests that progressives are more open to new information, ideas, and cultures. That may be why they are overrepresented in the loose, diffuse networks of creative professionals who drive music, arts, comedy, literature, and media. To flip a famous hip-hop lyric, it’s bigger than the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) and The New York Times.

Yet progressives have been slow to claim their history of cultural strategy. Roosevelt’s Works Progress Administration was not just the cornerstone of a successful jobs
program; it produced the art—by Ansel Adams and Dorothea Lange, Richard Wright and Zora Neale Hurston—that defined the themes of struggle and triumph that the world now associates with “the American Century.” In the 1960s, John F. Kennedy used cultural strategy to solidify Cold War liberalism. “I see little of more importance to the future of our country and our civilization than full recognition of the place of the artist,” he said. Under Lyndon B. Johnson, the National Endowment for the Arts and the CPB were created.

Conservatives frame change as restoration. Progressives see change as possibility. In 2008, Obama’s success depended on conveying this message—and letting the culture do the rest. At a University of California, Los Angeles rally for Obama, the appearance of 4,000 Shepard Fairey posters sparked a nationwide creative operation that directly involved hundreds of artists. By the fall, millions of T-shirts, prints, murals, and ephemera, unauthorized by the Obama campaign, heralded a new face of progress and change.

This lesson has been lost on the left. Liberals tend to call on creative types—especially famous ones—only around election time to raise money or reach a crucial demographic. In the campaign off-season, the left has depended upon a deep reservoir of goodwill from artists and patrons and the ample gumption of arts organizers to take up the fight.

Creatives may be the most underutilized asset in the progressive movement. But they are not tools of propaganda, either. Artists don’t think like wonks or organizers. That’s a good thing. Cultural strategy is not about agitprop, benefit concerts, and lapel buttons; those are tactics, sometimes useful, sometimes terrible. When artists tell new stories, they can shift the culture and make new politics pos-
sible—cultural strategy is about understanding that fact and empowering artists to do what they do best.

Take Moises Kaufman and the Tectonic Theater Project’s play, The Laramie Project. The play helped organize support nationally for the introduction and final passage of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act. It tied emotion to a tangible vehicle for change. Al Gore’s film, An Inconvenient Truth, did more to spark broad and deep action on climate change than Gore did as vice president. The movie framed the facts in cascading images that illustrated the stakes of political failure, reaching through the histrionic media environment to win new audiences. These projects also highlighted values—inclusion, sustainability, the right to live free of violence, the common global good—that point to a progressive agenda. When such values are promoted in the culture, they are normalized. They become core American values.

A new cultural majority—an emerging American public that is the most demographically diverse ever and predisposed to support a progressive agenda, a public that elected Obama in 2008 but mostly stayed home in 2010—is still out there. But it is not being reached by progressives’ formal infrastructure. Meanwhile, the right is constantly working in the culture to fragment it. During periods of economic and social upheaval, people seek a way of making sense of the chaos that surrounds them. Caught in the storm, they desire comfort and strength. Conservatives address this by pulling people backward to an imagined past. Progressives prepare people to come together to face the coming world. Culture is where they can instill faith.

In freeing creativity—that most renewable, sustainable, and boundless of resources—progressives can once again capture and carry forward our national imagination.
With traditional revenue sources getting the squeeze due to the contracting of the economy, recent examples of earned income campaigns involving cultural products indicate an exciting potential to not only earn new funds for social justice movements and organizations, but also to attract new audiences, build community, and diversify nonprofit revenue sources. Examples of this include:

» The Manifest Hope campaign, featuring artwork by Shepard Fairey, raised $3.5 million and helped jump-start a cultural movement in support of the Obama presidency.  

» Obama’s own campaign branded merchandise earned 10% of the $100 million raised by the campaign.  

» The (RED) campaign has used branded imaging and licensing to raise over $175 million for AIDS relief work in Africa.

1 Thanks to the McKay, Ford, and Open Society Foundations for their support of this research  
2 Interview with Yosi Sergant, TaskForce PR, 12/2/11  
3 Interview with Steven Geer, 1/16/2012  
Earned income campaigns involving cultural creatives and cultural products can do more than just be hugely profitable for social justice organizations. They are capable of instigating larger, cultural moments to benefit the cause.

» Over the past 25 years, Farm Aid has raised $37 million for family farms through the benefit concerts.5

» Evangelical Christian groups sell over $3 billion a year in identity and community reinforcing products, such as “silver ring things” and “What Would Jesus Do?” bracelets.6

In this report we will examine the potential for cultural creatives to engage with causes to create cultural products and experiences. We will show some recent examples of successful earned income campaigns involving cultural products, and then analyze these examples, providing cost-benefit analyses and examining various existent strategies. Finally, we will examine the gaps and opportunities available, focusing on best practices for products and how to engage with cultural creatives in deeper ways.

KEY FINDINGS

Our research finds that cultural products do more than just create revenue. They often are infused with value or meaning and reflect a cohering moment that reinforces the identity of the cultural movement they are supporting. It also finds that the most successful efforts occur when cultural creatives7 themselves are designing and driving the products and opportunities. As the case studies highlighted below will show, earned income campaigns involving cultural creatives and cultural products can do more than just be hugely profitable for social justice or-

5 “Farm Aid: Family farmers, good food, a better america.” Farm Aid. 2/29/2012. www.farmaid.org/site/c.qll5lhNVJesE/b.2723609/k.C8F1/About_Us.htm
7 Cultural creatives include visual and performance artists, musicians, designers, and other figures who influence culture, or what we refer to as the realm of ideas, images, and stories where people come together to form identity, community, and meaning.
ganizations. They are capable of instigating larger cultural moments to benefit the cause.

Our research also found that there are two types of cultural products: physical products (t-shirts, posters, artwork, music) or experiential products (concerts, retreats, travel, movie screenings). Each is distinct in its opportunities and challenges, and more study should be dedicated to understanding these cultural products and experiences and the potential to use them in our movement-building and moneymaking efforts.

**Product-Based Campaigns:** With the sale of physical cultural goods, the potential for “viral” marketing or creating ubiquitous cultural symbols that go beyond the campaign itself, is very real. These products can result in the creation of coalescing moments that unite and motivate a group. But they also involve very real sets of costs and profits and require proper business planning.

Sustainable earned income projects, such as the production of stickers, posters, t-shirts and other physical goods, are able to re-invest initial profits in future products. According to our research, specific strategies may help, like the re-investment of revenue from products that are cheaper to produce (such as stickers and magnets) as capital for the production of costlier products like shirts. In the appendix you will find more robust financial diagrams, but here are some other strategies for selecting and selling tangible goods.

» High-quality goods can produce extraordinarily high profit margins. Limited-run posters by coveted designers or artists can fetch high prices while not costing much more than...
standard posters. The limited run creates scarcity that can drive the price point higher.

» Both digital and physical music is very lucrative, but only if the music comes with a free license from both the publisher and the mechanical rights holders. When this is the case, the production costs for digital music is almost nil.

» Offering tangible goods as “rewards” for donations allows organizations to effectively “charge” more for those goods than they otherwise would have been able to, and takes advantage of the reliability of donors as compared to merchandise purchasers.8

**Experience-Based Campaigns:** Experiences, such as concerts, retreats, movie screenings or service trips, are a powerful way to engage with supporters, and can serve to cohere and energize an already-motivated community. The profitability of campaigns like these, however, is much more complicated than product-based campaigns.

Because the cultural product is the experience, the costs of an experience-based campaign can, in theory, be nothing. On the other hand, large concert series, movie productions or tours can be incredibly expensive, difficult, and time-consuming. As Erin Potts says about producing the Tibetan Freedom Concerts, the logistics of producing a concert are formidable, and shouldn’t be taken on lightly. However, using ticket add-ons, or other methods of raising money from events that will exist anyway, can be very profitable while costing relatively little additional money.

In the past decade or so, several films have come out that both promote a social justice cause and raise money for an organization. While documentaries and films have been

---

8 Interview with Steven Geer.
raising awareness for years, recent socially-conscious documentaries and films such as *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Food Inc.*, *The Cove*, and *Good Night, and Good Luck* have achieved much more attention and revenue, and been seen by many more people due to the involvement of cultural creatives in their production (Al Gore, Hayden Panettiere, and George Clooney, respectively).

Other projects, such as Off the Mat—which helps organize yoga communities around social service and action—can be profitable because the effort of selling product or raising the money is put on the volunteer-participants. Off the Mat is able to run successful earned income campaigns because their cultural organizing and products naturally create a community of motivated individuals. Because their yoga retreats encourage their community to be socially-minded, they are able to draw on their own community to run their earned income campaigns, allowing them to earn significant profits at relatively low cost.

**Better Practices:** This research found several very concrete better practices for cultural products. Engaging high-quality PR and marketing firms, controlling costs, and other common best practices should of course be kept in mind when running a cultural product-centric campaign. But other considerations are summarized below:

» **Product-driven:** Not all products are created equal. All of the successful campaigns that we studied emanate from a cultural product or set of products. The creative content and quality of the product is paramount to the success of the campaign. The product needs to authentically reflect the cultural creative behind it, the community toward whom it is geared, and the cause it supports.

9 This Ted Talk by Johanna Blakley talks about measuring the impact of movies for a change like Food Inc. http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/TEDxPhoenix-Johanna-Blakley-Mov
» **Artist-driven**: The cultural products involved in the discussed campaigns were generated by the cultural creative involved and are recognizable as their work or affiliated with their life or brand. As such, they are all authentic extensions of the creative’s existing work. When a movement or organization is seeking to partner with a creative, a large amount of care must be placed in partnering with a person or group who is already authentically involved in the movement or cause. And further care should be given to ensure that these creatives are seen as true allies to social justice movements over the long-term, not simply a means to new audiences.

» **Supported by experts**: Without a structure behind them, many of these projects could have fallen off their rails. Involving non-artistic professionals (business people, merchandisers, distributors, etc.) allowed these programs to grow in magnitude. Campaigns with carefully selected cultural creatives as partners can also benefit from the expertise of the creative’s community. These individuals have existing networks to plan concerts, distribute products, and engage with other creatives resources that would otherwise be unavailable to an organization.

» **Business first**: Earned income campaigns are primarily a profit-driven enterprise. While the money is used for non-profits, it was important for all of these campaigns to be run as a business, keeping profit margins in mind. Cascading the profit from one product to others with higher price-points and margins has been proven to create a robust cultural product line.

» **Authenticity**: The true magic of these projects is the alignment of the cultural creative, the cultural product, and the cause being supported. Authentic synergy between these three things is where the magnitude of these projects’ success comes from. A fair degree of forethought and
planning should be put into the partnerships an organization wants to make with cultural creatives, to be sure that the project, the creative, and the organization truly have an authentic relationship, and to be sure there is a natural audience for the project.

**Expanding Opportunities for Cultural Products:** As will be seen in the case studies discussed, there are current, successful examples of cultural creatives engaging with charities using cultural products. But there is plenty of room to both expand on these examples and promote the creation of more. Cultural creatives, who are by their nature embedded with an issue or a group of people, are well situated and highly motivated partners for nonprofits and institutions.

So where do we go from here? Here are some steps that can and should be taken to encourage the participation of cultural creatives, and encourage the development of cultural earned income strategies and programs.

» **Engaging and collaborating with creatives:** This report finds that creatives are the determining factor in successful earned income campaigns. Those wanting to create more opportunities for these products and experiences should invest in efforts to engage creatives in social justice movements over the long-term. These engagements should focus on strategic collaborations between these creatives and organizers over long-term not just single campaigns or events.

» **Partnerships with Product Experts:** Movements would benefit from the expertise of people familiar with profitable product production and marketing. Creating effective partnerships with professionals can give a program the infrastructure it needs to be truly successful. Frequently the creatives that are best at designing these efforts are
already in partnerships with these experts and can draw them into this work.

» **Investment Pool**: An effort to collect funds—both charitable and not tax deductible—to be used as seed investments for cultural products and experiences could help bring more efforts to market. Tools like Kickstarter.com can be used to fund some projects; particularly partisan ones where the initial investments must not be charitable and the profits would also be “hard dollars.” The method of cascading the profits from lower overhead items to higher should be considered.

» **Refining best practices**: It is important to be proactive about testing, documenting, culling lessons learned, as well as developing metrics for non-financial benefits of these products.

Getting information on “hard” financials can be very difficult even with close personal and professional ties, many of the organizations we spoke with were hesitant or unwilling to disclose financial information about their campaigns. For this reason it is difficult, if not impossible, to get a real idea of the exact financial potential of cultural creative-driven earned income campaigns. It is, therefore, paramount that social justice groups start testing the principles we discuss above. Establishing a funding pool for pilot programs is an important first step, and we recommend that two or three programs be launched in the next 12 to 18 months so we can began to have a clearer understanding of the costs and potential earnings of these sorts of campaigns. At that point we can have a better financial picture of the costs and benefits of cultural products in earned income campaigns.
In this section we will be discussing several of the campaigns involving cultural products in earned income campaigns that were studied for this report. These particular examples range from huge, national cultural movements to smaller, niche campaigns. They all demonstrate the variety of ways in which cultural creatives can engage supporters in powerful, income-generating ways.

THE OBAMA “HOPE” CAMPAIGN

Very few recent pieces of fine art reach the same sort of mass distribution and recognition that Shepard Fairey’s “Hope” print has. The image created a cultural movement, driven by artists, which united Obama supporters across the country. The New Yorker art critic Peter Schjeldahl called it “the most effacious American political illustration since ‘Uncle Sam Wants You.’” It was subsequently hung in the US Portrait Gallery.

The image and its distribution through merchandise sales at artist-run companies Obey and Upper Playground were responsible for grossing $3.5 million in profits, plus marketing and advertising worth well more than that. And all of this was without the support of the Obama campaign itself.

Fairey collaborated with Yosi Sergant, who turned the image into a full-fledged campaign and made use of two existing structures: artist-centered retail stores such as Fairey’s own Obey, which sold merchandise to Obama supporters, and a network of street artists who posted the image all over cities across the country. The project was designed to be financially self-sufficient. At the be-

While not related to the success of the campaign, it should be noted that the artists’ legal issues have overshadowed some of the significance of it.
ginning, Fairey produced thirty signed silkscreens that were sold for $200 each, netting $3000 in profits. He used the profits to print paper posters and make t-shirts, generating over $200,000 in revenue. This round of profits funded the production of an art show, other artist-driven products, and more consumer products to be sold. In the end, tees, sweatshirts, posters, bumper stickers, magnets, socks, key chains, 2,000 original works of art, and 10,000 pairs of gloves bore Fairey’s image. And the initial outlay was minimal: Fairey’s sweat equity, plus a very small cash investment.\footnote{11 Interview with Yosi Sergant, 12/2/11}

But beyond that, this example shows where the huge value of cultural products lies: aside from the profits generated from merchandise sales, the image was posted and reposted in cities through the country by networks of street artists. It was a political image that was also “cool.” It was attractive enough to be worn on a shirt or hung on a wall, and was therefore seen almost everywhere in the months leading up to the election. The uncalculated value of this is huge, with almost no cost. Furthermore, it rallied and united Obama supporters in a way merchandising does not. This phenomenon is also seen in the LiveStrong bracelets created by The Lance Armstrong Foundation which, beyond raising millions in sales for the foundation, created a ubiquitous cultural symbol, the silicone gel bracelet, which has come to be a symbol of tacit support for a cause.\footnote{12 The Yellow Bird Project (www.yellowbirdproject.com) is another example of using artists to produce merchandise that is more valuable than normal merchandise. They collaborate with indie rock musicians to create shirts, posters, and books, that raise money for charities the musicians support.}

OFFICIAL OBAMA MERCHANDISING

Like most political campaigns, the Obama campaign hired an art director who ensured that all products sold by the
campaign incorporated consistent imagery, aesthetic characteristics, and quality. But they also recognized that they had to market the products in a highly effective manner. Steve Geer, principal at OMP Consulting Group, a consulting firm that advises political organizations and nonprofits, helped the Obama campaign raise over $10 million in merchandise sales.

Based on this experience, Geer points out that “straight donors” tend to be more loyal than merchandise purchasers, and so the key is to convert the latter into the former. Instead of expecting people to visit a web store to buy products, Geer advises a strategic approach to merchandise sales that favors a “premium” based fundraising and upselling to donors and would be donors whose email addresses you have acquired. This process is similar to the National Public Radio (NPR) “gift with donation” approach.

In addition to this tactic, Geer instituted a system such that when a donor clicks to donate $10, they will be asked, “for an extra $15, would you like to receive this magnet?” and if they say yes, then they are moved in the system from a $10 donor to a $25 donor. The next time the campaign reaches out to them it asks for $25, not $10, and keeps nudging the donor up over time. Geer tested over 100 different items to offer as “gifts” to donors to the Obama campaign and found that the ideal donation level where the donor received a gift item like this was $15.

He also learned that people were more interested in receiving a window “cling” decal (which could be manufactured and shipped for just $1.50 per unit) than a bumper sticker. “Sale” of the decals tended to generate donations of $25 to $30. Donors of $30 or more were offered the gift of a t-shirt, which tended to generate gifts of $45 to $50, given that the perceived value of a t-shirt was $10 (though the campaign’s actual cost was really $6).
reveals that most sales were made to donors who were in the campaign’s email database (i.e. people who had opted in to be messaged by Obama) rather than through social networking sites, which he says are effective in raising awareness and building and audience but has yet to become an efficient commerce platform.

Using established marketing techniques and Geer’s expertise, merchandise fundraising accounted for over 10% of the funds raised by Obama in 2008. Of such funds, sales of t-shirts accounted for the most money and number of donors. In fact, such t-shirt sales were so successful that the campaign exhausted the inventory of “Made in America” navy blue cotton tees. Additionally, the quality of the goods and their prolific and recognizable nature created a strong affinity among Obama donors, strengthening the community.

THE IDELSOHN PROJECT

Record industry and media executives Courtney Holt, David Katznelson, Roger Bennett, and Josh Kun created the Idelsohn Project in order to explore and revive Jewish cultural history through music by revisiting lost themes and stories. Their goal was to release an album of lost Jewish music from around the world, much of which no one knew existed, every year.

Idelsohn is diligent about keeping costs under control, using a fiscal sponsor and drawing on the expertise of their founders to keep from hiring staff or consultants: aside from the volunteer hours of the founders, who meet in person twice a year to manage the project, Idelsohn’s only actual staff is a quarter-time Executive Assistant. Knowl-

13 Interview with Stephen Geer, consultant, 1/16/12
edge of music production and distribution channels have helped the project grow easily.

The project is able to raise grant money fairly easily because it appeals to the community it benefits. Foundations dedicated to preserving Jewish heritage regularly support the organization, and they are able to use all of this money directly for production of albums and events. Last year, Idelsohn raised $250,000, and is able to make use of a combination of traditional grant making structures and sales of albums, show tickets, and merchandise to fund their products.

In addition, a sophisticated marketing campaign has kept the project in the limelight, fueling both purchases and additional grants from foundations dedicated to promoting Jewish heritage. The first album was covered on the front page of The New York Times' Arts and Leisure section in 2004, and the second album was featured on the front page of the Style section a year later. Music from their album “Mazel Tov Mis Amigos” was performed at the Lincoln Center. Currently, The Idelsohn Project is working on an eighth album and has expanded its efforts into museum exhibitions, cards, mobile apps, and even a pop-up store in San Francisco.14

(RED) AND THE GLOBAL FUND

(RED) is a for-profit product licensing business Bono started because he wanted to get “the world’s most creative people working for the world’s poorest people.” (RED) products benefit The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria by generating money from the licensing of its brand name to other companies, who then sell (RED) products.

14 Interview with Courtney Holt, 10/20/11

Cultural Products and Strategies
branded items. Creation and marketing of the branded items is done by the companies who license the brand.

The concept of raising money from a license is unique. The brand itself, of course, has no real value, and yet its financial contribution as a cultural product is over $10 million a year.

Here is how it works: Participating companies are approved by (RED), pre-determine how much of their profits from the sale of (RED) items go to The Global Fund, are required to be transparent about their donations, and then donate the money directly to The Global Fund. (RED) itself has only approximately 15 people on staff, most of whom are account managers for the participating brands, so the overhead for the company is presumably quite low.

(RED) has attracted the attention and participation of many huge brands such as Apple, The Gap, Coke, and Nike, and since its founding in 2002 has generated over $175 million for The Global Fund. One hundred percent of the money from this campaign goes to a Global Fund grant in Ghana, Lesotho, Rwanda, Swaziland, South Africa, or Zambia.

There are some critics of (RED)’s tactics, though. Some argue that the impact is disproportionate to the advertising investment, and that there is a lack of real transparency as to what percentage of each purchase goes to The Global Fund.15 Don McKinnon, who ran (RED) for five years, responds that participating companies would have spent that money on advertising anyway, but that none of the money generated would have been donated. He goes on to suggest that, because (RED) has been aligned with so many popular brands and has become such a popular brand itself, that it not only has raised a significant

amount of money, but it has also raised awareness and has helped consumers grow to expect that products they buy have a charitable component.16

FARM AID

Farm Aid is probably the most successful example of an “experience-based” earned income campaign. Farm Aid was a variation of the Live Aid benefit concerts, started by Willie Nelson, Neil Young, and John Mellencamp to benefit family farms and farmers in the US. The first concert, in 1985, raised over $9 million. The next year it moved to a new city and also drew millions of viewers via a VH-1 broadcast. Every year since then, Farm Aid has mobilized artists and their constituents to benefit American farmers, and they have built on their success by launching the online forum (homegrown.org), selling merchandise, and distributing recordings of past concerts.17

A huge part of Farm Aid’s success is due to how naturally and authentically it relates to its creators. Not only are the three men who founded the concert respected artists, but they all have fan bases rooted in small towns and rural parts of the country and they all produce cultural products that reflect the sort of Americana that is threatened by the downfall of family farms. The first concert was pulled together in only six weeks, and its success is a true testament to the massive potential of cultural product-based fundraising: despite the short lead-up, the concert’s accomplishments were propelled by the existing emotions, cultural connections, and social concerns of both the cultural creatives and their audience. To put it plainly, they didn’t need to create anything but the concerts: no media

16  Interview with Don McKinnon 11/2/11
17  http://www.farmaid.org/site/c.ql5ihNVJsE/b.2723673/k.8C39/Past_Concerts.htm

Cultural Products and Strategies
They were there, their cultural product was there, and the audience was there already, they just found the perfect way to merge the three.

Another good example of this potential being realized is the Tibetan Freedom Concerts in the 1990’s. Erin Potts, Executive Director of Air Traffic Control (ATC), started the series with the Beastie Boys’ Milarepa Foundation. The success of the concerts was due in large part to the Beastie Boys’ known deep connection to the struggle for Tibetan freedom. The band’s constituents were already familiar with their beliefs, so when they used their 1995 tour to raise money (over $750,000), it was a natural move. This made the launching of the Tibetan Freedom Concerts, which ran from 1996 to 1999, an easy continuance. The concerts raised over $5 million for the cause, and helped jump-start an international youth movement for Tibetan freedom.18

OFF THE MAT INTO THE WORLD

Off the Mat (OTM), unlike all the previous examples, has a dual purpose: on one hand it uses a cultural product (yoga) to benefit social causes around the world, raising money through selling handmade items, conducting retreats and trainings, and selling merchandise. On the other hand, Off the Mat does something very unique: it creates and cultivates its own community.

OTM was created by Seane Corn, Hala Khouri, and Suzanne Sterling, who are all cultural creatives and yoga instructors. In addition to promoting their own activities, which encourage their community to “inspire conscious,

18 Interview with Erin Potts, 12/12/11 and 1/7/12.
sustainable activism and ignite grassroots social change,”19 they run two other programs: the Global Seva Challenge and the Empowered Youth Initiative. In both of these programs, OTM makes use of their community of inspired, motivated individuals to raise money for programs both in the US and around the world. To date, the Seva Challenge has raised almost $2 million for programs in Cambodia, Uganda, South Africa, and Haiti. They are currently in the midst of a program to benefit groups in India.20

Differently than other campaigns mentioned previously, OTM raises funds not by selling cultural products, but rather by using a cultural product to create an involved community who then are able to actively fundraise for yoga-based charities. The Global Seva Challenge is then funded by individual members of this community, who do their own earned income campaigns by selling handmade goods. Those individuals who meet fundraising goals are able to go with OTM on a trip to visit the charities that benefit from their hard work. This example really highlights how the involvement of a cultural creative in a campaign or organization can create incredibly motivated communities, who can then sustain a movement or organization into the future.

ANALYSIS

Earned income campaigns based on cultural products should help reinforce identity, community, and meaning, but they should also generate profit. What follows is an analysis of the profitability of various forms of earned income campaigns.

20 www.offthemat.org; http://engagenet.org/case-studies/off-the-mat-into-the-world; Interview with Kerri Kelly, DATE??
SALE OF PHYSICAL MATERIALS

Selling merchandise and other physical goods is a time-tested form of earned income campaign. As we have demonstrated, however, when physical materials are cultural products they can not only generate greater revenue, but can reinforce less tangible aspects of the campaign, and can more effectively engage the cultural creative’s existing community. Here are a few key take-aways for the sale of physical materials:

» **Posters** have low production costs and potentially very high retail prices.

» While **t-shirts** may be very profitable, they are also costly to produce, and so their production and sale should be bolstered by the sale of less costly items.

» Both **digital and physical music** is highly lucrative if the music can be obtained with a gratis license from both the publisher and the mechanical rights holder. Digital music in particular can be incredibly lucrative because it doesn’t cost money to produce each unit.

» **Testing price points**, suggested by Steve Geer, and/or starting with a small amount of product is a wise choice.

Raw numbers for the production and sale of various items can be found in Appendix A.

CONCERTS AND LARGE-SCALE EVENTS

While benefit concerts can be very lucrative, they are also both expensive and difficult to produce. Working with cultural creatives can help to minimize these hurdles by involving their professional networks, but events on
the scale of a benefit concert are as risky as they are potentially profitable.

A concert can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to produce, and is far more complex than just renting a venue and selling tickets. While everyone has heard of benefit concerts that raised millions of dollars, it is important to remember that successful benefit concerts are produced by professionals, people who do events of that scale for a living, not by a nonprofit with no experience or knowledge of how huge and multi-faceted an event like that is.

The potential for earnings, therefore, is vastly outweighed by the risk and challenge of putting on concerts and similar benefit events. It is very important, therefore, to establish relationships with cultural creatives who produce this sort of event in their professional lives and have a robust knowledge of the risks and complexities involved and can make good business decisions to ensure the success and quality of the project.

This demonstrates the importance of investing in the establishment of relationships between social justice groups and cultural figures. Promoting the involvement of artists and other cultural creatives and professionals opens up opportunities that otherwise would have been insurmountably difficult to pull off.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Using a profitable venture to fund a nonprofit is fairly common, but not uncomplicated. As several of the articles in the annotated bibliography detail, Unrelated Business Income Tax considerations are more than a little complicated, and any nonprofit looking to engage in an earned income campaign should consult with a tax professional. Here are some considerations to take in mind:
» Unrelated Business Income Tax (UBIT): This tax applies to income earned from profitable ventures unrelated directly to the purpose of the nonprofit beneficiary. This does not apply to situations where an artist or agency is raising money to donate to a nonprofit, but it does apply to situations where a nonprofit sells an item or service unrelated to its core mission for its own benefit (i.e. if a celebrity chef sets up a restaurant in a museum and the restaurant is open to the public as well as museum patrons, sales from the restaurant can be taxable).

» Federal election laws are tricky, and there are many restrictions on who can raise money, how much can be raised, and who can receive the funds. Further discussion of these issues can be found in the excerpt from ATC’s Annual Handbook in Appendix C.

» Registration with the Attorney General’s office in states where money is earned is necessary for the purpose of the campaign. Co-venture agreements between for-profit and nonprofit entities working on a project may also be required. These requirements, however, change from state to state, so consultation with tax professionals or consultants is very important.

CONCLUSION

Involving cultural creatives in earned income campaigns can make them vastly more profitable than they otherwise would have been, however, at the moment there is very little information available as to exactly how much more profitable the involvement of artists, musicians, and other cultural leaders can be. There are several examples of extremely successful campaigns run by cultural creatives, but most groups declined to provide real financial figures. Because of this, it is important for funders to invest in pilot programs that encourage the involvement of cultural
creatives in social justice campaigns in order to generate a clearer understanding of the financial impact. Funders should also encourage social justice campaigns to cultivate relationships and collaborations with cultural creatives in order to fully realize the potential of the relationship between cultural creatives and social movements.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


McKinnon, Don. Personal interview. 2 Nov. 2011.


Potts, Erin. Personal interview. 7 Jan. 2012.


Sergant, Yosi. Personal interview. 2 Dec. 2011.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Cost of Production – Low End (1 unit / 500 units)</th>
<th>Cost of Production – High End (1 unit / 500 units)</th>
<th>Retail Price – Low End</th>
<th>Retail Price – High End</th>
<th>Profit Margin – Low End</th>
<th>Profit Margin – High End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poster</td>
<td>$0.26 / $131.44</td>
<td>$0.54 / $271.70</td>
<td>$12.00</td>
<td>$40.00</td>
<td>$11.74</td>
<td>$39.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-shirt</td>
<td>$4.36 / $2,180.00</td>
<td>$15.40 / $7,700.00</td>
<td>$12.95</td>
<td>$28.00</td>
<td>$8.59</td>
<td>$12.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music/CD (album)</td>
<td>$1.88 / $939.40</td>
<td>$2.87 / $1,438.40</td>
<td>$9.96</td>
<td>$13.00</td>
<td>$8.08</td>
<td>$10.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music/mp3 (album)</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>$7.99</td>
<td>$10.99</td>
<td>$7.27</td>
<td>$7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sticker</td>
<td>$0.18 / $93.06</td>
<td>$0.39 / $195.00</td>
<td>$3.00</td>
<td>$7.00</td>
<td>$2.82</td>
<td>$6.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magnet</td>
<td>$0.25 / $124.99</td>
<td>$0.83 / $414.44</td>
<td>$2.00</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
<td>$1.75</td>
<td>$4.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-published book</td>
<td>$20.18 / $10,090.00</td>
<td>$24.54 / $12,270.00</td>
<td>$24.00</td>
<td>$27.00</td>
<td>$3.82</td>
<td>$2.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bracelet</td>
<td>$0.18 / $90.00</td>
<td>$0.49 / $245.00</td>
<td>$1.00</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
<td>$0.82</td>
<td>$2.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B:
EXISTING RESOURCES

RESOURCES FOR FUNDING PROJECTS

**Kickstarter** uses a “crowd-sourcing” approach to funding both large- and small-scale projects. Artists and social entrepreneurs can post their project along with a fundraising goal on the Kickstarter website, allowing their fans, community, and the general public to “invest” in the project. Funders are offered incentives for their investment. In some cases, this essentially means that funders are pre-purchasing the product. In others, funders are incentivized with exclusive deals such as private shows, signed albums, or limited-edition items. While projects are able to go over their fundraising goal, if a goal is not met in the time given, the project will not be funded at all and funders will not be charged. Kickstarter can be a great way to get an earned income campaign off the ground, allowing for the costs of initial production of items to be covered. www.kickstarter.com

**Pledge Music** is similar to Kickstarter, but is exclusively focused on musicians. Money is raised for albums, tour expenses, or band equipment. Many musicians pledge a portion of funds raised in excess of their goal to a charity. Like Kickstarter, funders are only charged when the project is entirely funded. Pledge would be a great way to fund the production of a benefit album or small-scale benefit concert. www.pledgemusic.com

RESOURCES FOR PRODUCING MERCHANDISE

**Zazzle** and **Café Press** are web stores that allow shirts and other merchandise to be produced relatively inexpensively. These services are good options for testing products, but production costs are higher than through other bulk production services. www.zazzle.com, www.cafepress.com

**Goodthreads** is a company that partners with nonprofits to produce merchandise. www.goodthreads.com

**Audiolife** is a merchandise production and management service. They also provide services for touring and event production and retail distribution. Audiolife is best for nonprofits and organizations who don’t have experience with production and distribution. www.audiolife.com

A **local producer** can be a good option for merchandise production, and local shops should be seriously considered, especially for locally-focused projects and campaigns.

RESOURCES FOR MUSIC PRODUCTION AND SALES

**iTunes** can be a good place to distribute music, and has been known to very occasionally waive their 30% fee for charity albums. www.itunes.com
Topspin Media offers a discounted 9% service charge to nonprofits and guarantees funds are released in 30 days, rather than three to six months. Topspin is a comprehensive service, offering marketing campaigns, social networking services, and a sales platform for both digital and physical music sales. One of the benefits of using this or other “direct to fans” platforms is that the seller gets emails for all buyers, and can then develop ongoing activities and engagement for turning consumers into advocates. www.atctower.net

Center for Artistic Activism runs several programs that bring artists and activism together, both by bringing activism to the arts and art into activism. www.artisticactivism.org

Creative Change Retreat is run by The Opportunity Agenda and is an annual, invitation-only retreat that brings together artists and activists. www.opportunityagenda.org/creativechange

The Rockwood Leadership Institute runs a Fellowship for Leaders in Arts and Culture, which trains artists and cultural leaders in leadership skills. www.rockwoodleadership.org/section.php?id=71

RESOURCES FOR PR AND MARKETING

TaskForce uses a mix of cultural organizing and strategic marketing to build and amplify progressive movements and campaign for change. From creating the ‘08 “Hope” campaign to elect Barack Obama to developing and launching the global nutrition campaign Future Fortified, TaskForce focuses on translating often complex topics in global health and social justice into compelling efforts that move the needle.

RESOURCES FOR WORKING WITH CREATIVES

Air Traffic Control is a nonprofit that exists to help musicians play an effective, unique, and vital role in the promotion of social justice. They can provide plenty of information and advice for musicians and managers interested in being involved in activism, charitable giving, or advocacy. They also can provide services researching reputable nonprofits and administering donations on behalf of musicians, handling all the often confusing additional paperwork in an effort to make it even easier for musicians to raise money for charities they believe in. www.atctower.net

Topspin Media is a service that helps musicians sell music and merchandise directly to fans. It is an online music store and a platform for promotions, and caters mainly to independent artists. www.bandcamp.com

CD Baby is an online music store which sells music both directly for the musician and aggregates content from independent digital music retailers. www.cdbaby.com

Bandcamp is a service that helps musicians sell music and merchandise directly to fans. It is an online music store and a platform for promotions, and caters mainly to independent artists. www.bandcamp.com

Creative Change Retreat is run by The Opportunity Agenda and is an annual, invitation-only retreat that brings together artists and activists. www.opportunityagenda.org/creativechange

The Rockwood Leadership Institute runs a Fellowship for Leaders in Arts and Culture, which trains artists and cultural leaders in leadership skills. www.rockwoodleadership.org/section.php?id=71

RESOURCES FOR PR AND MARKETING

TaskForce uses a mix of cultural organizing and strategic marketing to build and amplify progressive movements and campaign for change. From creating the ‘08 “Hope” campaign to elect Barack Obama to developing and launching the global nutrition campaign Future Fortified, TaskForce focuses on translating often complex topics in global health and social justice into compelling efforts that move the needle.
on policy, funding and perception. www.taskforce.pr

**AudioLife** offers marketing, distribution, and PR services as well as manufacturing as mentioned above. www.audiolife.com

**Bandcamp** offers email list management and other services in addition to the music production services mentioned above. www.bandcamp.com

**RESOURCES FOR LEGAL AND TAX INFORMATION**

The **Internal Revenue Service** has several articles and publications detailing the tax issues surrounding the generating of earned income by nonprofit organizations.

See the articles in the annotated bibliography for additional information on legal and tax concerns.

It is advisable to consult with a local tax professional or tax attorney.
When a concert is promoted specifically to rally voters for a candidate or to communicate messages to vote for or against a candidate, the band or promoter may also be required to file a simple form with the Federal Election Commission reporting the fact and amount of the expenditures for the event (independent expenditure report).

Artists can freely speak out about political issues and candidates. Assuming their decision to speak out and the message, etc. have not been coordinated or discussed with any candidate or political party committee, during the performance artists can freely speak for or against candidates and can ask audience/viewers to vote for or vote against a candidate.

For such an event not specifically promoted as a political rally or concert, all of the expenses will still be tax-deductible, to the band or promoter. And there would be no reporting requirements.

None of the proceeds can be donated directly to the campaign or party committee.

To help candidates/political parties—organized independently:

» Bands and concert promoters, acting independently of any candidate or political party committee, can organize concerts to rally voters for or against a particular candidate—federal, state or local.

» The band or promoter can sell tickets and pay expenses as usual—no limit. A promoter can pay the band or not—the band can forego all or part of their performance fee. The ticket purchases will not constitute political contributions. (Most of the expenses may not be tax-deductible to the band or promoter as a business expenses).

To help candidates/political parties—sponsored by the candidate or political party (benefit concerts with proceeds going to the candidate/party):

» Artists can volunteer their own time and performance, use of name and likeness, without limit.
An incorporated band cannot donate the use of its personnel (session musicians, crew, production labor), rights and clearances, or equipment: the candidate or party committee must pay the costs of all that.

So, for example, where campaign/party committee pays a smaller venue for use of house setup, house lights/sound, etc and individual musicians using their own equipment are all volunteering, that’s fine.

Individual artists can pay from their own funds for use of personnel or equipment but only up to applicable contributions limits—usually not practical.

Where a regular concert is scheduled, band/promoter can also sell tickets to the campaign/party committee at full-face retail value. Once the campaign has the tickets, they can do whatever they want with them—technically they are giving the tickets as premiums for a contribution, so the campaign can set the donation level at whatever they want for a ticket or set of tickets.

To help SuperPACs and nonprofit organizations:

For a concert, event or project organized and paid for by a c-3 or c-4 nonprofit organization, or a SuperPAC, and organized independently of any candidate or political party committee:

Merchandise sold by band’s merchandising operation with the revenue divided as usual, that is, nothing going to a candidate/party committee: can say anything for or against a candidate.
 Proceeds from merchandise, at a concert/performance or otherwise: could go to benefit a SuperPAC or nonprofit organization, but not a federal campaign or party.

Merchandise at a benefit concert for a candidate/party committee: could still have messaging for/against a candidate (but proceeds go the merchandising operation as usual).

■
INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly connected world, the public has a plethora of places from which to discover music: Internet radio stations like Pandora and CBS Radio/last.fm; music sections of large portals such as AOL and Yahoo!; magazine websites, such as Rolling Stone, SPIN; music blogs including Pitchfork, Hype Machine and Stereogum, etc; subscription music services: MOG, Rdio, Rhapsody and Spotify. However, artists need not be dependent upon the whims of editors or have large promotional budgets in order to build an avid fan base. Social media tools offer unprecedented opportunities for artists, large and small, to acquire and connect with fans on a regular basis, outside of regular album release and tour cycles enabling them to virtually run their own websites and social media pages.

This article will provide insight into the tools available to artists that enable them to build and control their brands from their own websites and social media pages. Artists must not let the medium be the message, but must implement a comprehensive web and social media strategy to connect with their fans on a regular basis.

WEBSITES AND LANDING PAGES

First of all, every artist who expects to make a living as such should have a website or at least a profile page that surfaces when a fan searches for them on Google. It need not be fancy; in fact, professional quality websites can be built inexpensively on free tools like Wordpress (www.PixiesMusic.com), Drupal (Moby.com), Ning (www.linkinpark.com) or Bandzoogle (www.SonicBoomSix.co.uk).

Homepages or profile pages can be built on About.me (about.me/k’naan), or Flavors.me (killedincars.com) and enable the artist to aggregate their social media presence—Facebook, Twitter, blog in one easily accessible place. In any event, the website or landing page must reflect your brand; it must have a look and feel consistent with the artist’s image, be updated regularly and offer visitors something they cannot get anywhere else, be it a bonus track, exclusive video, a few written words about last night’s show, the opportunity to buy something they can’t buy anywhere else or simply recognition of fans. Direct to fan marketing and commerce platforms like Topspin Media and Bandcamp enable artists to sell music, merchandise and even concert tickets directly from their own websites and profile pages.
FACEBOOK

Myspace used to be the predominant place for fans to discover new music and where artists tended to “homestead” themselves. However, Facebook, with over 700 million registered users worldwide, has now emerged as the must-have platform upon which artists can build a fan base. Artists’ Facebook pages must be updated regularly and reflect the artist’s brand. RootMusic and Damn the Radio offer free or inexpensive tools to create compelling band pages; and companies like Buddy Media offer a more expensive, custom page built upon a robust platform including services which offload some of the work of monitoring the page and also provide great analytics reporting capabilities.

Third party apps and features within Facebook also enable artists to grow their fan base, offer exclusive content, even conduct commerce directly from the artists Facebook page. The cumulative effect of fans telling their friends about their favorite bands and subsequently their friends telling their friends has made Facebook the most effective marketing tool ever developed. “Cage the Elephant” built a simple Facebook page using Root Music’s BandPage, and by posting music, news, opportunities to vote and interact with the band, streaming playlists and videos, as well as links to buy music, was able to grow their Facebook fanbase to over 700,000, with their songs being played and shared over 5000 times a day. Miles Davis used BandPage to send out 40 tracks via his Facebook news feed, and issued a fan-christened album, “Blue Flame,” with the ten songs that received the most “likes” from his fans. During the month that the campaign was active, Miles Davis’ Bandpage content received over 20,000,000 impressions (i.e. unique views), received 4 to 8 times as many likes on posts, an increase of 200% on post feedback and 400% on post views than the previous month.

TWITTER

Twitter’s 140 character messages empower Artists to connect with fans in an organic way, rewarding loyal fans for following them with frequent communication and priority access to information about album releases, upcoming tours, etc. These one-on-one messages can also be used to drive fans to the artists’ website, where the fans can access exclusive content, priority access to purchase tickets, VIP experiences, etc. A number of third party services, such as Twiturn, Musebin, Song.ly, Tinysong, Twisten.fm, SongTwit and Twt.fm allow artists and fans alike to share music via Twitter. But most importantly, Twitter provides artists with a simple and free way to get your story out, create a personal connection with your fans and make them want to support you as an artist. Zoe Keating, a San Francisco-based artist explains that she had many fans who had been listening to her music for years, but who
never purchased anything from her until they started following her on Twitter. Once again, the key is to connect with your fans first, market to them later.

Dave Grohl, Foo Fighters front man, notoriously dissed Twitter, but then publicly apologized and admitted that when he had an album to promote, he was not above tweeting. He also allegedly heard from fans via Twitter that they were being excluded from a show, and he instructed the box office to let his fans in, in lieu of the “guest list” who had not yet showed. Honest. Authentic. Connection with Fans.

EMAIL MARKETING

Artists must not, however, assume that “if you build it, they will come.” Topspin, Fanbridge and Reverb Nation offer DIY marketing tools that enable artists to gather email addresses, increase their Facebook and Twitter followings and reward fans for following them. For example, in the spirit described by Seth Godin’s book “Permission Marketing,” Topspin offers a content-for-media widget that rewards fans with a free download for liking the artist on Facebook or volunteering their email address. All of the marketing units are easily shareable, often picked up by the music discovery sites editorially, can be run as ad units throughout the web and allow the artist to track where their fans live, which offers were most effective and insight into their fans’ social media footprint.

Giving away a free track in exchange for an email address has helped artists such as Pixies, Yeasayer, David Byrne, Interpol and the Decemberists grow their email lists by over 20%, adding 20,000 to over 100,000 fans in just one year. New fans acquired via email tend to account for a significant percentage of actual purchases. And the conversion rate on purchases from fans who have opted in to receive emails from the artists they love can be as high as 30%. Pixies (pixiesmusic.com) launched a compelling email campaign last year where, using Topspin’s email for media widget, they gave away a digital copy of the entire Doolittle album in advance of a tour, in exchange for a fan’s email address. They gathered tens of thousands of email addresses over the course of a few months and then emailed those fans a link to buy tickets to a show in London. The tickets sold out in less than 24 hours and attendees included only those fans who had joined the mailing list. Now, two years later, Pixies have grown their email list from zero to over 165,000, have done over one million dollars in direct to fan sales and have delighted their fans with several fan only shows that have sold out in a few hours.

Jukebox the Ghost (jukeboxtheghost.com) launched an interesting email campaign marketed towards college students whereby they agreed to play a show at the colleges from where they gathered the most email addresses, and were even able to entice several universities to email
their student body about the contest, with amazing results. The band received over 5250 entries from colleges around the country, acquired over 6000 new Facebook fans, over 1500 new Twitter followers and saw a 40% increase in sales throughout the campaign. Five of the schools each had nearly 200 entries and the band was able to identify key markets, based upon geographic traction from the schools.

Bay Area technology companies like Klout, Rapleaf and Fliptop can identify a fans’ social media presence based on their email address. Rapleaf assigns an influencer score to that user, based on how many Twitter followers and Facebook friends that user has, enabling artists to reach out and engage their most loyal, influential fans in their marketing efforts. Klout works with brands to identify influencers and create targeted marketing campaigns within the Klout environment to give fans access to tickets and interactions with the bands, sports teams and brands that fans love.

Artists can also help one another out by emailing their fan bases about their artist brethren whose music might appeal to the same audience. A recommendation from a fellow artist whose work a fan likes might be the only thing more powerful than a “like” from a friend. In 2009, British band Fanfarlo (fanfarlo.com), who has a big following in the U.K., but was yet relatively undiscovered in the U.S, launched a campaign to build awareness in the U.S. by offering to sell a digital version of its album for $1 to all fans who volunteered their email address. Fanfarlo gathered over 20,000 email addresses, used the $20,000+ to fund a U.S. tour, played a series of shows at key venues in New York and California, and was signed to a major label. This was all due to the fact that the artist Sigur Ros had messaged his fan base about Fanfarlo and that email became one of the biggest sources of referral traffic for the offer.

CROWD-SOURCING TO ENGAGE FANS IN CREATIVE PROCESS

There is no better way to keep your fans than to engage them in your creative process. Companies like Kickstarter and Pledge Music enable artists to raise money from fans by posting a financial goal necessary to complete a creative pursuit, e.g. record next album and allowing fans to “invest” in exchange for rewards such as a backstage pass, limited edition art work, guitar string, etc. Nataly Dawn, lead singer and bass player of the band Pomplamoose launched a Kickstarter campaign with the goal of raising $20,000 to record a solo album, and was able to raise over $100,000 from 2315 pledors in less than 2 months. She received almost 1000 pledges of $10, that earned the pledgor a download of the album before release, over 500 pledges of $30 in exchange for a signed hard copy of the album plus the download, over 200 pledges of $40 in exchange for a special edition t-shirt plus the album download,
3 pledges of $1500 in exchange for an original oil painting that was to be featured on upcoming album art plus the tee, download, etc, 6 pledges of $2000 in exchange for Nataly covering the pledgors’ song of choice and uploading to her YouTube channel, 2 pledges of $3000 in exchange for Nataly playing a house show at the pledgors’ homes, and many pledges and gifts in between.

Companies like Creative Allies, Crowdsping, DeviantArt, Talenthouse and others run contests for fans to design posters, album art, merch, etc. for the artists they love. Inclusion of fans in the creative process is another very effective way of both rewarding fans and engaging them in your marketing efforts organically as the contests are promoted throughout social media by fan and artist alike. The Beastie Boys ran a poster design contest that received over one million impressions.

REWARDING YOUR FANS

Companies like Fanrank, FanTrail and Big Door allow fans to earn points by interacting with artists, and those points can be used to buy limited edition items, access to VIP events, etc. Fanrank does so within the Facebook environment, assigning points to fans for status updates, likes, comments, tweets and re-tweets that contain brand (or band-defined keywords and URLs. Bands are able to access fan data, including email, name, date of birth, gender and location (opt-in, of course) and segment their fans based on such criteria and their influence. Tiesto launched a Fanrank campaign to promote his last album release, and rewarded the fan who earned the most points by flying to the winners home and playing a house party at their home. In two months, Tiesto’s 6,919 Fanrankers generated 21,989 Facebook posts, 185,293 Facebook comments, 262,926 Facebook likes, 19,818 tweets and 207,268 re-tweets.

FanTrail does the same thing that Fanrank does, but via a mobile application. A small, relatively unheard of Austin, Texas-based indie band, Quiet Company, started on the FanTrail platform in March of 2011 and has built a solid, international following. They messaged their fans regularly, ran trivia contests, announced shows, and rewarded their core fans with free tickets and shout outs via their app and social media channels. Instead of staged messages, they allowed their natural humor and good nature to come across in their audio messages to their fans (their first message was titled “Ur hawt”). Quiet Company now has over 2,000 active users on their application, one of the most engaged fan bases on FanTrail and has learned that roughly 1/3 of their mobile fan base is in Saudi Arabia. Because of FanTrail’s ability to track fans all over the world, the band now knows that they should plan a tour in the Middle East.
MAKE SURE YOUR MUSIC IS HEARD

Sites such as blip.fm, 8tracks, Justin.TV, iMeem, turntable.fm and Playlist.com make it easy for fans to create playlists that can be shared with their friends. Peer to peer music sharing services, such as Grooveshark, Jango, and Slacker make it easy for fans to share the music they love. Sites like Soundcloud enable artists to post music to Soundcloud so that it can be freely stored and played by their fans, without either incurring bandwidth costs. Allowing your music to be readily available for fans to discuss and share via such services should be a cornerstone of any artists’ social media strategy.

Ensuring your music is played on Internet radio, available on subscription music services and that your videos are available on YouTube, VEVO, and MTV is also important. Artists and their team need to know how the Search Engine Optimization (SEO which involves building your site such that it shows up high in the Google natural search results) and Search Engine Monetization (SEM which involves bidding for keywords from Google such that your site will show up higher in the Google search results) game is played as it is essential to capturing the attention of fans. Jack Conte of Pomplamoose explains how his discovery that YouTube will display a cover song right beneath the original inspired his band to record a cover of Beyonce’s “Single Ladies” and post the video to YouTube, generating several million views and several hundred thousand subscribers for an otherwise relatively unknown band, demonstrating the power of SEO. When bidding on key words, it is best to use the services of experts like Trada or Gupta who can help you identify less costly long tail words that will still boost your Google page rank.

FAN CLUBS

Social Media also offers powerful tools for building and managing fan clubs that enable artists to reward their truest fans with recognition, access to the band, pre-order tickets and exclusive content. The Collective’s (US-based management firm), Aaron Ray, believes in giving your truest fans real value and coaches that what fans want the most is recognition by the artist, validation by their friends, access to good seats, meet and greets with the artists and lastly, exclusive content. Aaron helped Linkin Park launch a pre-order for the album “A Thousand Suns” and a fan club using Topspin and Ning to incredible results. The album charted as number one on Billboard, selling over 30,000 pre-sale fan club tickets in 24 US touring markets, the band tripled its fan club memberships (94% of which are still active 6 months later) and increased their email mailing list by more than 125,000 new fans. Sixty-five percent of tickets sold were sold to fan club members on the first day of the pre-sale.
SPONSORSHIPS

Due to the fact that music is shared so easily and frequently throughout social media, brands have also gotten hip to the virtues of aligning themselves to artists and are increasingly tapping into the artists’ fan bases via social media. Gone is the stigma of bands selling out by association with big brands. Topspin powers branded streaming playlists, videos, download programs and targeted custom campaigns, helping the artists with whom they work generate alternate revenue streams by connecting brands with their artists and using their tools to reach audiences online. Aligning yourself with a brand not only provides an incremental revenue stream, but can also help an artist organically tap into the brands’ audience (and vice versa).

Lady Gaga is an artist who harnesses the power of social media and the tools available to great effect. She has over 1.3 billion combined views of her videos online, has over 43 million ‘likes’ on Facebook and is #1 on Twitter with over 10 million followers. She updates her Facebook posts and tweets daily, keeping her fans engaged, letting them in on her activities, thoughts, favorite charities, etc. for her adoring “Little Monster” fans. She implemented a comprehensive social media strategy to promote the release of “Born This Way,” tweeting and posting on her Facebook page regularly, offering the entire album for sale for one dollar via Amazon’s deal of the day, and even promoting her album in Zynga (the game platform launched within Facebook and fastest growing company of all time that recently announced plans to become a standalone platform) whereby fans were able to buy Zynga game cards at Best Buy, bundled with the album, and to buy virtual items in a “Gagaville” game.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The most effective Social Media Strategy includes:

» **Consistency**: build a social media presence via your website, landing page, Facebook and Twitter that fits your image, and keeps the look and feel consistent.

» **Authenticity**: make sure the voice is yours (even if you hire someone to do it).

» **Frequency**: communicate with your fans regularly, offering them some insight into what you are doing daily, something small weekly and something big monthly. Don’t wait until you are on tour or have an album release to reach out.

» **Engagement and Exclusivity**: Engage with your fans, recognize them and reward them with something they cannot get anywhere else, be it a VIP meet and greet, front row seats, a bonus truck, limited edition tee or boxed set in exchange for following you, giving you their email address or telling their friends about your work.
» **Savvy**: Stay ahead of the curve, test out new technologies, learn about SEO, SEM and re-targeting or hire some tech savvy young people to do it for you and experiment often.

In conclusion, artists need no longer spend hundreds and thousands of dollars to market themselves. With a “Fifth Beatle” or a drummer who is slightly tech savvy, even emerging artists can access the myriad of tools and technologies cheaply and readily available to build compelling social media campaigns and grow their fan bases. If your band is filled with Luddites, there are many specialty public relations and marketing firms who know how to build audiences, such as Red Magnet Media (Rachel Masters), Cyber PR (Ariel Hiatt), Eyes and Ears Entertainment, etc who can help you devise and execute a consistent strategy. Technological innovations are emerging everyday, so keep abreast of change and incorporate new and exciting aspects into your marketing plans.
The following annotated bibliography details some recent articles about nonprofits and earning income.


In Part I of this two-part article, Emily Chan tackles the legal complexities involved when nonprofits engage in for-profit activities. She gives a concise breakdown of how earned income is categorized as either related (and therefore tax-exempt) or unrelated (and therefore taxed at a corporate rate).


In the second part of Chan’s article, she tackles several different legal structures, which might be required by or beneficial to nonprofits engaged in profitable enterprises.


Mark Dolliver examines consumer attitudes about companies engaging in social causes. With plenty of statistics, he demonstrates that strategic engagement with causes can be a boon for for-profit businesses.


For years, the best way for musicians to reach a large audience was huge, televised benefit concerts. Recently, however, with the help of social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, musicians and other celebrities have been able to lend their celebrity itself, not just their talents, to promoting causes they believe in. This article discusses the various benefits of social media and how it compares to benefit concerts such as LiveAid.
Taking the position that most, if not all, nonprofits aim to end their fiscal years with a zero balance, Alice Korngoldt examines Nonprofit Finance Fund Capital Partners, a nonprofit that is seeking to change the grant-making process from one where grants are issued and re-issued year after year to one where grants are treated as equity, with the end goal of growing a nonprofit rather than just funding its programs. By funding programs in this way, NFF Capital claims, the nonprofits will be encouraged to embrace revenue-building strategies.


Having worked with ZeroDivide, a San Francisco-based Foundation since 2007, Paul Lamb outlines some advice for individuals or foundations interested in pursuing “social enterprise incubation program[s],” wherein a nonprofit, or “social enterprise” engages in profitable ventures related to their cause.


This article is a very succinct, point-by-point summary of the benefits, challenges, and tax implications of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization engaging in activities which result in earned income.


John Markoff’s article highlights how socially minded technology developers can make a for-profit business model into a successful nonprofit. Highlighting nonprofit tech companies such as Mozilla and TechSoup, both of which bring in huge profits, as well as the growing world of “support” nonprofits, such as the Electronic Frontier Foundation and several open-source software companies, this article provides a overview of how one field has
effectively turned a for-profit business model into a nonprofit one.


A B Corporation is a special sort of corporation, dedicated to using its business to solve social and environmental issues, which meets higher standards of transparency and legal responsibility. As opposed to a for-profit business engaging with charities, or nonprofits engaging in profitable enterprises, B Corporations are a more balanced sort of organization, where business and social action are merged. This website by B Lab, a nonprofit organization that promotes B Corporations, provides resources for consumers, established B Corporations, and businesses or nonprofits interested in becoming a B Corporation.

Alvarez suggests reevaluating our assumptions about measuring impact and using an ethnographic approach to collect data. One benefit of this approach is that the data will be more meaningful in this particular context. A few disadvantages are that the process is time consuming and the depth of information is limited to one project in a specific context.


The article traces the history of social documentaries and alternative media (documentaries or series available online). Although there are some methods to measure the success of a social documentary, these measurements are limited to the same tools used by mass media outlets: tickets sold, viewers on television, unique visits on websites, awards won, etc. Another way to measure social impact is to note the diversity of the subject, maker, and audience.


Bare worries that nonprofits focus too much on the technical aspects of evaluation and suggests that nonprofits use storytelling and a utilization-focused evaluation. He believes that this type of evaluation is more effective because it only asks two questions: who’s going to use the information? For what purpose?

Annotated Bibliography

Bare explains that many nonprofits are currently using accountability as an indicator of impact, which is problematic because it only measures internal metrics. He believes that nonprofits need a continuous cycle of feedback to measure the effectiveness of their programs while they are still ongoing. Based on the feedback, nonprofits can adjust their programs accordingly. He lists a few “tools” for doing this: risk analysis, systems approaches, testing assumptions, the outside view, sensemaking, game theory, scenario planning, and documentary methods.

From the Abstract: The author argues that many foundations have substituted process accountability for accountability for contributing to social change. Accountability in terms of required reporting is important, but it sets a floor, not an aspirational ceiling. Seeking to extend basic human rights to more individuals around the world, seeking to reduce racism in a given city, or seeking to change public-health norms in small town—all of these aspirations require first a willingness to take on challenges that defy short-term, causal, quantifiable results attributable to a best practice. There are tools—such as risk analysis, systems approaches, and game theory—that can help philanthropy engage in work on complex social problems that cannot be deconstructed into a series of small, linear projects.


The study encourages filmmakers to measure social impact using a variety of data sources such as: surveys, online audience engagement, anecdotal data, festival acceptance, theatrical success broadcast, internet streaming, online buzz, DVD sales, film reviews and awards, diversity of audience, audience size, press coverage, participating in discussions, blogs, and social networking sites, collaboration with other organizations, screenings with policymakers/politicians and policy changes. All of these methods provide evaluators with a broader view of the film’s effect on individuals as well as the larger community. The study also provides a chart with sample measures for dimensions of impact: quality of film, increased public awareness, increased public engagement, stronger social movement, and social change.


From the Abstract: Assessing the Intrinsic Impacts of a Live Performance attempts
to define and measure how audiences are transformed by a live performance. The study’s research design consisted of a pair of questionnaires—one administered in-venue just prior to curtain, and the other sent home with the respondent and mailed back. The first questionnaire collected information about the audiences’ mental and emotional preparedness for the performance. The second questionnaire, related to the first by a control number, investigated a range of reactions to the specific performance, including captivation, intellectual stimulation, emotional resonance, spiritual value, aesthetic growth and social bonding. Between January and May 2006, six presenters surveyed audiences at a total of 19 performances representing a cross-section of music, dance and theatre presentations. This report builds on recent literature to address several hypotheses: 1) that the intrinsic impacts derived from attending a live performance can be measured, 2) that different types of performances create different sets of impacts, and 3) that an audience member’s ‘readiness-to-receive’ the art affects the impacts received. The study develops a simple measurement tool to assess impact, provides an analytical framework for considering the results, and suggests how performing arts presenters might begin to use this information to select programs that create specific benefits for their constituents.

Callahan, Suzanne, Jane Jerardi, Caitlin Servilio, and Rha Goddess.


Rha Goddess developed and used a model called Arts Based Civic Transformation (ABCT) to empower individual, communities, and societies. She used both pre- and post-tests (right after and six months later) on its audience to test its ability to change viewpoints and to assess long-term change. Goddess also focused on pre- and post-dialogue and evaluated the audience members by their own assessment of their emotions at the moment.


The report discusses different ways that nonprofits measure impact. The Roberts Enterprise Development Fund focuses on reaching benchmarks and improving operations on a day-to-day basis. The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation also marks milestones as they come and uses an in-reporting system. Costal Enterprises surveys the target population and measures the quality of the outcome rather than focusing on the existence of the outcome itself.
The film was used as a strategic lobbying tool. Many celebrities, business owners, politicians, and journalists were invited to screenings, which were followed up with meetings and requests of the participants. Contact with these people was sustained over one to three years, and the study took into account the ensuing and sustained actions of politicians and business owners. Moreover, the study measured impact in these areas: public awareness, consumer attitudes and behavior, corporate policy, political action, and impact on the film’s partners. They commissioned several surveys from various companies. Over an eighteen month period, they also tracked who saw the film at screenings, in cinemas, on DVD, and on television as well as who saw the trailer or extracts of the film online. They also tracked who had heard about the film from media coverage. They also commissioned MediaGen to analyze the amount of press generated by the film and looked at Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE), PR value, and the messaging of the articles. Besides press generated by the film, the study also noted the amount of unique visits to the film’s facebook and twitter websites. They also commissioned Freud Communications to conduct a focus group in which the participants were shown the film, lead in a discussion about behavior, and brought back for a second study a year later to see if their behavior had changed. They measured the amount of fish bought in supermarkets before and after the film aired (some supermarkets had participated in promoting the film).


From the Abstract: This report summarizes our findings and recommendations from our web review. It should be seen as a starting point, or primer, for how organizations can begin to sift through the copious amounts of data available using Google Analytics and to focus on the metrics that can best inform their decision making. We hope this document provides practical guidance to practitioners and funders of community information projects on how to begin to measure online impact, understanding that with more time and resources, organizations can go much further in understanding their online activities and connecting them to their project-specific impact goals.

The paper discusses the current methods used to evaluate the impact/influence of documentaries, which include tracking financial returns on documentary distribution, including ticket and DVD sales, licensing and broadcast revenues; commissioning surveys; as well as gathering and analyzing data about the audience as well as participation on the website. However, a more standardized methodological approach is needed in order to more accurately assess the impact of documentaries on social change. The paper mentions the Fledgling Fund model as well as the Knight’s Foundation model.


From the Executive Summary: This white paper lays out an expanded vision for “public media 2.0” that places engaged publics at its core, showcasing innovative experiments from its “first two minutes,” and revealing related trends, stakeholders, and policies. Public media 2.0 may look and function differently, but it will share the same goals as the projects that preceded it: educating, informing, and mobilizing its users...The first and crucial step is to embrace the participatory—the feature that has also been most disruptive of current media models. We also need standards and metrics to define truly meaningful participation in media for public life. And we need policies, initiatives, and sustainable financial models that can turn today’s assets and experiments into tomorrow’s tried-and-true public media. Public media stakeholders, especially such trusted institutions as public broadcasting, need to take leadership in creating a true public investment in public media 2.0.


Duxbury discusses the increased usage of cultural indicators as tools of research for measuring impact. She refers to the Arts and Culture Indicator Project, which suggests that arts/culture/creativity in neighborhoods contribute to a number of potential positive impacts: supporting civic participation, catalyzing economic development, improving the built environment, promoting stewardship of place, augmenting public safety, preserving cultural heritage, etc. Currently, nonprofits are moving toward a integrative approach to indicator models that identifies and analyzes cross and cumulative impacts among indicators. Although indicators are useful for research, Duxbury warns against relying too heavily on them because they can produce a “façade of scientific management.”

There are too many other variables for impact to be directly attributed to an arts and culture initiative. Moreover, intermediate effects (outcomes) may not lead to the intended results. However, the paper suggests that using conceptual frameworks (based on successful models) as a starting point for discussion can lead to the development of research questions, tools, and communication principles that could be useful in measuring impact.


Dwyer recognizes the need for expanding the research and tools used for measuring impact. She is specifically interested analyzing the relationship between participation in arts education and the development of creativity. Currently, the government is developing a new generation of assessment tools (tests) to measure competency in the classroom and school level as well as other types of measurable performance.


The authors believe that organizations should measure goals linked to their mission rather than the mission itself. They categorize nonprofits into 4 different groups: niche, integrated, institutional, ecosystem. Niche, integrated and ecosystem nonprofits should focus on using a theory of change. Institutional nonprofits should measure influence rather than impact.

Abstract: Leaders of organizations in the social sector are under growing pressure to demonstrate their impacts on pressing societal problems such as global poverty. We review the debates around performance and impact, drawing on three literatures: strategic philanthropy, nonprofit management, and international development. We then develop a contingency framework for measuring results, suggesting that some organizations should measure long-term impacts, while others should focus on shorter-term outputs and outcomes. In closing, we discuss the implications of our analysis for future research on performance management.

Figueroa, Maria Elena, D. Lawrence Kincaid, Manju Rani, and Gary Lewis. “Communication

From the Executive Summary: For social change, a model of communication is required that is cyclical, relational and leads to an outcome of mutual change rather than one-sided, individual change. In Section 1 of this report we provide a description of such a model. The model describes a dynamic, iterative process that starts with a “catalyst/stimulus” that can be external or internal to the community. This catalyst leads to dialogue within the community that when effective, leads to collective action and the resolution of a common problem...

Section 2 of the report also includes a set of two matrices that can be used to keep a record, by the community, the change agent or anyone interested, of each stage of the Community Dialogue and Action process. Each matrix documents whether the step was undertaken, who participated, whether there was any conflict or disagreement, the way in which it was resolved and the outcome of each step. A suggested analysis of these data is also included in Section 2. The matrices also include a space to document the forces that enable or hinder the social change process.


The paper simply lists five steps to building public will: 1. Framing and defining the problem or need. 2. Building awareness about the problem or need. 3. Becoming knowledgeable/transmitting information about where and how the problem can be impacted or changed. 4. Creating a personal conviction (among key audiences) that change needs to occur and issuing a call to action. 5. Evaluating while reinforcing.


The authors recognize the cultural context behind evaluations and believe that the interests of minority populations must be included. They suggest using a theory-based evaluation (program theory) to test the links between what programs assume their activities do and what actually happens. They also emphasize the importance of examining the mechanisms that influence successive stages of the participants’ behaviors through observation and interviews.
Abstract: The major principles and commitments of an educative, values-engaged approach to STEM educational program evaluation are presented, justified, and illustrated. How this approach addresses key issues in STEM education and advances the field is also discussed.


Guetzkow created a chart that describes the mechanisms of art impact on three levels: direct involvement in arts organizations, participation in arts as an audience member, and the presence of arts organizations in the community. Each category impacts the community and individual in different ways. He states that all impact-related studies focus on the direct (vs. indirect) impact on the arts on the individual and organizations involved in the arts rather than the direct/indirect impact of the arts on the community as a whole, which results in inflated, generalized and short-term evaluations. He suggests that organizations measure what percentage of the community is affected and find out what the “tipping points” are.


From the Introduction: As part of vetting the report findings and determining how to implement its recommendations, The Endowment convened a small group of foundation staff, grantees and evaluators. After the presentation of the report’s findings, meeting participants then engaged in a series of discussions on the main themes of the report. Discussion centered on implementation of three key steps: 1) developing a theory of change (an explanation of how certain actions and activities will lead to a desired policy goal), 2) defining benchmarks and indicators, and collecting the data, and 3) using findings.

This paper synthesizes the convening discussions in order to advance the conversation across the field on policy and advocacy evaluation. It is organized into two broad sections: the first section summarizes participants’ overall feedback and recommendations on approaching policy and advocacy evaluation...A second section provides specific suggestions from participants on developing a theory of change; defining benchmarks and indicators, and collecting data; and using findings.

Haidt, Jonathan, and Jesse Graham. “When Morality Opposes Justice: Conservatives Have Moral Intuitions that Liberals May

There are five psychological foundations that people use to define morality: 1. Harm/care 2. Fairness/reciprocity, 3. Ingroup/loyalty, 4. Authority/respect, 5. Purity/sanctity. Liberals determine morality based on the first two, while conservatives use all five. This article is relevant to this study because it serves as a guideline to help determine which strategies will be more influential among politically conservative and liberal people.


To avoid setting unrealistic targets, programs should set targets for their outcomes after the baseline set of data has been collected. Moreover, programs should set regular, short-term targets to measure progress and to compare with the collected data. The report also stresses the importance of comparing a program’s data with other programs to determine similar realistic outcome indicators. To help determine which characteristics lead to which outcomes, programs should organize outcome data by client characteristics as well as service characteristics.


From the Abstract: This case study illustrates how a short documentary used in a savvy grassroots campaign packed theaters statewide and successfully drew together audience members with differing points of view—including hundreds of coastal fishermen—into meaningful dialogue about the future of Oregon’s ocean.

The wave of public support generated by this campaign prompted action on ocean protection—from the governor’s office to a group of coastal fishermen who are charting new waters in their willingness to promote marine protection.


House argues that there are three key components to democratic evaluations: inclusion, dialogue, and deliberation. He believes that all stakeholders, including underrepresented ones, must partake in the evaluation process. When he conducted an evaluation of a program, he brought all participants of the program together to discuss the findings of the study face to face.

Jackson recognizes that evaluation is an essential part of a nonprofit’s initiative and planning. However, it is often unrealistic to prove a program’s success because the information is either impossible to get or too expensive to attain. The data that nonprofits use is generally from condition markers before and after the program begins. Jackson emphasizes that nonprofits should not make claims or take full responsibility for impacting conditions that they have no actual control over. Moreover, she believes that nonprofits should not be tempted to prove through quantitative analysis that an arts intervention caused a particular outcome. Establishing a correlation with the intended outcome is enough to make a case.

Jackson, Maria Rosario, Florence Kabwasa-Green and Joaquín Herranz. “Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators.” The Urban Institute, 2006.

From the Executive Summary: This monograph, part of a series presenting the work of the Urban Institute’s Arts and Culture Indicators Project (ACIP), discusses three major advances in our ongoing work. First, we introduce a definition of cultural vitality that includes the range of cultural assets and activity people around the country register as significant. Specifically, we define cultural vitality as evidence of creating, disseminating, validating, and supporting arts and culture as a dimension of everyday life in communities. Second, we use this definition as a lens through which to clarify our understanding of the data necessary, as well as the more limited data currently available, to document adequately and include arts and culture in more general quality of life indicators. Third, we develop and recommend an initial set of arts and culture indicators derived from nationally available data, and we compare selected metropolitan statistical areas based on the measures we have developed.

Jackson, Maria Rosario and Joaquín Herranz. “Culture Counts in Communities.” The Urban Institute, 2002.

From About This Report: This report presents the guiding principles and conceptual framework developed by, and underlying the work of, the Urban Institute’s Arts and Culture Indicators in Community Building Project (ACIP). The report also reviews the current state of data and research on integrating arts, culture, and creativity into quality of life measures and suggests prospects for future developments. It is the first in a series of publications of the Institute’s Culture, Creativity, and Com-
munities program. ACIP was launched in 1996 in collaboration with the Urban Institute’s National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation. Recognizing that arts and culture had too frequently been neglected in efforts to assess quality of life, the Creativity and Culture division of the Foundation commissioned the Institute to explore the possibility of integrating arts and culture-related measures into neighborhood indicator systems. These systems consist of periodically collected measures that monitor quality of life at the community level. ACIP operates at both national and local levels—actively encouraging the inclusion of arts and culture within quality of life indicator systems and seeking to create the concepts, tools, and language necessary to do so.

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


Evaluators should recognize the importance of culture in evaluating impact. They should be cautious of group differences and demographic variables in the study so that they can determine how the cultural elements and inequities of a community can affect outcomes. Besides race, evaluators should consider other factors such as education level, gender, age, and income.


The paper provides recommendations for people working the arts advocacy and the arts: embrace contradictions; allow artists to lead in the creative process; develop authentic partnerships for effective collaborations; understand the nuances of working with celebrities; connect the dots (integrating cultural strategies into their work); maximize impact (by amplifying work that is already out there, targeting diverse communities, working with other organizations and movements, and providing people with opportunities to stay involved); and match the medium.

Martinez, Tia Elena, Susan J. Colby, and Lisa Quay. “Minding...
“Minding the Gap” suggests using a “gap check” to assess the impact of strategies on equity before implementing them as well as documenting the negative and positive outcomes on subsets of the population. The article advocates for a multi-decade commitment to issue areas because the assessments that are completed now are too short (5-7 years).

From the Abstract: The challenges shaping the life chances of boys and young men of color are well-documented but still shocking. This book draws attention to the urgent need—both economic and moral—to better understand the policy and community-based factors that serve as incentives or barriers to young men and boys of color as they make critical life decisions. This volume draws attention to the potential of a public policy focus on young men and boys of color as a high-leverage strategy for promoting an agenda for equitable, sustainable, healthy communities in California and across the Nation.


The authors believe that measuring the impact of arts on the community is limited by data and methodology. It takes a long time for an individual to be impacted on a level that is noticeable in the community, and researchers can only measure intermediate outputs for a short period of time. Moreover, it is difficult to prove that an arts program generated a specific social benefit because there are many other factors involved.


The authors suggest using a mixed-method evaluation to measure universal program outcomes as well as effects on various subsets of people within the target community.


McClintock argues that nonprofits should use storytelling for evaluating projects. He believes that participants at all levels must become more involved in the evaluation
process, and he suggests a few ways to do this: site visits, review of documents, participant observations, telephone interviews, individual and group storytelling.


Many organizations are using dashboards or scorecards for evaluation. College Summit, for instance, collects data monthly and shares this information online. The report emphasizes the need for transparency among nonprofits and suggests that nonprofits establish standards for collecting data. The report also lists a number of organizations that allow nonprofits to share their impact data and research with other nonprofits.


“The NEA’s periodic Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPA) allows researchers to study the correlations between U.S. adults’ self-reported levels of arts engagement and a range of positive civic and social behaviors...Although this Note draws conclusions similar to those of previous NEA reports, it examines a wider range of civic and social activities. Besides analyzing volunteer rates among arts participants, the Note tracks civic activities captured by two new questions in the SPPA: attending community meetings and voting in a presidential election. Also new to the 2008 survey are questions concerning arts attendance at schools and places of worship, as well as questions about taking children to out-of-school arts experiences.”


From the Abstract: The first section reports the total number, staff, and budget size of performing arts organizations. The second part addresses U.S. consumer spending on performing arts admissions and other cultural events. Part Three takes a different approach. It represents the NEA’s first-ever analysis of Americans’ daily time spent doing arts and cultural activities, including performing arts attendance. This section relies on previously unpublished data from the BLS’ American Time Use Survey. The Note concludes by reviewing several possible measures of arts and cultural value that extend beyond mining federal databases.

The study dealt with the livability of neighborhoods, and they used metrics and indicators such as: traditional economic impact, surveys of patrons and identification of neighborhoods, social networks and social capital formation, and impact of cultural assets on property value.


Outcome-Driven Grantmaking (ODG) has four steps: 1. Set a measurable outcome and scope 2. Research the field and players 3. Establish a logic model, metrics, and targets 4. Compare the expected social return of potential investments. The report emphasizes constant research during the planning and implementation process.


The study uses two different methods of valuation: measuring the film’s externalities (effect on companies, number of times the topic is mentioned in media, community surveys) and using a willingness to pay (contingent valuation) study. The first method was very costly and not particularly effective in this study (they did not have the money or resources to actually conduct thorough studies). The second method also seems ineffective because, as the authors have noted, since the market for the WTP study is imagined, the results of the study may be inflated (there is no actual money involved so people may be willing to pay more than they would in reality).


The article focuses on six methodological challenges: unit of analysis, retrospective data, selection bias, intrusiveness, causal inference, and comparison and control groups. The article agrees with Dwyer about only measuring short-term outcomes but adds on that the outcomes must be tied to the ultimate impact. Moreover, the authors refer to PolicyHub’s guide to data collection, which include: experimental and quasi-experimental evidence (comparison studies about effectiveness of one intervention to another or none at all), survey and administrative evidence, and
qualitative research evidence (collection of opinions/perceptions of stakeholders about the program and its (in)effectiveness). They emphasize the need for surveying the individual under an interrupted time-series design, which will allow researchers to determine the nature of the impact.

OTHER WORKS CONSULTED


Benavente, Javiera and Rebecca Lena Richardson. “Cultural Organizing: Experiences at the Intersection of Art and Activism.” Community Arts Perspective. II.1 (2009).


Annotated Bibliography


Shome, Debika and Sabine Marx. “The Psychology of Climate Change Communication...


THE CULTURE GROUP