CREATIVE AGENCIES:
A MODEL FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY

by

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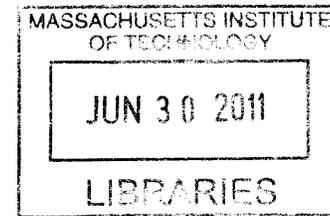
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This research investigates how existing initiatives based in artistic and non-artistic disciplines
build indigenous capacity for leadership in disenfranchised communities through the application of the
creative process. There is a perceived disparity between the missions and processes of community-based arts
initiatives and non-arts initiatives in practice and in literature. However, this thesis evaluates both types
of initiatives against a set of measurements for successful capacity building and finds that all cases enlist a
similar creative process. Often considered only in relation to artistic endeavors, an agenda-drive, democratic,
creative process can incubate leadership.

The components for such a process are identified and discussed in this research through in-depth
narratives and analyses of three initiatives: the Highlander Research and Education Center in eastern
Tennessee, Appalshop in eastern Kentucky, and the Village of Arts and Humanities in North Philadelphia.
Despite widely varying vehicles for capacity-building - popular education and organizing, arts and media
production, and spatial transformation and arts programming, respectively – all enlist the creative process.
This research finds that the creative process can provide an analogous experience to that which community
leaders enact to create change while concurrently developing a skill set that is transferable to the activities
of community leadership.

Additional benefits and impediments because of the use of the arts in capacity-building endeavors
are discussed in this thesis. While indigenous cultural expression and artistic production are valuable when
integrated, the initial motivations and backgrounds of the founding artists, the perceived competition
between artistic production and leadership development, and the misconception of the purpose of their
efforts by a broader audience, introduce challenges to capacity building. Additional challenges to all capacity-
building initiatives stem from a mismatch between the measurements required by their funding sources and
those that capture their most meaningful output. The findings of this research can provide guidance for new
and veteran practitioners of leadership development, community development, or community-based artistic
enterprises.

ABSTRACT

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To the *idea* of Alabama.

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This thesis has roots in Buffalo, New York; Saint Louis, Missouri; Greensboro, Alabama; and the cities, towns, and hollows I have passed through on blue highways in between. It grows out of personal experience, enlightenment, confusion, discontent with the status quo, an ever-active imagination, and a dogged belief in an innate capacity in everyone to *envision* and *create*. It expands on what I have identified as the most critical skill I gained from an education in architecture: a fluency in the *creative process*; that is, the ability to critically sense contextual and systemic influences, to draw inspiration from challenging situations and restrictions, to look deeper than face value, to aggregate and synthesize seemingly different components, and to create proposals and alternatives that progress notions of what can be.

Before starting school at MIT, I lived and worked as an architect in rural Alabama for two years. I came to intimately know a small community of stark contrasts. An idyllic natural and cultivated landscape – the big sky, a grandiose old theater house, the meandering Cahaba River – was juxtaposed with a population whose poverty rate was twice the national average. While the community was steeped in living cultural heritage – gospel music; generations-old, buttery, Southern recipes; expertise in traditional crafts – it was also undermined by a general inability to recognize its own potential, both individually and collectively. An enduring lack of local economic opportunity and mobility, racial discrimination and tension, inept state and local policies that overlooked rural challenges and needs, as well as presumably numerous other factors, created currents of disenfranchisement and dependency. Many community members (although certainly not all) were unable to rely on their imagination for self-determination and the creation of new opportunities.

In Alabama, I began to wonder how, if at all, an initiative could enable those living in this community (or other struggling communities) to break their dependency on external assistance, re-envision their own abilities, challenge the status quo, harness existing assets, and take action to produce positive change. Knowing firsthand the practicality and power of the creative process in other facets of my life besides that of architectural practice, this research seeks to understand how Buffalo, Saint Louis, Greensboro, and so many other places in between and beyond, might benefit from the rediscovery of indigenous creativity.

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

"What does it take for a disenfranchised community to envision and implement change? And how does an initiative develop this ability if it is not present?" While the first question asks how a community can drive its own development from within, the second asks what approach or approaches to community engagement can produce this indigenous capability. These questions, which provoked the body of research that follows, were based on an assumption of the latent potential within disenfranchised communities. By placing both "envisioning" and "implementing" in the hands of the community, I was suggesting an approach in which the entire process of community development - from the conception of the ideas for change, to the ultimate realization of those ideas as tangible or intangible products – could be owned by the community. If this was possible, then what would the role of the engaging initiative, an action-oriented group of people (either formally organized or loosely structured), be in achieving such independence?

If a community has ownership of the entire process of development, then the role of the initiative is not to lead or prescribe, but rather to *ignite*. The goal of the initiative is to build the capacity of individuals within the community to be able to enact change themselves. In his seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire calls for this redefinition of roles in response to the dichotomous relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed:

> One of the basic elements of the relationship between oppressor and oppressed is prescription. Every prescription represents the imposition of one man's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the man prescribed to into one that conforms with the prescriber's consciousness. Thus, the behavior of the oppressed is a prescribed behavior, following as it does the guidelines of the oppressor. (Freire 1970, 31)

The prescription that Freire speaks of deprives one from the opportunity to envision change for himself. Herb Smith, a filmmaker at the media and arts organization Appalshop in eastern Kentucky, likens this oppressive relationship to that which has existed for decades between big coal companies and the residents of Appalachia. With the advent of railroads and the ability to export large quantities of coal came a surge of company-built towns, each with its own mandated housing and its own internal economy and currency. The relationship between the coal companies and the coal workers resembled Freire's description of that between the oppressor and the oppressed. "These companies had this old model of the company town," Smith says.

"It wasn't democracy. It wasn't participatory. It wasn't, 'Can we hear what the workers care about?' It was, 'This is what we're doing. This is your role. Trust and obey.'" The resulting mentality among the Appalachian populous, Smith believes, is still very present in Appalachia today (personal communication).

With prior knowledge of approaches to community engagement, as well as additional research conducted during the conceptual development of this thesis, I determined that the approach and outcomes I was describing are similar to those that capacity-building initiatives aspire to achieve. Further research revealed, however, that the term has multiple definitions, processes, and applications. Below, I describe the evolution of capacity-building as a type of community engagement. I note the confusion that has resulted from its adoption by various fields and a subsequent lack of accumulated knowledge on its process.

WHAT IS CAPACITY BUILDING?

The term "capacity building" and the development of the approach can be attributed to the international development community. The United Nations Development Programme was an early proponent of capacity-building methods in its work in developing countries. Originally using the term "institution building" as far back as the 1970s, the program redefined the approach "capacity building" in the 1990s. Today, the organization defines capacity as "the ability of individuals, institutions, and societies to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustainable manner." Capacity building (or "capacity development," as the organization sometimes refers to it) necessitates concurrent development at individual, institutional, and societal levels. To build capacity at the local and societal levels, the organization enters at the institutional level and works to make institutions "better able to deliver and promote human development" (United Nations Development Programme 2010, 2).

Although the term found a prominent place in international development lexicon, the description of the actual process or processes of capacity-building remained underdeveloped. The approach was applied to numerous areas of development assistance as priorities shifted from infrastructure, to agriculture, social services, and governance. Within each application, the scope of assistance was defined differently. Thus, the international development community failed to accumulate a body of knowledge on the actual process of providing capacity building support (World Bank Operations Evaluation Department 2005, 5).

The final decade of the twentieth century saw various fields adopt "capacity building" outside the

international development community, and additional definitions made the term increasingly ambiguous. The European Commission described capacity building as working "to develop and strengthen structures, institutions and procedures that help to ensure: transparent and accountable governance in all public institutions; improve capacity to analyze, plan, formulate and implement policies in economic, social, environmental, research, science and technology fields, and in critical areas such as international negotiation" (World Bank Operations Evaluation Department 2005, 6). Non-profit organizations and even private companies use the term today to refer to an increase in internal operational efficiency. Although the quest for internal sustainability remains constant across definitions, the scope and audiences for the programs described here are far different than those described by the United Nations Development Programme.

In *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, John Kretzmann and John McKnight bring the tenets of capacity building from the international development community to the field of community development in the United States. They describe two paths towards addressing needs in "devastated" communities. In a traditional, needs-driven approach, missing components and critical needs are mapped, and a bleak, incomplete picture of the community is created which assumes that such needs can only be addressed if outside expertise and materials are sought. The alternative approach, a capacity-focused approach, builds on identified assets existing in the community. Adopting the tri-level framework of the United Nations Development Programme, the authors argue that every community, no matter how devastated, has human, associational, physical, financial, cultural, and institutional assets that, if identified, can be mobilized to spur community development. As assets are strategically linked to community needs, internal personal or organizational relationships are created, which sustainable, long-term development depends on (1993, 5-9).

OTHER APPROACHES TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The assertion put forth by proponents of capacity building – that the agency, knowledge, skills, and materials for community development exist or can be fostered internally – is distinct from other approaches to community engagement. Service-based initiatives identify needs and attempt to fill them with external financial or material aid, assuming that such assets are absent within disenfranchised communities. Advocacy organizations work in dialogue with community members to identify needs, but the professional advocate then acts as the voice of the community, supporting and promoting the community in larger planning

processes. In these approaches, both envisioning and implementing responsibilities are left to an external party or a professional. They remove community members from a development process that in itself can be empowering. Professional community organizers depend on the engagement of residents to envision and implement change. However, if the community becomes dependent upon the presence and powers of the organizer, then the organizer deprives the community from leading the process of change.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THROUGH THE ARTS AND DESIGN

Arts and design initiatives are underrepresented in the mainstream conversation on capacity building. Perhaps the exception, *Building Communities* gives cultural organizations and individual artists substantial attention. It emphasizes the material assets of cultural organizations – facilities, materials, and equipment – that can be made available for other community groups to use, as well as the skills of artists that can be shared through performances or educational classes (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993, 161 - 162). The authors claim that individual artists can (a) keep community traditions and culture alive if their work is influenced by local character and history, (b) teach their artistic skill set to others, (c) create products of commercial and aesthetic value that can become a source of revenue, and lastly, (d) improve the community's perception of itself if their work is reflective of local identity (95-96).

The range of community-based arts initiatives in existence today is broad and represents a spectrum of intentions and ensuing approaches to community engagement. A growing number of art and design firms today pursue projects in disenfranchised communities as they would in traditional practice, providing professional assistance to "clientele" from these communities and subsidizing their work with alternative funding sources. Such initiatives, including Design Corps in Raleigh, North Carolina, or Public Architecture in San Francisco, California, are fueled by the belief that their work addresses needs more critical than those typically addressed with traditional clients (Design Corps 2011; Public Architecture "About " 2011). Depending on how participatory the actual process is, community members can participate in design charrettes or help construct final products. These types of endeavors can thus be similar to service-based, advocacy, or even organizing initiatives. The community-based arts realm also consists of organizations with pedagogical intentions, aspiring to teach artistic skills to community members. Some, like Artists for Humanity in Boston, Massachusetts, teach art to create artists, instilling individuals with the skills that can

develop into careers (Artists for Humanity 2011). Others teach art for enrichment and enjoyment.

Kretzmann and McKnight acknowledge the presence and advantage of this portion of the community-based arts spectrum. Their analysis is product-oriented – that is, it looks at what services artists and arts initiatives can provide – rather than process-oriented, failing thus to identify the value of the creative process itself for community and leadership development. While they are correct in identifying the broad spectrum of ways in which such individuals and organizations can serve as community assets, the arts are not identified as a tool for developing individual capacities beyond technical proficiency.

THE FALSE DISCONNECT BETWEEN THE ARTS AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Just as there is a divide between the bodies of literature on capacity-building and community-based arts, so too is there a disconnect in actual practice. Community development organizations geared towards building community capacity usually do not see the arts as anything more than a supplement to their work, if they consider the arts at all. The underestimated value of the arts as an important component to community development was illustrated during a post-mortem analysis of Continental Harmony, an initiative of the Clinton administration in 1999 to commemorate the pending millennium. The project placed composers in residence across towns and cities in all fifty states. After engaging residents and partnering organizations in an exploration of local history and character, the composers crafted locally inspired compositions that were later performed at community-wide millennium celebrations across the country. During the post-mortem session, the analysts found that "while people actively involved in civic affairs perceived the arts as a valuable asset, they did not see them as relevant to their core concerns, be they business interests, sustainability issues or environmental concerns." Discussions following the identification of this disconnect have focused on how to incorporate artists and artistic processes more integrally into cross-sector change processes (Cleveland and Shifferd 2008).

BRIDGING THE GAP THROUGH CROSS-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

The potential of the arts to be a central vehicle for building community capacity has not yet reached the researchers and practitioners of capacity building. This thesis attempts to bridge these two fields by analyzing successful capacity-building models from both arts-based and non-arts based practices against

outputs ascribed to capacity-building endeavors. I examine the practice of initiatives that build individual and collective capacity to identify the common components that are essential for their success. I also look to identify components that may not be essential but add enriching layers to the process of building capacity. Additionally, this research evaluates the added value, if any, of artistic and design expression or production to individual or community development.

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY

For this study I created a framework for analysis, searched for data to fill out that framework, and drew conclusions from actual practice. I chose to do this because (a) the literature on capacity-building in communities is limited, and (b) I was interested in understanding the complexities around such endeavors that occur when actualized. The first step was to create a list of parameters to narrow down the field of community engagement organizations to those that fit the type of initiative I was interested in studying, those that:

(1) work in disenfranchised locations long enough to see long-term effects,

(2) involve individuals from those communities into the process of problem identification and solution creation,

(3) embody the local context, heritage, and people, and

(4) create an engaged and active citizenry that can themselves affect social change.

These parameters allowed me to assemble an initial list of arts and non-arts organizations. This list included initiatives in the United States and abroad, as well as in both rural and urban locations. I intentionally sought a diverse pool so that I could (a) understand what were essential ingredients, independent of constraints or advantages of particular contexts, and (b) develop a nuanced type-based framework for understanding the spectrum of approaches to building community capacity.

I developed a set of measurements to evaluate the success of each initiative. "Success" for these initiatives cannot be measured against a singular metric, as achieving long-term community capacity requires multiple various inputs and is manifested through numerous potential outputs. Additionally, the goals of the initiatives themselves are multiple and often include other goals in addition to building capacity. During this phase of research I studied available print and digital literature and compiled my findings

into a matrix that compared the cases, which are discussed at length in Chapter Two. I worked iteratively during this portion of my research; while filling in the matrix with information about each case study, I was also identifying other components or outputs of capacity building initiatives that I had not previously considered. The descriptions of the measurements included in Chapter Two are my revised measurements, reflective of an increased understanding of capacity building in practice.

As a result of the cross-comparison, I chose three initiatives to examine in depth based on their success across all measures relative to the other initiatives. The Highlander Research and Education Center, Appalshop, and the Village of Arts and Humanities were chosen for further study. Additionally, a set of "ingredients," or common components across initiatives that contribute to success, emerged from the cross-comparison. The three case studies thus became a means of (a) testing the accuracy of the measures of success that I identified originally, and (b) refining the list of ingredients of success.

This thesis tells the stories of the three initiatives that are based in three distinct communities. In *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Raymond Williams attributes the ambiguity of the term "community" to "the difficult interaction between the tendencies originally distinguished in the historical development: on the one hand the sense of direct common concern; on the other hand, the materialization of various forms of common organization, which may or may not adequately express this" (1976, 76). The term at once describes groups with similar interests and concerns, as well as groups delineated by geography or formal association. Each case study uses the term "community" to describe different delineations, including both the physical boundaries of a place and the shared interest in a particular issue.

The Highlander Research and Education Center uses it two ways: first, to describe those who have shared struggles regardless of their location or lack of familiarity with each other. I go further to use the term to describe the growing body of participants who have been a part of the organization since its inception as "the Highlander community." Appalshop defines its community as the region of Appalachia, as well as in reference to specific locales within the region. The Village of Arts and Humanities also uses a geographic framework as its working definition of community, albeit a far more constrained one. They also use the term "the Village community" to describe the staff and participants of their programs.

Each case study has constructed a distinct approach to building community capacity and creating social change. One of these initiatives focuses directly on individual development, while the other two use

artistic production or physical design as vehicles for building capacity in the community at large. The thesis provides a thorough account of contextual influences, the initiatives' strengths and weaknesses of practice, as well as their own notions regarding successful capacity building. It also compares the initiatives thematically, identifying common features across them in respect to their ethos, their process, and their organizational structure and composition that enable (or inhibit) success. When the organizations are put into dialogue with each other, the relative strengths and weaknesses of each initiative's interpretation of the ingredients for success are revealed, as are the ramifications of their implementation in practice.

For the three final case studies, I conducted semi-structured phone and in-person interviews with staff and/or former participants (at Highlander and Appalshop, some staff had also been participants at one time and were thus able to speak to two distinct experiences). As this research topic plays out daily as a particular process of working between individuals, with communities, and with places, I felt it necessary to visit each case study site. The varying nature of each case study dictated various qualitative methods for on-site data collection.

The Highlander Research and Education Center works primarily through a residential workshop model that hinges on collective learning. As such, I attended a workshop in mid-March of 2011 called the Social Change Workshop. As a participant, I learned about the history of the organization and its ideas and methods from Highlander staff. More profoundly, I was able to see these methods in action over the course of the weekend. Additionally, I met other individuals who were attending. For this case, formal one-on-one interviews with staff would not have sufficed, as to understand how Highlander works requires an understanding of a place, a group environment and dynamic, a process, and an overarching ethos. I have threaded facets of my experiences at the workshop throughout this thesis.

What is known of Appalshop comes through the products it creates and disseminates. Its unorthodox organizational structure is partly the reason for the breadth of their production. As such, I was interested in observing the working environment of the Appalshop artists to try to discern the organizational dynamic. Additionally, because the work of Appalshop is extracted directly from its environmental, social, and economic context, I thought it important, in understanding the relevancy of its work, to see Appalshop's hometown of Whitesburg, Kentucky, feel the presence of the coal industry, and view the stark difference between the what was described to me by Appalshop member Dudley Cocke as "the rich landscape and the

poor residents" (personal communication).

The dramatic and distinct physical transformation at the Village of Arts and Humanities necessitated a visit to the Village Heart, the core of its physical development, to see how spaces are used currently, especially in juxtaposition to the surrounding streets. Being there in early March, while Philadelphia was still very much in the grip of winter, prevented me from seeing active use of most of these spaces. However, a youth participant gave me a tour of the Village, telling me personal anecdotes along the way in addition to explaining the function of each space. Upon learning that he had completed a photography course previously at the Village, I gave him control of my camera during the tour and asked him to document the places and details he thought were significant. All photographs of outdoor spaces at the Village included in this thesis were taken by my tour guide. I also attended the Art of Fashion class to observe the interaction between staff and students. During and after the class I was able to speak informally with several students.

THE AGENDA-DRIVEN CREATIVE PROCESS

A core finding of this thesis is that all three cases, representing both arts and non-arts initiatives, implement a similar process for building individual and collective capacity to implement change. Despite widely varying vehicles for capacity building, these initiatives share common components, informing an ethos and methodology, which differentiate them from other community-based initiatives. Therefore, the belief that all arts-based community initiatives have fundamentally different intentions than non-arts-based initiatives is false. This shared process spans the division between arts and non-arts initiatives, banding together a body of work that might otherwise be considered unrelated.

The shared process in question is the *creative process*. Just as capacity building has multiple definitions and applications, so too does this term. I therefore look to evidence from the case studies to determine the definition and scope of the creative process as it relates to this research. While often considered only in relation to the expression or production of art and design, this research illustrates that there are permutations of the creative process across capacity-building initiatives, regardless of whether or not they create artistic products. The creative process follows a series of steps, from *sensing* one's context to identify a challenge or subject of interest, to *envisioning* a response, to *representing* that response through production or implementation, to *sharing* the work with others. The creative process is flexible and inclusive of people,

materials, and knowledge, often in unconsidered configurations, and requires curiosity, motivation, risk-taking, and confidence from its participants. Just as this is the process used by many artists when creating artwork, so too is it a process that can be used by leaders looking to make relevant responses to core community challenges. When used collectively towards the advancement of a social agenda, the creative process has the ability to engender leadership in a place and a people where leadership might otherwise not exist.

MODELING LEADERSHIP TO BUILD LEADERSHIP

These capacity-building initiatives thus use the creative process to incubate leadership; with guidance, participants model the process leaders enact to create community change. Each of the three cases I evaluated defines success in relation to making a change in the leadership potential of those who participate. Each identified component, or "ingredient," for success works directly or indirectly to support personal journeys towards becoming community agents of change.

Some ingredients are essential to the success of a capacity-building initiative that strives to build leadership. Others were identified that, while not essential (that is, they were not apparent in all three cases), they nonetheless proved to enrich the approach. Perhaps more important than the ability to separate the essential from the non-essential ingredients is a new understanding about how these ingredients work as a system to achieve success.

In a successful capacity-building initiative, *responsibility and authorship are distributed among and shared by all participants.* Such initiatives have *leaders who guide rather than prescribe,* and *individual capacity is linked to the ability to act collectively.* These three ingredients are the essential core of a capacity-building initiative and direct personal engagement between individuals from the initiative and from the community. Such personal engagement happens within a framework wherein the *mission is powerful and inspiring, broad yet clearly defined, the initiative strives for excellence in the products created,* it *identifies, builds on, and transforms perceptions of existing community assets,* and it *undertakes projects that are responsive to local conditions and relevant to current issues.* This set of ingredients creates a process that (a) values individual ideology and expression, (b) has a social agenda, connecting projects (at least implicitly) to core community concerns, (c) strives for excellent quality and (d) is representative of a specific place and population, drawing from and

celebrating local assets. Together, the aforementioned ingredients create a democratic space and a creative process that models leadership and develops leaders.

The final ingredients for success are not essential to the core activities of a successful capacity-building initiative, but rather serve in various ways to enrich its process. When *participants collaborate and exchange with parties from elsewhere* and *the initiative disseminates knowledge*, both the capacity-building efforts within the target community as well as those of other audiences can be affected. When an initiative's *approach is multidisciplinary and addresses multiple targets*, various disciplines create multiple vehicles for learning, and the challenges of a community can be addressed holistically. Lastly, if *the initiative seeks technical, material, and financial assistance from a broad range of sources, both external and internal*, a broad base of resources can stabilize or supplement the capacity-building process.

THE CRITICAL NEED FOR THE CREATIVE PROCESS IN DISENFRANCHISED COMMUNITIES

Disenfranchised communities suffer from, among other things, the loss an ability to envision change for themselves.[1] This research does not seek to dismiss or criticize the work of external assistance providers that deliver much-needed support. However, the relationship that disenfranchised communities have to individuals, organizations, or governments that provide external assistance ultimately prolongs their dependency if ownership over idea creation is not given back to the community. Initiatives that successfully build community capacity are able to motivate individuals to take ownership of the envisioning process and make the essential link to implementation.

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1 In *The Quality of Life*, Harvard University economist Amartya Sen with co-author Martha Nussbaum state that, when assessing the socioeconomics and development of populations, measurements should emphasize functional capabilities, including the ability to: engage in economic transactions, participate in political activities, move freely from place to place with security, receive education of high quality, reason, engage in various forms of social interaction, play, control one's own material environment, feel emotions of love and gratitude, and be imaginative. He states, "What is missing for the poor is not just economic resources, but also the freedom of senses, imagination and thought" (1993).

There is added value to the process of leadership development by the incorporation of indigenous cultural expressions and artistic production. I discovered soon after initiating this research that I had no true non-arts baseline against which I could compare arts-based initiatives. The Highlander Research and Education Center, while it does not intentionally produce art, draws heavily on indigenous cultural expression to fortify its process of developing leaders and building collective agency (Carawan and Carawan 1989; Conti and Robert 1989; Sapp 1989). This is a significant realization in itself, however, as it reveals the power available to capacity-building initiatives if they are not only sensitive to existing expressions but integrate them meaningfully into individual and, especially, collective projects. All three cases intentionally draw inspiration from the indigenous expressions of their target communities to inform their own work. In doing so, they make ancestry and heritage tools for building strong, self-supporting, intergenerational community and reinforcing identity.

Artistic production provides additional benefits to initiatives that strive to build the capacity for leadership. Production processes can serve as investigatory tools for exploring one's community, and subsequently one's identity, as is the case with Appalshop. Appalshop's products, as well as some produced at the Village of Arts and Humanities, benefit the creator, as the act of disseminating one's work is an empowering process itself. Distributable products enable dissemination of a social agenda or message to an audience beyond that which individuals may be able to reach themselves. Sharing aesthetic representations of place, people, and struggle can promote empathy and understanding between disparate groups, suggesting newly realized similarities to replace presupposed differences.

The Village provides examples of added benefits through physical transformation. The transformation of space is ultimately a group activity, requiring community members to work together. In doing so, the opportunity arises to develop personal relationships. Evidence of a community fortified over time is thus evident in the physical spaces of the Village. The Village Heart, the center of the transformed neighborhood, also provides a secure, reassuring, invigorating environment for youth to step beyond their comfort zone and develop leadership capabilities.

This thesis is significant to the bodies of literature of capacity building and community-based arts. While organizations like the United Nations Development Programme explicitly use the term "capacity building," there are numerous initiatives that, working on a smaller scale and in different contexts, enact the same general principles. None of the three cases in this thesis define themselves as capacity-building initiatives. While this issue of nomenclature may not hurt the success of the initiative in accomplishing its goals, it hurts the body of literature on the subject, as potentially numerous best practices and innovative approaches within the field are overlooked.

This work helps define a sector of capacity building – capacity building for leadership – within the still disjointed and ambiguous body of literature. Its conclusions also provide evidence for broadening the accumulated knowledge of capacity building to include arts initiatives, not just as a supplement to, but as an integral part of developing leadership. Alternatively, when this thesis is placed amongst the body of art-based literature, it brings the lessons from capacity building with it, thus broadening the scope of the arts' relevance for addressing core community concerns.

This thesis unfolds much as my research progressed. Chapter Two reviews the measurements for success that narrowed the field of capacity-building initiatives down to three exemplary cases. Chapters Three, Four, and Five tell the stories of the Highlander Research and Education Center, Appalshop, and the Village of Arts and Humanities, respectively. In addition to providing background on each initiative, these chapters discuss their success, from both their perspective and against the measurements. Chapter Six weaves the case studies together into a discussion on the shared ingredients for success that were identified from my evaluation. The thesis concludes in Chapter Seven with further insight into the relationship between the creative process and leadership development, the added value of the arts to capacity building, and impediments the arts introduce to such initiatives.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS
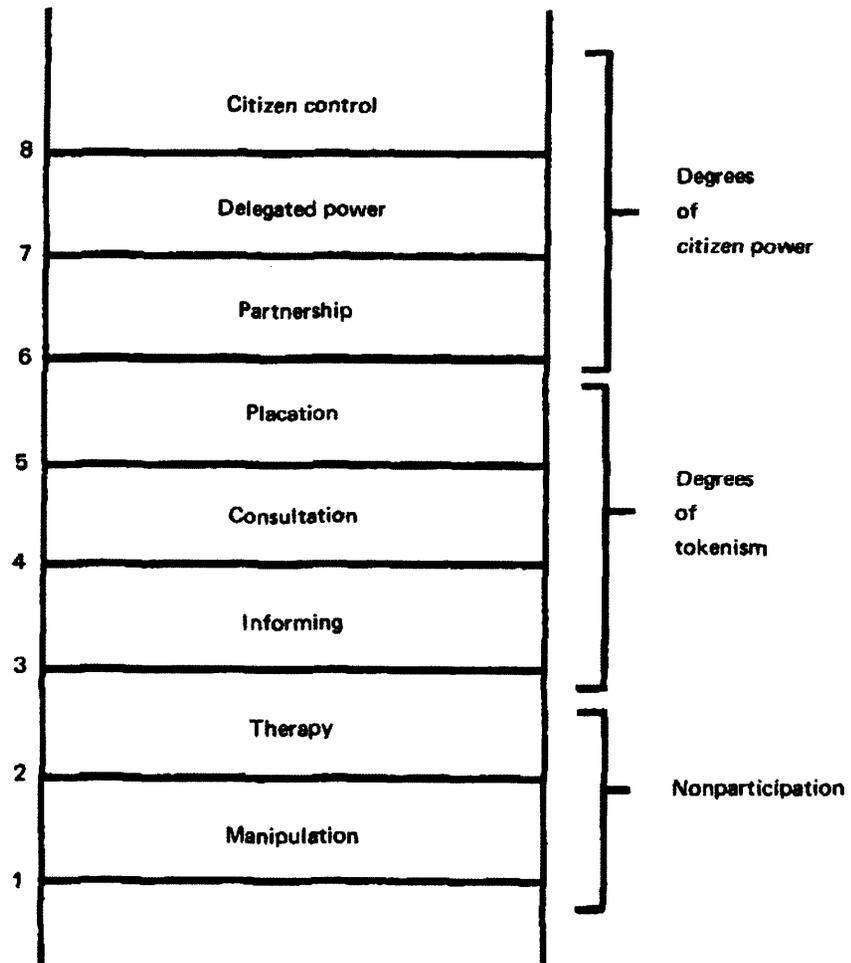
FIGURE 1:

ARNSTEIN'S LADDER OF
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
(SOURCE: ARNSTEIN 1969)

Through this investigation, I sought to discover a set of ingredients necessary for successful capacity building in a disenfranchised community, whether used by arts-based or non-arts-based initiatives. Since there is little literature on the subject, I extracted the ingredients through an analysis of contemporary initiatives. There are many such initiatives, both within the United States and abroad, which employ myriad approaches to achieve varying levels of success toward this end. To narrow the list of cases for further study, I developed a set of initial parameters. For further consideration, an initiative had to:

(1) work in a disenfranchised community long enough to see long-term effects,

(2) incorporate individuals from those communities into the process of problem identification and solution creation,

(3) embody and reflect the local, context, heritage, and people, and

(4) create an engaged and active citizenry that can themselves affect social change.

I used Sherry Arnstein's 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' to identify a base threshold for the magnitude of community involvement (See Figure 1). Arnstein's eight-tier 'ladder' visualizes the range of involvement types that could be undertaken by a government, business, or organization with respect to its community (1969, 217). An application of this ladder against a sample population of community-based organizations illuminated the degree to which community was involved in each instance. Initiatives warranting further consideration fall within the 'partnership,' 'delegated power,' and 'citizen control' rungs.

The ladder also illuminates that often-lauded community-based initiatives can fall short in regards to the degree with which they interact and involve community. Their exclusion from this thesis is not representative of my failure to acknowledge the significant work they have done and the recognition they have received; however, they are not included because of the stipulations of the parameters I have chosen.

As an example, the Center for Urban Pedagogy in New York City uses a process in which social

advocates and organizers representing various issues are linked to talented designers. Artistic products are created as a result of this collaboration, and are then used by the organizers for or with a particular community (Center for Urban Pedagogy 2010). Although the art has a pedagogical purpose and the Center for Urban Pedagogy intends to empower communities through increased access to information, community members are given solutions rather than being involved in the process of problem solving.

Two notable design and architecture organizations also fall below the threshold rung, despite their strong presence in current conversations about social relevancy and engagement within the professions. The Rural Studio, an undergraduate design-build studio at the Auburn University College of Architecture, Design, and Construction, seeks to teach undergraduate architecture students the social responsibility of the profession to provide decent living conditions for the poor (Dean and Hursley 2002, 1). Over its eighteen-year history, the program has produced nearly one hundred buildings in Hale County and the surrounding region and has several hundred alumni (Rural Studio 2010). The process of project conception and development, however, involves little significant involvement with community members. Projects are typically chosen through discussions between community groups or individuals and Rural Studio faculty, and a limited number of public design reviews are held to receive community feedback while the designs are developing. The program's time constraints (semester to year-long projects) and organizational constraints (funding by a university for the benefit of enrolled students) dictate an approach that focuses not on community capacity building but rather on (1) the education of students and (2) the final built work. Projects are designed and constructed almost entirely by students and are given as gifts to individuals or community groups.

Similarly, Public Architecture, a San Francisco-based non-profit architecture firm, seeks to build a social conscience amongst practicing architects and put "the resources of architecture in the service of the public interest" (Public Architecture "About" 2011). Their process involves the identification of significant societal challenges and the subsequent creation of design solutions. Employees of Public Architecture complete both tasks, although often in consultation with community members. Public Architecture expands their cause and acts as a model within the profession through a campaign called "the 1%," which encourages pro-bono work from practicing architects (Public Architecture "The 1%" 2011). As influential as Public

Architecture has been to change the perception of an architect's responsibilities within the profession, they have not been nearly as catalytic in the communities they work with to build capacity for long-term positive change.

I also defined a set of measurements against which I could evaluate each initiative's success at building community capacity. "Success" for such complex initiatives is multi-definitional; thus, success cannot be measured with a singular metric. By creating a set of measurements, I was able to analyze each initiative against seven measures of success. Many of the measurements overlap or have interdependencies. Nonetheless, I have attempted to determine their relative importance for successful capacity building and organized them accordingly, beginning with the most important. I worked iteratively between research on each initiative and the actual measurement framework, revising some measurements, adding new ones, and deleting others which turned out not to be important measurements for capacity building. The set that follows is in its final form.

1. THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY LEADERS.

A successful capacity-building initiative should create new leaders and develop leadership skills within existing community leaders. These initiatives redefine what leadership is and in whom it can occur, making leadership an obtainable personal goal for those who otherwise would not have considered themselves leaders. Such organizations foster self-confidence and imagination, and provide individuals with both the motivation and skills necessary for mobilizing themselves and others. Such skills may include problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, the ability to identify surrounding assets (tangible and intangible) to use, relationship-building and project management skills. Since the revitalization of a disenfranchised community may require combined efforts on multiple fronts, leadership needs to come from many individuals in many positions. The creation and continued support for community leaders is necessary for the development and sustenance of spin-off projects.

2. AN INCREASE IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

Civic engagement stems from a concern with the well-being of one's community, a desire to be informed of developments affecting one's community, and a belief that democratic participation is a necessary component of a healthy community. Capacity-building initiatives can connect individuals with community issues, not only raising their awareness of them, but also instilling in individuals a sense of responsibility to react. Such an initiative can foster the atmosphere for fuller citizenship by enabling individuals to ask questions, identify challenges, and engage in various ways with their community. Civic engagement is manifested in individuals who actively seek information, ask questions about current issues, participate in community-building activities, or challenge authority. Increased civic engagement may manifest itself in the increased attendance at town hall or city council meetings, increased voter registration, or an increase in the number and size of social initiatives. An increasingly contentious political environment could also be demonstrative of civic engagement if emerging voices are challenging the status quo. Additionally, increased civic engagement may be reflected in an increased and continuous participation in the organization itself because of the community struggles it represents.

3. A GROWING NETWORK OF PARTICIPANTS, COLLABORATORS, AND SUPPORTERS.

A capacity-building initiative geared towards change envisioned and implemented by the community has the potential to grow from one initiative to a movement of initiatives and individuals working towards various ends within a community's development. The continuous creation of new leaders can create a growing pool of individuals who are directly and indirectly linked to the capacity-building initiative. If the pool is managed well, it can serve as a network of collaborators and supporters for the initiative to leverage for support. A capacity-building initiative also has the opportunity to bring in individuals and initiatives from outside the community to offer necessary expertise and enrich initiative programs. By doing this, the initiative can (1) create a greater external awareness of the community's developments and (2) create inter-community relationships or exchanges, thus making the development of one community the responsibility and interest of others.

4. THE CREATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

Knowledge creation in capacity-building initiatives can happen when participants' experiences and knowledge are identified, reconsidered, and valued, making them leverageable assets for development. Knowledge can also be created through a participatory research process to unearth new information, or through the making of an innovative process or project. The findings of a capacity-building initiative, whether factual knowledge concerning a particular community issue or lessons learned regarding the methods it implemented, should be documented. A record of developments can allow an initiative to measure its own progress. Documentation is also a prerequisite for disseminating information about the initiative, the community, and the challenges it faces.

5. THE CREATION OF SPIN-OFF PROJECTS.

Whereas the desired outcome of initiatives that build capacity for leadership is an active citizenry, the projects that these leaders then take on are another way to measure the success of such initiatives. The creation of spin-off projects beyond the scope or immediate control of the initiative is evidence of permanent change in an individual's capacity for envisioning and implement change in his or her surroundings. Such projects carry the added benefit of expanding the goals and purpose of initiative without the additional direct investments of time, energy, and funding by the initiative. This increased return on investment can mean a greater utilization of community assets and addressing of needs.

Spin-off projects may be (but are not limited to) entrepreneurial business endeavors, artistic creations and design work, new non-profits or social organizations, or a change of course for an individual who decides to pursue higher education as a result of participation. Additionally, spin-offs may also change the physical environment. These changes may include the reuse or reconsideration of abandoned of underused spaces, new construction, landscape projects, or temporary installations. New activities or events may also come into being, thus visibly altering what happens within the physical environment. Visible change, either through the transformation of the physical environment or within it, can serve as advertisement for an initiative, notifying others of change and potentially increasing interest in the activity. Spin-offs may also

occur within the initiative itself, through the creation of intrapreneurial endeavors by community members or their inclusion on the staff or board.

6. THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE INITIATIVE.

A successful capacity-building initiative should exhibit the potential to be a long-term and effective presence in the community. Such a presence is necessary, as capacity building and democratic space-making can be slow, time-intensive, and multi-staged. Thus, an initiative's presence (even if it changes over time) is necessary to ensure a lasting, deep change in individuals and the greater community. Additionally, a sustained, dependable presence is often necessary for gaining community support and enabling the initiative to serve as a role model for spin-offs and other initiatives. A sustainable working model may be informed by the presence of key individuals, organizational culture and structure, its funding structure, partnerships, its relationship to the community, and its relevancy to current struggles or needs.

7. THE SUCCESSFUL EXECUTION OF STATED GOALS.

The initiative should have a history of successfully executing its own projects and reaching stated goals, whether they be transforming physical spaces, raising awareness of critical issues, or changing policies. The initiative should serve as a model of building capacity for leadership and creating positive change that others can look to for guidance and expertise. A successful track record is necessary for earning the confidence and trust of the community as well as growing a network of collaborators. The respect that comes with successfully executing stated goals can make the initiative and thus the community a stakeholder in municipality-wide decision-making.

CASE STUDIES OF CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVES

I analyzed and evaluated the following initiatives against the set of measurements for success described above. This list is not exhaustive; there are likely many initiatives that build community capacity successfully that are not included here. These initiatives, rather, represent a cross section of initiatives across various locations, demographics, and approaches. These case studies are described briefly below, along with

a matrix wherein I analyzed and evaluated them against the measurements.

THE ORANGI PILOT PROJECT

The Orangi Pilot Project began in 1980 under the leadership of Dr. Akhtar Hameed Khan in an outskirt of Karachi, Pakistan. A capacity-building approach was implemented in order to achieve wide-scale community development in the settlement of 1.2 million people. Through an approach of research and extension borrowed from Khan's prior experiences in rural development, community needs were identified and addressed. Needs requiring attention emerged through endogenous inquiry; the most pressing issue that initially emerged was the need for a sanitation system (Orangi Pilot Project 2010).

Local leadership was identified and developed to enable broad support for and adoption of an innovative sanitation system. Sub-populations within the community – mainly women and youth – were identified as assets with unrealized potential, and were trained to become technical experts, surveyors, architects, or even purveyors of technical assistance for others. As the Orangi Pilot Project documents and widely disseminates its processes and lessons learned, they have become a globally recognized model for community and infrastructural development (Khan 1996, 38-44, 139-145).

PARTNERS FOR URBAN KNOWLEDGE, ACTION AND RESEARCH

Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research, based in Mumbai, India, is a knowledge production organization that seeks to use research as "a tool for pedagogy, advocacy, intervention and transformation." The organization began in 2005 with the conviction that the process of research, when undertaken democratically, can become a vehicle for empowerment in disenfranchised communities (Partners for Urban Knowledge Action and Research 2009). Through the flagship Youth Fellowship Program, three hundred 'Barefoot Researchers' are annually granted one-year research positions to undertake a research project of their choosing. The program attempts to (1) introduce the process of researching to individuals, many of whom have received little formal education, to spur individual development, and also (2) create an alternative method of placed-based knowledge creation. The program is "based on the assumption that youth have an implicit knowledge of their own self, family and locality. Hence, they are most suitable to

observe and document this knowledge in any format that suits their capacity and creativity." Local and non-local expertise is brought in around various research methodologies or topics as needed. Many youth come back for further research, receive Advanced Youth Fellowships, start their own social initiatives, or go to previously inaccessible institutions of higher education (2010).

THE SOUTHERN MUTUAL HELP ASSOCIATION

In 1969, The Southern Mutual Help Association began in response to inadequate living conditions in the sugar cane fields of Louisiana. It began by organizing a series of self-help, low-income housing efforts, eventually securing the first Community Development Block Grant for a rural area in the country and replicating this model in dozens of rural communities in the state. Today, the organization works "...to build healthy prosperous rural communities in Louisiana...through people's growth in their own empowerment and the just management of resources" (Southern Mutual Help Association "SMHA's Mission" 2010). Guided by director Lorna Bourg, a Macarthur Genius Award recipient, the Southern Mutual Help Association engages with fishers, row crop farmers, families looking to become homeowners, and youth in a nine parish region around its headquarters in New Iberia, Louisiana (Southern Mutual Help Association "Awards" 2010). It approaches community and economic development through a three-prong approach of building individual economic assets, educating families to improve their economic health, and advocacy for policy change. The Southern Mutual Help Association organizes several programs geared at building leadership within communities, pairing this training with technical assistance and support. Additionally, the organization has an extensive network of collaborators across the South to create significant impact in resources and policy change (Southern Mutual Help Association "Program Summary" 2010).

THE WEST PHILADELPHIA LANDSCAPE PROJECT

The West Philadelphia Landscape Project began in 1987 as an urban greening project and an investigation into the potential of vacant land in West Philadelphia neighborhoods for concurrently restoring the natural and built environments (Spirn 2005, 400). As the project matured, multiple communities - neighborhood residents, middle-school students, university professors and students, gardeners, and public

officials - were brought together into conversations about landscape literacy, community development, environmental justice, urban gardening, and community education (401-407). The initiative produced landscape designs and used web design and photography with it various constituents. Today, the West Philadelphia Landscape Project is assisting the Philadelphia Water Department in it efforts to envision a city-wide green infrastructure system (West Philadelphia Landscape Project 2011).

STUDIO H (WITHIN PROJECT H)

Project H is a network of architects and designers in selected cities across North America who strive to co-design and co-create with community members, using "the power of the design process to catalyze communities and public education from within" to produce design solutions tailored to community needs (Project H "Our Mission" 2010). Emily Pilloton, Project H's founder and current director, initiated Studio H in 2010, a year-long design/build program for high school-aged youth in rural Bertie County, North Carolina with the intention to "spark rural community development through real-world, built projects" (Studio H "About" 2010). Students learn critical-thinking and design skills, vocational and construction skills, and intra-personal skills. In its inaugural year, students have designed and built cornhole boards (a lawn game), chicken coops, and a community market space.

THE HIGHLANDER RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER

Formerly known as the Highlander Folk School, the Tennessee-based organization has worked in the South and Appalachia since 1932 "with people fighting for justice, equality and sustainability, supporting their efforts to take collective action to shape their own destiny" (Highlander Research and Education Center "About Us" 2010). Rooted in the ideology of its founder, Myles Horton, the organization supports the struggles of communities to make positive social change through a popular education approach that incorporates participatory action research and cultural organizing. By developing both community leaders and regional networks, Highlander has played a significant role in the labor rights movement of the 1930s and 1940s, the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, the endemic environmental struggles of Appalachians beginning in the 1960s, and the growing and varied social, economic, and environmental

struggles faced by contemporary rural communities, communities of color, and a burgeoning Southern immigrant population (Highlander Research and Education Center "History" 2010).

APPALSHOP

Appalshop has grown from its modest beginnings as a War on Poverty-initiated vocational training program for filmmaking in 1969 to a regional, multi-disciplinary arts production and cultural center today (Lewis 1990, 80). Through radio, film, music, theater, and other arts, Appalshop sheds light on the struggles of Appalachians, provides vehicles for popular expression, celebrates regional cultural heritage, and collaborates with organizations and individuals from within and from outside the region to support local struggles and participate in conversations of national and global relevance (Appalshop "About Us" 2010). Bill Richardson, Appalshop's founder, treated the first high school-aged students as equals, and since then the eastern-Kentucky-based organization has always dispersed leadership and responsibility amongst its participants (Barret, personal communication). Today, Appalshop operates as something of a collective, giving each artist significant autonomy and responsibility for his or her own work.

THE VILLAGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

What began as artist Lily Yeh's personal vision in 1985 to turn an abandoned urban lot into an art park with the assistance of a few local children and adults has grown both physically and programmatically into "a vital urban village" intending to "build community through innovative arts, educational, social, construction and economic development programs and to do justice to the humanity of people who live in inner city North Philadelphia or similar urban situations" (The Village of Arts and Humanities "About Us" 2010). The Village now owns fifty-six parcels of land and seven buildings, and maintains an additional eighty-seven lots of city-owned abandoned land (Grimaldi Feedback on Vacant-lot Fund Cut 2010). Once-vacant parcels are now art parks, a tree farm, vegetable and floral gardens, and abandoned buildings have been redeveloped into an arts and education center, a crafts studio, a café, and living spaces (The Village of Arts and Humanities 2009). A wide selection of after-school arts-based and leadership courses are offered for local youth (The Village of Arts and Humanities "About Us" 2010).

The information I discovered for each initiative with respect to the measurements was compiled into a matrix (included on the pages that follow), which allowed me to compare the initiatives. To complete this evaluation, I studied available literature (books, journals, newspapers, articles) audiovisual material (films, videos, and radio stories about or by the initiative), and online resources (the initiatives' websites, Facebook pages, and blogs, as well as those of collaborative partners and funders). The case studies warranting further investigation filled out the matrix more thoroughly relative to other cases. The Highlander Research and Education Center, Appalshop, and the Village of Arts and Humanities are highly successful case studies that collectively represent a spectrum of approaches to capacity building (these approaches are discussed following the matrix). I was also able to identify common features that all or many of them possessed. These "ingredients" of success are discussed at length in Chapter Six.

MEASUREMENT **NO. 1**:
THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT
OF COMMUNITY LEADERS.

ORANGI PILOT
PROJECT

- Youth are targeted to become community surveyors and technical assistance providers as a part of the Low Cost Housing Program. They have mapped and documented infrastructure in 438 of the city's 844 settlements and most of the drainage channels of the city [Orangi Pilot Project 2010].
- Women are integral to the OPP's health education programs. They are trained as vaccinators and birth attendants and work in mobile teams, each covering an area of 10- 20 lanes (Khan 1996, 82).
- Students from Orangi who have received college degrees can return and start new schools through the OPP. These entrepreneurial educators are given grants to start up these endeavors. 472 schools have been started or supported in the past 15 years [Orangi Pilot Project 2010].

PARTNERS
FOR URBAN
KNOWLEDGE,
ACTION AND
RESEARCH

- Many of the Youth Fellows return for Advanced Youth Fellowships, to be "catalysts," and even to be fellowship coordinators. Others have started their own social initiatives and non-governmental organizations, gone to previously unaccessible institutions of higher education, been hired to do research for other enterprises, or changed career paths because of their experience with PUKAR [Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research 2009).

SOUTHERN MUTUAL
HELP ASSOCIATION

- The Public Policy Leadership Institute "works to increase community involvement, particularly among marginalized citizens in economically distressed areas."
- By providing technical assistance to self-help associations, SMHA provides the necessary tools and information for individuals to take on leadership roles in their own communities.
- SMHA organizes a number of initiatives aimed at youth development. Opportunities are created for youth in the Federation to learn about academic, research, and problem-solving skills, health awareness, and personal and social development.
- A Homeowners' Association promotes leadership development in first time homeowners who have purchased a home through SMHA [Southern Mutual Help Association "Program Summary" 2010).

WEST PHILADELPHIA
LANDSCAPE
PROJECT

- Sulzberger Middle School (SMS) students became local experts and advisors on water and landscape issues, the history of their neighborhood, and their political, social and demographic context.
- University of Pennsylvania students were taken out of their studios and became teachers and guides for Sulzberger students,
- The significance of community gardeners' presence increased, and the community's acknowledgement of the importance of their work increased.

- Studio H claims and hopes to support the growth of potential community leaders by giving students an expansive skill set that can be applicable to a diversity of future endeavors and career paths.
- The program does not explicitly link its pedagogy to a broader social agenda, however, as other initiatives on this list do. Due to the age of the organization, it is too soon to evaluate the creation of new community leaders.

- Seeds of Fire is a youth leadership program that provides the skills and support for youth from the South to develop as community leaders. An annual summer camp at Highlander is followed up with outreach and field visits.
- Threads is a five-year, multi-racial, inter-generational leadership school that trains adults across the South who are involved with economic justice work.
- Highlander recently began work on an Immigrant Leadership Development Program.

- The original film workshop enabled young participants from the region the opportunity to play leading roles in an emerging regional movement for re-thinking Appalachia as a place for living and working, and with a heritage to celebrate. They became the trainers of subsequent groups of participants.
- Today, the Appalachian Media Institute is explicitly about developing leadership in youth from the region to challenge the unspoken injustices occurring in the region.

- Stories about those who developed as leaders during the Village's early years are well known by current participants. JoJo Williams and James "Big Man" Maxton are two such examples.
- The Village organizes a Teen Leadership Corps which offers weekly activities for selected "future leaders" to develop leadership and entrepreneurial skills. They participate in workshops, projects, summer internships with designated mentors, and organized trips to cultural events and institutions (The Village of Arts and Humanities 2010).
- As many of the youth come from surrounding neighborhoods, they are believed to be the representative of their community, bringing the interests of the neighbors to the Village.

MEASUREMENT **NO. 2**:

AN INCREASE IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

ORANGI PILOT
PROJECT

- In order for a block to participate in the Low-cost Sanitation Program, everyone on the block has to agree to participate. Existing organizers on each block are identified to organize their neighbors. Thus, each individual is participating in a collective effort to improve both their own physical space and that of the shared street.
- Women and youth - two groups who are not traditionally a part of civic life or formal economic activity - are given critical roles for developing the neighborhood. They become local sources of knowledge that their neighbors rely on (Orangi Pilot Project 2010).

PARTNERS
FOR URBAN
KNOWLEDGE,
ACTION AND
RESEARCH

- As a part of the PUKAR Youth Fellowship, researchers interact with their communities in a way they have not previously. They actively search out information by doing surveys, holding workshops, and interviewing residents and stakeholders.
- Their research is often presented to relevant public agencies and governments or private companies. The relevancy of the research undertaken means that the findings are often applicable to and useful for decision makers (Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research 2009).

SOUTHERN MUTUAL
HELP ASSOCIATION

- The SMHA operates the Public Policy Leadership Institute to increase civic involvement. According to their website, one way this is done through the delivery of a compact disc which teaches how to recognize issues, believe in one's abilities, and then do something about it (one disc is for adults, one is for youth).
- Part of the Rural Recovery Response program (for post-hurricane recovery) is the training of individuals to know what funds they are entitled to, and how to act as their own advocates to get their message across at the local, state, and federal levels (Southern Mutual Help Association 2010).

WEST PHILADELPHIA
LANDSCAPE
PROJECT

- Sulzberger students became local experts advocates for their neighborhood and for water and urban landscape issues.
- Members of the Mill Creek Coalition began to work with the Philadelphia Water Department.

- Project H increases, or at least illuminates, the civic engagement of its body of designers. Due to the age of Studio H, it is too soon to gauge an enduring increase in the civic engagement of its members or the community. However, through the design/build project curriculum, students undertake investigative work, requiring them to engage with community members in order to discern feasible design solutions to current community issues (Studio H 2010).

STUDIO H
(PROJECT H
DESIGN)

- Over its history, Highlander has provided groups of individuals - labor union leaders, civil rights activists, environmentalists, immigrants, youth - with the leadership skills they need to engage effectively in conversations and actions of civic concern.
- In 1961, referencing the movement of Citizenship Schools Highlander initiated, Horton stated, "Well, of course, the teacher must start where the man is. But at the same time he is thought always in terms of what he can become..We are getting results not only in terms of reading and writing but in terms of intelligent first-class citizens - hundreds and hundreds of them - simply because we began by assuming that they could be citizens" (Tjerandsen 2003).

THE HIGHLANDER
RESEARCH AND
EDUCATION CENTER

- Initially, Appalshop was a way for civically minded individuals from the region to stay in the region and engage in local and regional events and issues. Early participants were able to remain in the region and produce meaningful work that pushed, questioned, or celebrated regional culture.
- Interns in the Appalachian Media Institute have the opportunity to explore their surroundings, see the value of local heritage, and uncover information about their particular topics of interest.
Roadside Theater uses performances start conversations about contentious or uncomfortable issues, and engages the audience with story circles afterwards to share personal stories and collectively organize against particular struggles (Cocke, personal communication).

APPALSHOP

- By linking art projects to social concerns, youth are able to formulate and express personal opinions and represent their thoughts through various artistic media. A digital media piece that youth from the Village created for the nation-wide "If I Had A Trillion Dollars" competition, which asked youth what they would do with the trillion dollars spent by the federal government on war in Iraq and Afghanistan, won first place (American Friends Service Committee 2010).
- The active maintenance, development, and care for reclaimed spaces seems to support a notion that individuals have an increased concern and interest for their neighborhood, or at least provides way a way to visually represent the concern that already exists.

THE VILLAGE
OF ARTS AND
HUMANITIES

MEASUREMENT **NO. 3**:
A GROWING NETWORK OF
PARTICIPANTS, COLLABORATORS,
AND SUPPORTERS.

ORANGI PILOT
PROJECT

- The programs of the OPP have spread throughout most of the 1.2 million person settlement. Participants include youth, women, and existing business owners.
- The OPP also builds partnerships with the government to support and provide the necessary overhead for their projects.
- Institution building has been a large focus of the OPP's recent work. The Community Development Network comprises fifty partnering non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations (mostly from the Sindh and Punjab provinces), and facilitates organizational strengthening, mutual assistance, and collective learning (Orangi Pilot Project 2010).

PARTNERS
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KNOWLEDGE,
ACTION AND
RESEARCH

- PUKAR staff bring in relevant expertise when necessary regarding various topics or research methods as needed. In doing so, they create an expanding network of individuals and organizations that support PUKAR (Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research 2009).

SOUTHERN MUTUAL
HELP ASSOCIATION

- SMHA has worked with many other development organizations throughout the South. In 2002, it institutionalized these collaborations with the creation of the Building Rural Communities Collaboration.
- SMHA is working with local row crop farmers state wide (who are at risk for losing the livelihood due to agribusiness) to transition to sustainable agriculture. SMHA has partnered with: Louisiana nonprofits, universities and environmental groups, organic farmers, and direct markets.
- SMHA initiated new models of cooperation between back and other organizations (churches, nonprofits) and was selected to be part of a new partnership model between the USDA, LISC, the Federal Home Loan Bank, Fannie Mae, and a local bank (Southern Mutual Help Association 2010).

WEST PHILADELPHIA
LANDSCAPE
PROJECT

- WPLP's collaborators include: Aspen Farms Community Garden, Sulzberger Middle School, the Mill Creek Coalition, the Philadelphia Water Department, Philadelphia Green, University of Pennsylvania (both the Department of Landscape Architecture and the Center for Community Partnerships), and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- As WPLP matured, more groups were woven into its work.

- Studio H continues to involve various local individuals in its efforts, including local school teachers and craftsmen. They also pull from a network of designers to assist with critiques and guest lectures, including instructors from the departments of Architectural Technology and Fine Art, and Graphic Design and Advertising, at Pitt Community College in Greenville, North Carolina (Studio H 2010).

- Awareness of Highlander historically has grown through word-of-mouth communication. Those who attended a workshop often returned to their communities, telling their experiences to others who would then attend. This is apparent in the beginnings of the Citizenship School movement on the Sea Islands of North Carolina.
- Those who attend Highlander understand or come to know that social change and organizing are collective activities, thus requiring them to engage others in their communities.

- The first collaborators were those who joined and stayed within the organization, expanding the film workshop into a cultural and media arts center.
- Today, Appalshop collaborates with other socially-active groups in the regional, including Highlander and Kentuckians for the Commonwealth.
- Roadside Theater has developed multi-year collaborations with the Free Southern Theater in New Orleans, Pregones Theater in the Bronx, and Native American artists in Zuni, New Mexico (Roadside Theater 2001).

- The Village spearheaded Shared Prosperity, a collaborative planning process between ten organizations and numerous local residents, to focus on the economic and physical development of the neighborhood around the Village.
- The Village occasionally collaborates with artists, arts, or environmental groups from within Philadelphia or beyond. They do not participate in any long-term collaborations like those that occur at Highlander, Appalshop, or the West Philadelphia Landscape Project.
- Spells Writing Center recently opened a studio in the Village and offers creative writing workshops for children and their families (Grimaldi, personal communication).

MEASUREMENT **NO. 4**:

THE CREATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

ORANGI PILOT

PROJECT

- Through a model of action research and extension that meaningfully engages residents throughout Orangi, the OPP has created knowledge about the settlement *with* residents. Researchers (including residents) discovered what the most critical challenges residents faced were, and how much they could contribute (financially, through manual labor, and through their local knowledge). The OPP then developed a technology for water sanitation that was both affordable for residents that they were capable of installing (Orangi Pilot Project 2010).
- The institution documents its findings and innovative processes, making it possible to share their knowledge with others attempting similar capacity-building or infrastructural projects (Khan 1996).

PARTNERS

FOR URBAN

KNOWLEDGE,

ACTION AND

RESEARCH

- Youth from disenfranchised communities of Mumbai are the vehicles for knowledge creation. In choosing a research topic that is of personal significance and is relevant to their communities, they create and document knowledge that enables personal growth and has the potential to inform and better their communities.
- Knowledge is documented and represented through a variety of formats, from audio recordings, to videos, to papers or newspaper articles (Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research 2009).

SOUTHERN MUTUAL

HELP ASSOCIATION

- The initiative was one of the first initiatives nation-wide to undertake the work it does, access certain funding sources, and develop new forms of collaboration. It has thus created knowledge about how to be a high-functioning organization.
- Participants (farmers, homeowners, etc) do create knowledge, however. Instead, SMHA provides them with the necessary information to make informed decisions and take strategic action.

WEST PHILADELPHIA

LANDSCAPE

PROJECT

- Numerous publications and reports have been created and disseminated on how the WPLP reads and understands urban landscapes, restores natural environmental assets to the neighborhood, and concurrently undertakes community development
- The digital database contained knowledge previously known but perhaps not framed specifically in relation to Mill Creek. Efforts were made to make the database accessible on personal computers as well, thus enabling access by organizations and residents (Spirn 2005).

- Studio H disseminates information about its activities through a blog. Pilloton also travels the country extensively, speaking at various conferences and symposiums.

- Participatory action research and popular education methods seek to discover knowledge from the experiences of participants. As such, each workshop that occurs at Highlander has the potential to produce new knowledge.
- There is not a defined system for documenting this knowledge, however. Over the years, numerous books and articles have been written about Highlander's work. However, there is no system for learning about Highlander's current knowledge pursuits for those other than those who participate.

- Participatory action research is used in many of Appalshop's media projects.
- The use of media by participants provides an opportunity to critically sense their environs and enables the creation or discovery of knowledge. Such knowledge is captured and recorded in their films, songs, radio programs, photographs, and theatrical performances.

- Through opportunities presented in arts and leadership courses, youth are able to engage with their neighborhood, and analyze and synthesize the knowledge they have acquired.
The documentation of knowledge that the Village creates is not made readily available for the public, or even for participants.
- The Village has developed a working base of knowledge as to how a neighborhood can be physically redeveloped from internal efforts. The Village is looked to as an alternative model for neighborhood revitalization.

MEASUREMENT **NO. 5**:

THE CREATION OF SPIN-OFF

PROJECTS.

ORANGI PILOT

PROJECT

- The growth of the OPP depends on the buy-in of Orangi residents, since the organization asks that they provide manual labor, time, and/or the funding to complete a portion of the work.
- The visual transformation of Orangi, made possible by residents (without the expectation of assistance from the government) has motivated residents in neighboring settlements in Karachi to undertake the same infrastructure upgrades, despite not being under the aegis of the OPP.
- Two programs, one in Orangi and one in nearby Gadap, have begun to assist in the technical training of youth to become architects and technical advisors and strengthen housing support services.
- The Orangi Welfare Trust, which began grass roots community development in Orangi in 1998, was inspired by the OPP and the philosophy of Khan (Orangi Pilot Project 2010).

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ACTION AND

RESEARCH

- Some graduates of the PUKAR Youth Fellowship go on to start their own social enterprises and non-governmental organizations. Others go on to college or additional schooling that they otherwise would not have considered or had the credentials to attend.
- Some former fellows return to do additional research or become paid employees of PUKAR as coordinators or catalysts (Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research 2009).

SOUTHERN MUTUAL

HELP ASSOCIATION

- SMHA supported the creation of four separate self-help organizations in West St. Mary Parish, which then together created a Federation to assist each other meet common goals. SMHA supplied assistance that enabled the Federation to start its own housing and education activities.
- SMHA is working to transition row crop farmers (mainly producing sugar cane) to sustainable agriculture that not only uses more sustainable growing practices but also ensures a dependable long-term livelihood for farming families. To do so, SMHA provides technical assistance and leadership training to farmers. This model is similar to Highlander's Citizenship Schools, as farmers then become teachers for others (Southern Mutual Help Association 2010).

WEST PHILADELPHIA

LANDSCAPE

PROJECT

- Ideas from *A Framework for Action* (1991), and potentially the ideas generated in the recent MIT course 'Water, Landscape, and Urban Design,' influenced the Philadelphia Water Department's new 'Green City, Clean Waters' program.
- Some of the Sulzberger students came back to the program to assist as interns and/or sought further schooling for graphic andweb design.
- Further collaborations with other community groups were made possible as a result of WPLP's program with SMS.
- Teachers at SMS began developing or reorganizing their curricula to link into and expand off of WPLP's work and pedagogy.

- The multi-nodal Project H is essentially comprised of the projects that have spun off from the original efforts. Studio H, however, is too young to produce spin-offs, as at the time of writing it has not yet completed its inaugural year, and there are no graduates of the program.

- Since Highlander's own "projects" are the individuals who participate in a Highlander workshop, the spin-offs are the projects that participants initiate after returning to their communities. These individuals, over the organization's history, have changed company policies, federal and state laws, industry practices, and challenged numerous other injustices.

- Appalshop has generated a number of spin-off projects, both within its first few years and throughout its history, that are housed within the organization as new projects and divisions.
- The Summit City Cafe opened in Whitesburg in 2007 as a result of Appalshop's presence. It too caters to a relatively progressive market.
- The Center for Rural Strategies is based in Whitesburg, and four out of its seven employees are former Appalshop members.
- The Cowan Creek Mountain Music School also began because of the popularity of Appalshop's Traditional Music Project.

- Each additional transformation of a parcel or a building was a spin-off of the first projects of Lily Yeh, as each one required ongoing or additional energy and efforts from community residents and other collaborators.
- According to former managing director Heidi Warren, "the result [of Village activities] for many was heightened pride and a new, more optimistic view of the future. This led some participants to make major changes in their lives, to break free from addiction, to gain economic independence, to buy their own home, to improve their education, to seek new opportunities for their children" (Rudy Bruner Foundation 2001).

MEASUREMENT **NO. 6**:
THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE
INITIATIVE.

ORANGI PILOT
PROJECT

- The OPP has been in existence continuously since 1980. Since then, it has been replicated in 419 other Karachi settlements, 23 other cities, and 85 villages in Pakistan (Orangi Pilot Project 2010).
- The OPP is historically resistant to taking funding from external sources. Knowing that it did not have such financial backing, it was challenged to look for infrastructural solutions that could be afforded by local residents. Thus, such an infrastructure project could hypothetically continue without the guidance of the OPP, given that the technical assistance and necessary materials are available (Khan 1996).

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ACTION AND
RESEARCH

- Projects stay relevant by addressing critical concerns shared by researchers and others in their communities. The information produced is thus meaningful and useful to themselves, their community, and often to other topically-similar agencies.
- Annual staff retreats are held to enhance inter-personal relationships and facilitate team building. The current activities of PUKAR are critically assessed, and PUKAR's methods and processes are refined moving forward.
- PUKAR is funded almost entirely by the Sir Ratan Tata Trust, a large and well-known philanthropic organization in India.

SOUTHERN MUTUAL
HELP ASSOCIATION

- SMHA has been in existence continuously since 1969, beginning as a collective of homeowner associations.
- The organization stays relevant by responding to emerging concerns, injustices, and struggles from an ever-changing demographic, including those around hurricane relief, predatory lending, neighborhood revitalization, and the fishing industry in the wake of the British Petroleum Oil Spill.
- Funding for SMHA historically depends on the generosity of individuals and organizations for donations. The Rural Recovery Response program was the first time the organization had ever accessed federal funding (Southern Mutual Help Association 2010).

WEST PHILADELPHIA
LANDSCAPE
PROJECT

- WPLP remains relevant, as the broad issues it defines itself against are still very much unsettled. The WPLP will continue to remain relevant to Philadelphia, as the City has recently undertaken a massive project of 'green' water infrastructure.
- Between sectors and organizations - between public city departments, residents, nonprofits - Spirn was the liaison. No one doing work with WPLP had been there for as long as she had and had earned the trust of these respective groups. Thus, when she left for MIT in 2000, there was an unease and unfamiliarity with each other, and this slowed progress on the project.
- Funding ebbed and flowed as institutional and grant funding came and went.

- Studio H is sustainable for the near future. Grant funding and its directing instructors are stable and committed for the time being. For the long-term, however, there appears to be no thought has to how Studio H will (a) maintain itself should Pilloton and Miller leave, and (b) expand, both within Bertie County or perhaps in surrounding counties and other Project H chapters.

- Highlander has reinvented itself over the course of its history, staying on the edge of burgeoning social movements. In the past five years it has increasingly taken on environmental sustainability and justice issues. It acquired a 500-tree orchard recently and hopes to make the farm a productive landscape, responding to a need to learn and disseminate knowledge on land stewardship.
- Highlander receives a substantial proportion of its annual funding from private donations and "no strings attached" foundations (relative to the other initiatives on this list). This enables Highlander to stay relevant to the specific needs of participants, and provides a more stable funding pool (Williams, personal communication Feb 23, 2011).

- The organization has consistently produced high quality projects and remained relevant to its community by responding to changes in its cultural, economic, and political context.
- Many of the staff have committed several decades to Appalshop. How Appalshop will transition into new leadership is a question that remains unanswered.
- Leadership and decision-making responsibilities are shared by the employees of Appalshop.
- Appalshop's funding is heavily skewed towards arts foundations, which may make it vulnerable as arts funding has been reduced over the past decades (Cocke, personal communication).

- The Village was spearheaded by Yeh until 2002, when a new executive director was transitioned in. Knowing that Yeh would not and should not be the director indefinitely, she and the staff planned ahead of time for her departure. The board was re-envisioned to be an advisory board with external members having various fields of expertise. (Rudy Bruner Foundation 2001). A system of distributed responsibility means that less reliance is placed on the presence and capabilities of one person.
- The Village relies predominantly on funding from arts and horticultural foundations or organizations. The City's funding for vacant-lot maintenance, a source the Village relied on for its own physical maintenance programs, was cut severely in 2010 (Grimaldi 2010).

MEASUREMENT **NO. 7**:

THE SUCCESSFUL EXECUTION OF

STATED GOALS.

ORANGI PILOT

PROJECT

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RESEARCH

SOUTHERN MUTUAL

HELP ASSOCIATION

WEST PHILADELPHIA

LANDSCAPE

PROJECT

- The OPP began with the broad goal of encouraging the development of abilities and activities already present in the Orangi community as a means for improving community well-being and living standards. More specific goals were established (first, to provide better sanitation to residents, and later to improve education and health resources, as well as provide improved low-cost building supplies and methods), These goals continue to be met, as residents of Orangi and beyond work to provide such things to their neighborhoods and blocks.

- PUKAR guides Barefoot Researchers through the process of knowledge creation and links them to various outlets (white papers, internet-based reports, magazines, television, conferences) and networks (academic, public and private sector policy-making). Since 2005, over 1800 youth, the majority from marginalized communities, have had year-long research positions. Hundreds of research projects have been completed in the areas of education, health, gender, sexuality, the environment, culture, and media (Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research 2009).

- Over its history, the Southern Mutual Help Association has succeeded in creating "healthy, prosperous rural communities in Louisiana" through low-income, self-help housing projects; education and job training; or campaigns for policy change (Southern Mutual Help Association "SHMA's Mission" 2010).
- To stay relevant to emerging post-disaster needs, the organization initiated the Rural Recovery Response program in 2005.

- The initial phase of WPLP sought to demonstrate the value of the buried Mill Creek and thus influence the Philadelphia Water Department to incorporate it into their plans. This failed (although the PWD is now seeking assistance from the WPLP for their new city-wide watershed program, which is very much in the vein of WPLP's initial suggestions.
- University students and gardeners designed and built community gardens.
- The WPLP implemented a middle school curriculum, which taught landscape literacy.
- The WPLP advanced research and produced new knowledge in the fields of landscape architecture, urban planning, community development, and popular education.

- Studio H's goal for its first year was to complete a series of projects aimed at developing critical design competency. After an initial 'design bootcamp,' students designed and built a trio of increasingly complex projects: a cornhole board (one per student), a chicken coop (two per class), and finally an open-air market.

- Highlander had so much success organizing labor union leaders in the 1930s that it became the official training center for the Congress of Industrial Organizations.
- After working on in the Citizenship Schools on the Sea Islands for three years, the voting rate for the 1958 state election among African-American residents was 100% (Conti 1989).
- Communities across Appalachia that fought against illegal toxic dumping (like the community in Bumpass Cove, Tennessee) and other man-made environmental disasters were successful in their campaigns.

- Appalshop succeeds in recording the critical issues and important cultural traditions of the region. It also succeeds in telling the stories of the people, not those of the commercial culture or big industry. The stories told through films, theater performances, and on WMMT come from residents and are told by residents of Appalachia.
- Appalshop supports communities' efforts to challenge injustices by aiding their causes and increasing their visibility with media, the arts, and advocacy work.
- Appalshop participates regional, national, an international dialogues through collaborative projects.

- The Village has definitely "transformed the neighborhood into a vital urban village" (The Village of Arts and Humanities "About Us" 2010). The physical environment denotes a space that is welcoming of neighborhood residents and represents the energy and care they have given.
- Arts and leadership programming also enables youth to see their neighborhood and themselves differently, as they discover the potential they and their community hold.
- Given the gravity and variety of problems in the North Philadelphia, there seems to be still so much that the Village has not affected. The streets bordering the Village Heart, for example, are physically in poor condition and are considered dangerous by Village participants.

The aforementioned initiatives vary widely in their geographic scope, community demographics, organizational frameworks, tools and outputs. Despite this, I identified four distinct approaches to capacity building. The types of approaches described below were determined based on the vehicles used to build community capacity:

CAPACITY BUILDING THROUGH ARTISTIC PRODUCTION.

These initiatives build community capacity through the incorporation of individuals into the process of envisioning and creating artistic works. The product itself thus becomes the co-product to or byproduct of individual growth. Products created from such endeavors could include any of the visual (photography, film, sculpture, painting, theater), audio (radio, musical performance), or digital arts (web or graphic design). Studio H, the West Philadelphia Landscape Project, Appalshop, and the Village of Arts and Humanities use this approach.

CAPACITY BUILDING THROUGH PHYSICAL TRANSFORMATION.

Initiatives of this type build community capacity by addressing the physical needs of the community. Through meaningful incorporation of community members in the processes of envisioning, developing, and/or constructing physical transformation, social development can occur simultaneously. Various disciplines may be utilized in such a process, including architecture, landscape architecture, planning, engineering, and the arts. Transformed spaces can serve as visual representation of a transformed population and are spaces of community pride. While the needs addressed through physical transformation were markedly different in the communities of the Orangi Pilot Project, the West Philadelphia Landscape Project, and the Village of Arts and Humanities, all rely partly on this approach. Although in its infancy, Studio H has scaled up from the production of smaller products to the creation of community space.

CAPACITY BUILDING THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIVIDUALS.

These initiatives consciously pursue the discovery or creation of new knowledge as a means of empowering individuals. In this approach, community members are not simply the recipients of knowledge,

but the discoverers of it. This distinction is critical, as these initiatives are not only providing instruction (which could be described as a transfer of knowledge), but are rather engaging individuals in the active pursuit and creation of knowledge. Many of the aforementioned initiatives incorporate knowledge creation into their process. Participants of Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research use a rich variety of research methods to make discoveries about the communities they come from. The Orangi Pilot Project, the West Philadelphia Landscape Project, and the Highlander Research and Education Center incorporate participatory action research into their programs. Appalshop uses films and other media to make and document discoveries about Appalachia.

CAPACITY BUILDING THROUGH KNOWLEDGE CREATION.

Such initiatives focus directly on the mental, ontological, and psychological development of the individual. While these initiatives may incorporate various artistic or cultural components into their programs, the actual output is not the art but rather the individual. Of the initiatives listed above, the Southern Mutual Help Association and the Highlander Research and Education Center base their approaches on individual transformation. While Partners for Urban Knowledge, Action and Research, the West Philadelphia Landscape Project, Appalshop, and the Village of Arts and Humanities produce other types of products, all incorporate individual development into their processes.

Many of the aforementioned initiatives use multiple approaches for building capacity. The development of hybrid approaches enables the identification of similarities between initially disparate initiatives. Rather than seeing initiatives thus as design-based, arts-based, or non-arts-based, what emerged was a spectrum of approaches, disproving the division between arts-based and non-arts-based initiatives that is often created.

KNOWLEDGE CREATION

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AND RESESARCH

HIGHLANDER
RESEARCH AND
EDUCATION
CENTER

APPALSHOP

WEST
PHILADELPHIA
LANDSCAPE
PROJECT

ARTS
CREATION

INDIVIDUAL
DEVELOPMENT

SOUTHERN MUTUAL
HELP ASSOCATION

THE VILLAGE OF
ARTS AND
HUMANITIES

STUDIO H

ORANGI PILOT PROJECT

PHYSICAL
TRANSFORMATION
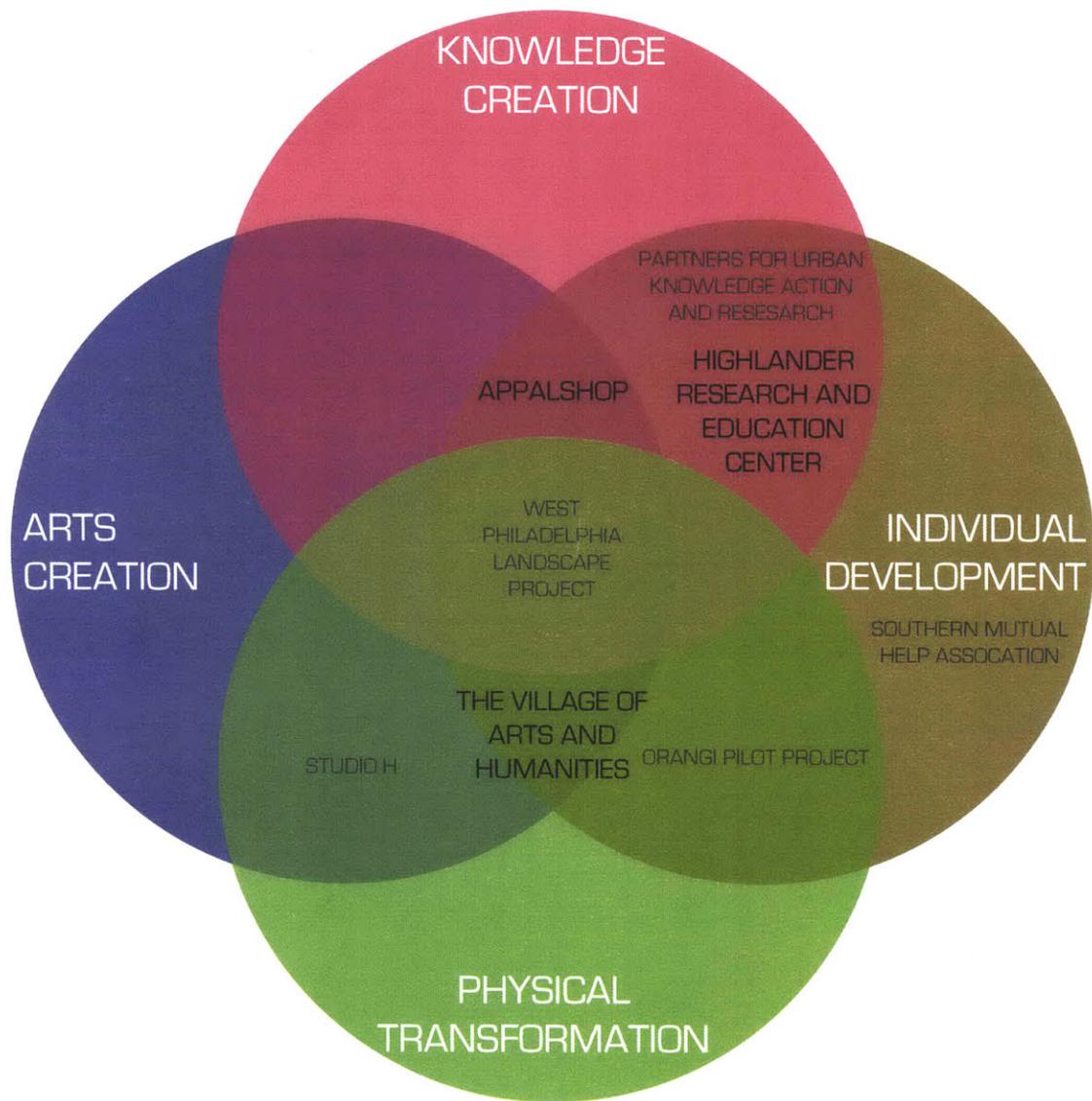
FIGURE 2:

DIAGRAM OF APPROACHES
AND HYBRID APPROACHES
TO CAPACITY BUILDING
(CREATED BY AUTHOR)

THE HIGHLANDER RESEARCH
AND EDUCATION CENTER

"Highlander serves as a catalyst for grassroots organizing and movement building in Appalachia and the South. We work with people fighting for justice, equality and sustainability, supporting their efforts to take collective action to shape their own destiny. Through popular education, participatory research, and cultural work, we help create spaces – at Highlander and in local communities – where people gain knowledge, hope and courage, expanding their ideas of what is possible. We develop leadership and help create and support strong, democratic organizations that work for justice, equality and sustainability in their own communities and that join with others to build broad movements for social, economic, and restorative environmental change" (Highlander Research and Education Center "About Us" 2010)

"I know that I am not weaving my life's pattern alone. Only one end of the threads do I hold in my hands. The other ends go many ways linking my life with others."

- Septima Poinsette Clark, director of Highlander's education programs in the 1950s and a Citizenship School teacher.

Today, the Highlander Research and Education Center is based at a 186-acre farm at the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains, approximately twenty-five miles east of Knoxville, Tennessee. To reach Highlander, one winds up a small road of homes and family farms to the main entrance, marked by a modest blue sign, through which Highlander sits atop a steep driveway. As one climbs the hillside, the horizon emerges, layered with blue-grey mountains. Modest buildings peck the rolling hillside that is Highlander's property. Black cows graze in a field at its base; around the bend in the gravel road lays Highlander's orchard of apple trees.

Throughout my research I read and heard countless times that "Highlander isn't a place, it is an idea." For over eighty years, people from across the country have made a journey to Highlander, temporarily leaving their respective communities behind to come together with others who share similar struggles and to learn collectively. For the purpose of fully comprehending the Highlander idea, I believed I had to also visit the place it occupies. Additionally, I did so under the premise that thousands before me had come: as one of a group of strangers from various homes, united by a common purpose. Thus, in addition to my study of literature on Highlander and semi-structured interviews with staff, I attended a Social Change Workshop in March 2011 as a participant. Anecdotes of my experience are included throughout this chapter and Chapter Six.

HISTORICAL, SPATIAL, AND IDEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

MYLES HORTON

Highlander began as the idea of one individual, Myles Horton, long before it was officially founded in 1932. The idea developed as a synthesis of familial and religious influences in Horton's childhood, political and economic philosophies, and the words and actions of progressive educators. As a boy raised in a small town in western rural Tennessee, Myles Horton divided his time between church and schools. His family attended a Presbyterian church that placed value on good works rather than revivalist rhetoric. Horton later recalled that his parents, farmers and sharecroppers, instilled the belief in him that "the only way to get out of poverty was to be assertive and to go to school, and to be of use in the world..." (Peters and Bell 1989, 35).

While attending Cumberland College in central Tennessee, he gained experience organizing his

fellow students and workers of a nearby mill. During a position he had one summer organizing Bible Schools in Ozone, Tennessee, he informally invited the parents of his students to meet together and speak with him about their problems. He was surprised by their ability to articulate their problems, their desire to look for solutions, and his ability to provide useful and action-enabling information to them (Peters and Bell 1989, 38-39).

These experiences solidified his conviction to work with struggling peoples, but he felt he needed to come with something more to offer. The following years were spent in several institutions of higher formal education developing his ideas of non-formal, popular, adult education. He attended Union Seminary in New York City in the late 1920s, where he absorbed the ideas of Christian socialists and progressive educators at nearby Columbia University, like educational reformer John Dewey and adult education pioneer Eduard Lindeman. He left for the University of Chicago in 1930 to study under the aegis of sociologist Robert Park who shared with Horton his theories of conflict and mass mobilization. While there, he was influenced from his reading of Lester Ward's *Dynamic Sociology*, which asserted that education should be foundational to all social practice (Peters and Bell 1989, 40). He was also encouraged to visit Denmark and research the Danish Folk School movement. The national system adult education schools located in rural regions of the country was begun to spur radical social change in the Danish countryside. While the newer schools lacked the vitality and vision Horton hoped to find, these facets were still present in some of the older schools:

> [Horton] found that many of the directors were unconventional educators. They were men on fire to correct injustice…The schools each (had) a…distinct purpose, made wide use of poetry and song, and sought to develop feelings and will more than memory and logic. (Adams 1975, 22-23)

Others in the United States were interested in the possibility of such a school in the United States. J.K. Hart wrote prior to Horton's trip that:

> A folk school in America, as in Denmark, would probably center around a personality of some real teacher, a man who is capable of learning, and who can teach, not so much by his teaching, as by his capacity to learn…we have very few (people) who can teach their own capacity to learn. (1927, 23)

Upon returning, Horton and two colleagues, Don West and James Dombrowski, received a donation of a house in Monteagle, Tennessee. There they opened the Highlander Folk School "to provide an educational

center for the training of rural and industrial leaders, and for the conservation and enrichment of the indigenous cultural values of the mountains" (Highlander Folk School 1939).

THE HIGHLANDER FOLK SCHOOL

The school opened in 1932 with a strong intention, purpose, and vision for the scale of its impact but without a specific cause to direct its energy. Horton and his colleagues began to hear of unrest brewing in nearby mines and factories, and set their sights on organizing and educating the workers to affect change in their working conditions. Highlander's labor organizing programs grew as the labor rights movement grew across the South. During this time, Highlander initiated its system of residential workshops for union leaders at the school, eventually becoming the official director of educational programming for the Congress of Industrial Organizations (Peters and Bell 1989, 46). Through this relationship with union movement leaders from around the South in the Congress of Industrial Organizations, Highlander saw many groups and many individuals come together at the school. While most unions at this time were segregated, Highlander not only prohibited segregation but actually sought racial diversity. Its residential programs brought African-Americans and white individuals together. Not only were they expected to learn together, but also they were expected to sing, eat, and sleep in the same room together (Conti and Robert 1989, 8).

Because of the controversy that these integrated workshops incited, Highlander began holding desegregation workshops in the early 1950s, as it had experience already bringing members of African-American and white races together and it had an "insider" sense of the simmering desegregation movement. Septima Clark, a former school teacher from Johns Island and Highlander's director of education in the early 1950s, invited her friend and local leader on Johns Island, Esau Jenkins, to attend such a workshop. At this time, Jim Crow laws required that African-Americans pass a government-mandated literacy test to vote. Jenkins wanted to increase votership on the predominantly African-American island but did not know how to effectively go about teaching the several thousand people to read. Over the following few years, Horton, Jenkins, Clark, and others developed a replicable model of Citizenship Schools to teach illiterate African-Americans to read, always with the greater intention of increasing citizenship and equality (Oldendorf 1987, 181 - 189). Highlander had high expectations for the participants of Citizenship Schools,

regardless of their position in society. In 1961, Horton stated:

> Well, of course, the teacher must start where the man is. But at the same time he is thought always in terms of what he can become...We are getting results not only in terms of reading and writing but in terms of intelligent first-class citizens - hundreds and hundreds of them - simply because we began by assuming that they could be citizens. (Tjerandsen 1980)

In these schools, teachers had no formal training to be instructors. The first teachers were chosen based on their interest to teach and their acceptance by students (Peters and Bell 1989, 47). Those who learned to read often became Citizenship School educators themselves. This transformation was both empowering to the individual and allowed the project to multiply in scale.

During the 1950s, Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and the students who formed the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee and initiated sit-in demonstrations, attended Highlander's civil rights workshops prior to implementing their respective projects. The school was accused repeatedly of being Communist by Southern political leaders and was finally shut down in 1961 by the state of Tennessee. The Citizenship Schools, which by this time had spread far beyond Johns Island, continued under the aegis of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. By 1970, over 100,000 African-Americans had learned to read and write because of the schools (Peters and Bell 1989, 47).

THE HIGHLANDER RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER

Horton was able to obtain a charter for a new school, and the organization reopened in Knoxville as the Highlander Research and Education Center. It stayed there until 1971 when it moved at its current location in New Market, Tennessee. During this period, the school shifted its focus away from the civil rights struggles, acknowledging that there was strong African-American leadership to carry the movement forward. Highlander looked to the struggles of poor white citizens in Appalachia - the "allies" of African-Americans – and the beginnings of their organizing activity around chronic poverty, increasing environmental degradation from strip-mining practices, poor landfill management, and various other issues of environmental and economic justice (Highlander Research and Education Center "History" 2010).

From the 1970s onward, Highlander's work became more topically diverse, reflecting the replacement of one all-consuming movement with an increasingly complex web of struggles across Appalachia and the South. During the 1970s, Highlander actually took more direct steps in organizing constituencies.

Highlander was critical in forming the Southern Appalachian Leadership Training program, as well as a participatory research project about land ownership in Appalachia. The 1980s saw Highlander's forays into international exchange, helping connect victims of the tragedy in Bhopal, India to those affected by similar Union Carbide factories in the United States. Much of the environmental and economic justice work of the 1980s continued into the 1990s (Highlander Research and Education Center "History" 2010).

Today, Highlander works primarily with African-Americans, poor or working-class white individuals, immigrants, and refugees in the South and Southern Appalachia (Williams, personal communication Mar 13, 2011). The Highlander idea exists as it always has, although the organization's resources are spread across a number of issues, for there does not currently exist one all-encompassing social movement. Economic literacy and justice have been a strong component of Highlander's focus since its inception, and the organization has recently made an explicit effort to incorporate economics education into all of its programs, in part because it identifies the growing gap between classes to be problematic. Highlander focuses on struggles around immigrant rights as well, and has recently collaborated with the Center for Research on Women at the University of Memphis and the Southern Regional Council to conduct research regarding community change in the South resulting from Latin American immigration (Highlander Research and Education Center "Current Programs" 2010). Highlander also works on issues around juvenile justice and the prison system, as well as environmental justice and land stewardship (Williams, personal communication Mar 13, 2011). The organization is receptive to the growing synthesis in discourse and action nationally between social justice and environmental justice activists and organizations, and has incorporated environmental awareness and justice into several of its current programs, including the Children's Justice Camp and Threads, a multi-generational, multi-cultural leadership and organizing school (Highlander Research and Education Center "Current Programs" 2010).

THE HIGHLANDER IDEA AND METHODOLOGY

Highlander is both an indelible idea and an adaptable methodology that can be used in myriad scenarios. Its work as an institution of popular education incorporates cultural organizing and participatory action research into a process with the explicit intention of developing grassroots leadership to build social movements and create social change. While Highlander's attention has shifted over time between various

social struggles, Susan Williams, a member of the education team, believes that the idea of Highlander has never wavered:

> ...the premises of the approach have stayed the same: that change needs to come from people directly affected, that there's a lot of people who are marginalized in this country and that's who needs to be part of the democratic process. There are other people that are key players that need to be a part of the process like lawyers, and academics, but that the leadership should come from people who are affected by problems to decide what to do...Everyone is a teacher and everyone is a learner, and that people, if you bring them together, can really help each other and come up with good ideas, kind of a belief both in individuals and in a group process where everyone can participate. So people bring what they bring, and take what they need to take. That is true through the whole history [of the organization]. (personal communication Feb 23, 2011)

A common misconception of Highlander is that the organization has been a series of schools - a union organizing school in the 1930s and 1940s, a civil rights school in the 1950s and 1960s, an Appalachian environmental school in the 1970s, and so forth. While many of its major projects have spanned decades and perhaps seem disparate, Horton and other staff believed that the idea behind all of them held constant. The specific issues addressed by the school have always been pulled from existing unrest and community struggles.

POPULAR EDUCATION

Popular education is defined by Highlander as "a participatory process that combines people's experiences to develop collective analysis and strategies for action for positive social change." It is unlike traditional adult education in that (1) teaching is not one-directional (that is, it is not administered by a teacher and absorbed by students), and (2) it has an explicit political purpose (Williams, personal communication Mar 13, 2011). Highlander uses a popular education approach with the goal of "constructing democracy" by (1) creating a democratic space at Highlander wherein individuals can freely express themselves wholly create strong networks across a diverse constituency, and (2) building a collaborative base of strong, democratic grassroots community-based organizations (Highlander Research and Education Center "Current Programs" 2010).

EDUCATIONAL SETTING AND PROCESS

The educational process and setting used during a Highlander workshop are designed to construct a strategy from a collected body of knowledge that can be implemented upon leaving Highlander. As such, popular education must be conducted in a group setting, wherein individuals from various communities, each with various experiences around a similar struggle, convene. Horton and his colleagues realized very early on that methods of communication used in formal education that they were most familiar with were ineffective with the groups they were working with. Their initial interactions with struggling groups revealed that they needed to approach education differently:

> What we needed was a schooling by the people we were trying to teach, so we could understand how they learned and how they perceived their problems. We came to value their primary method of learning, experiential learning. We had discovered that the students could bring their curriculum with them and that the starting point of the education process should be their life experience and perceptions, not ours. (Horton "Influences on Highlander" 1989, 18)

Highlander staff continue to implement a process that begins with the agendas and experiences of individuals, reworking their programmatic offerings based on these specifics. In order to accurately gauge the interests and needs of the participants, Highlander's work must begin, in fact, before a workshop begins. Highlander staff educate themselves on what the particulars of a given situation are, how the individuals perceive their struggle, and what they want to learn at Highlander. Highlander then sets up an agenda they believe will facilitate directed learning. Williams states, "We have a goal for what we're doing. And often it's based on what we know about the group. We're not neutral...What we try to do is figure out an agenda that is useful to the people..." (personal communication Feb 23, 2011). When I attended the Social Change Workshop, I was asked to provide information beforehand about my background, why I was attending, and what I hoped to learn. The responses influenced the specific topics for discussion on the final day of the workshop (and additional topics were added during the weekend as other interests emerged). I participated in a discussion on "The Nuts and Bolts of Highlander" facilitated by Williams, wherein a group of us were able to ask questions regarding the composition and operations of Highlander.

The educational setting itself serves as an example of a democratic space that participants in their communities could recreate. Horton believed that in formal educational settings, power was held by the teachers and students were positioned subserviently. Horton connected the oppression that was prevalent

in the classroom with the acceptance of prolonging of oppressive forces outside the classroom. Highlander's deliberate restructuring of the educational setting was meant to affect the behavior and perceptions of participants (Horton "A People's Movement to Liberate Education" 1989).

Highlander staff act in facilitation roles that involve "careful diagnostic attention to the problem and its definition, and expert prescription of the process by which answers can be learned and resources brought to supplement the learners' experiences." Facilitators must affirm people's experiences in order to produce a comfortable space for sharing. A major barrier to popular education historically has been that people come in without self-respect and do not trust that their own experiences have value and are worthy to learn from. Because of a careful cultivation of place, atmosphere, and personnel, a space is created where people's thoughts are respected and are listened to seriously. Dignifying ones experiences allows people to realize that they come with knowledge (Kennedy 1981, 2-3).

Highlander also restructures the role of specialists in the educational process. Facilitators are responsible for developing these contacts that may prove useful in the process of popular education. Such individuals or groups are brought in collaboratively when their skill set or field of expertise can aid or enrich the process (Kennedy 1981, 5). Participants decide how, if at all, they can use this expertise.

The non-hierarchical model is reinforced spatially. Highlander follows the example of Native American Councils, in which participants and facilitators alike sit in one large circle. (Horton "Influences on Highlander" 1989, 86). At the Social Change Workshop we sat always in a circle when meeting as an entire group, the Highlander staff scattered throughout. We used the same rocking chairs that many before us have sat in (and occasionally autographed).

Williams describes a flexible approach in which Highlander assumes an agenda that forwards the aspirations of participants. As a facilitator, "you have to be willing to not do what you wanted if people seem to want to do something else...[You have to] create a structure that can hold people but be willing to let go of it if it doesn't [work]. You have to be willing to negotiate" (personal communication Feb 23, 2011). In this way, Highlander is not a neutral facilitator, but rather adopts the agendas of groups it works with and creates flexible frameworks for them to learn within.

Cultural work and cultural organizing have been an integral component of Highlander's work from the very beginning (Williams, personal communication Feb 23, 2011). The organization has never actually defined "culture," but based on evidence from its programs, culture at Highlander could be thought of as personal or collective expressions - singing, dancing, writing, making, performing, creating artwork, cooking and eating, celebrating – that draw from the history and heritage of a particular group, a community, family, or an individual. Because "culture is something everyone has," Highlander believes that it can "inspire action and build bridges" (Highlander Research and Education Center "Highlander's Methodologies" 2011).

The inclusion of culture as a main tenet of Highlander was not a conscious decision. "If you grew up poor like I did in the mountains and the rural South, you tend to think of the totality of things that make up life," said Horton. "The singing, the square dancing, the fights - all were a part of life. Culture is what I always thought was the underlying category that took everything that was not pulled out and called education, or religion...It is the base" (Conti and Robert 1989, 24). Tufara Waller Muhammad, the current director of Highlander's cultural programs, says, "I come from a long organizing tradition...where art and culture have always been a part of organizing...I didn't realize that it didn't happen everywhere until I left the South. For me, the cultural piece is integral to organizing, but for some people it is frivolous" (Benavente 2008, 4).

Zilphia Horton, Myles Horton's wife, can be credited with making culture a powerful component of the Highlander idea and methodology. She regularly attended union meetings and the picket lines of striking workers. She taught them songs, many of which were adaptations of religious or traditional songs (Carawan and Carawan 1989, 299). She learned the song "I Will Overcome" during a workshop with white tobacco farmers from South Carolina, who themselves had learned the song from members of their union's African-American counterpart. Zilphia Horton began including it in all of her workshops. Musician Pete Seeger, who was affiliated with Highlander for many years, adapted the song into the form known and used widely today. Guy and Candy Carawan, who followed Zilphia as Highlander's in-staff cultural directors, continued teaching the song to those who came to Highlander. Thus, as the movement grew, so did the popularity and significance of the song. In 1966, the organization gained the copyright to the song and

began distributing grants from the profits it generated (Highlander Research and Education Center "We Shall Overcome Fund" 2011).

The Carawans came to Highlander in the 1960s to participate in the civil rights movement by organizing workshops for politically active songwriters, singers, and cultural organizers. They've continued to organize cultural workshops over the decades. Today, the couple serves as consultant to Highlander, living just down the road from its campus (Highlander Research and Education Center "Staff" 2011).

At several points during the Social Change Workshop, we sang songs from different movements. Led by the strong voice of Waller Muhammad, these expressions provided yet another critical connection to Highlander's legacy and the legacies of those who came there previously. We also participated in a "cultural sharing" event one evening, in which every person had the opportunity to share anything that they identified with. Songs, stories, quilts, family photographs, guitar compositions, poems, heirloom jewelry, and many other tangible and intangible items were shared.

CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Highlander has always had an executive director; today, Pam McMichael holds this position. Underneath her, several teams of staff operate. One member of the education team organizes Highlander's cultural work, one maintains the library and archives, and all organize and lead various workshops and leadership institutes. The development and communications team is tasked with distributing news about Highlander to its collaborators and alumni through a newsletter, a website, and digital media, as well as organizing fundraising campaigns. Other teams include a buildings and grounds team to maintain the extensive property and an administrative team. Additionally, Highlander hosts several interns who take on various tasks, including daily administrative responsibilities and assisting with summer camps and workshops. The composition of the organization reflects a diversifying South: staff represent African American, Hispanic, and white races, and various members are proficient in Spanish (Highlander Research and Education Center "Staff" 2011).

Employees usually "find" Highlander, meaning they begin their interaction as participants, seeking out assistance. Many, although not all, of the current staff have come this way. Although also not explicitly required that new staff be familiar with the Highlander idea and methodologies, having intimate knowledge

of these, especially from the perspective of the participant, has proven beneficial (Williams, personal communication Feb 23, 2011). In Muhammad Waller's case, she began interfacing with Highlander when her daughter attended a youth camp there (Muhammad Waller, personal communication).

Other requirements for working at Highlander differ from those necessitated at formal education schools. While a degree from an institution of higher education can be beneficial at times, it is not essential for working successfully at Highlander. What is more essential is experience working with organizations and experience facilitating groups. Temporal flexibility required of staff, as job requirements and foci quite often must morph to respond to changing contextual conditions. Williams began coming to Highlander as a representative from Save Our Cumberland Mountains. She attended workshops on participatory action research, economics, and synthetic fuels. Several years later she applied, was hired, and began working at Highlander as a liaison between groups working on environmental issues and economic issues (personal communication Feb 23, 2011).

Highlander continues to work to apply its idea and methodology in a variety of formats. Much of Highlander's programming changes yearly based on what groups request their facilitation and the fiscal and temporal capacity of Highlander. These residential workshops occur throughout the year. In 2009, almost thirty groups or organizations met at Highlander (Highlander Research and Education Center "2009 Annual Report" 2010). A depiction of Highlander's current programmatic landscape is completed with the addition of other continual or annual initiatives, described below.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Although youth have always been present at Highlander, an explicit intention to increase programs for youth was made in the early 1980s. "Young people need focused attention," says Williams. Two summer programs are offered to empower youth across the South and Appalachia. Through both programs, a progression of involvement is common, wherein participants will return as junior counselors, counselors, and even as assistant directors (Williams, personal communication Feb 23, 2011).

Seeds of Fire Camp is a one week organizing and leadership camp held each July for youth ages 13 –

18 to gain the skills, experiences, and support to become community leaders. The camp's agenda is generated from the current foci of youth groups and youth-engaged organizations around the South (Highlander Research and Education Center "Current Programs" 2010). In recent years, Seeds of Fire has focused on juvenile justice and prison issues. By pulling together representatives from groups across the South that are confronting similar issues, Highlander tries to address the dilemma that "people are working on these issues, but there isn't anything bigger that's holding them strategically together." Youth are required to apply and attend in groups so that they are not alone when they return to their communities. Additionally, each group of youth must come with an "adult ally." Adult allies have their own track while at Seeds of Fire that focuses on how to be an ally and enable youth leadership (Williams, personal communication Mar 13, 2011).

Highlander provides the youth groups with a curriculum for a "mini-camp" that they can hold back in their communities for other youth. Highlander will often visit their youth constituencies to give them in-field guidance. Additionally, groups that meet at Highlander sometimes will organize mini-camps together, enabling their various groups to meet each other and build connections around shared interests (Williams, personal communication Mar 13, 2011).

The *Children's Justice Camp* is set up for children ages seven through twelve and also occurs in the summer months. The goal of the camp is to "instill in each child a sense of responsibility, a desire for self-reflection, and a passion for loving all humans" (Highlander Research and Education Center "Current Programs" 2010). Interactive and energetic classes are held throughout the week on social and environmental issues, arts and crafts, science, and nature studies, among others. Each year's camp has a different theme; during the summer prior to the most recent presidential election in 2009, "voting" was the camp's theme (Williams, personal communication Mar 13, 2011).

THREADS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Threads is a one year, multi-racial, intergenerational leadership and organizing institute with the goal of broad-based movement building. Every year, a different group of community leaders from throughout the South participates in a series of workshops and trips aimed at growing as leaders and developing a strong leadership network. Highlander recruits individuals from across its constituency in hopes of forming a rich body of experiences and perspectives from which to learn. Threads has a broad economic justice

focus, and individuals who come often have work experience around issues including but not limited to mountaintop removal, immigrant rights, worker centers, and welfare reform. Williams states that these issues are often viewed as discrete topics, but Highlander tries to remove people from their separate silos and begin dialoguing together (personal communication Feb 23,2011). In an entry posted to McMichael's blog, View from the Hill, on December 8, 2010, she recalls this interaction at a Threads session earlier that year:

> Through workshops and field visits participants learn from each other: economic human rights organizers in Louisville gleaned lessons and strategies from immigrant rights organizers in western North Carolina; the youngest participant from New Orleans talked about the catastrophic BP Gulf Coast Deepwater Horizon oil spill which resonated with organizers from southwest Virginia as they fight against coal companies to end mountain top removal; and all participants shared devastating and hopeful experiences of working and organizing in these economic times by learning how they might influence policies and create alternative economies.

GENERAL INFORMATION WORKSHOPS

General information workshops began in response to constant inquiries from individuals who were interested in coming to Highlander and learning more about the organization (Williams, personal communication Mar 13, 2011). Rather than coming individually, Highlander provides such individuals with a collective experience similar to that which others experience when they come for popular education and leadership development workshops.

One such workshop is the *Social Change Workshop*, which I attended in March with a group of approximately thirty-five participants. The group was multiracial (with African-American, white, Indian, and Hispanic individuals) intergenerational (with teenagers as young as fifteen to adults in their sixties), and represented various educational levels (from those who has not yet received high school diplomas to those with doctorates). There were urban gardeners; anti-war workers; professors of sociology, public health, and rhetoric; undergraduate students from several universities; individuals looking to start schools of popular education; and non-profit directors. The weekend was organized into a series of workshops on subjects including the building of social movements (we looked specifically at the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the 2011 overturn of the Egyptian government), the legacy of Highlander's work, and cultural organizing.

On the final day individuals were free to join one of several small group discussions formed around topics chosen by the participants. In between sessions, we ate communally or had breaks to explore the grounds.

The *Wild & Wacky, Witty & Wonderful Workshop Work Week* is a week-long program at the end of May. This workshop places a stronger emphasis on land stewardship that the Social Change Workshop. Individuals participate in workshops similar to those organized for the Social Change Workshop in the morning. In the afternoon, they volunteer their time to various activities, including pruning the orchard, working in the organic garden, clearing the walking paths, or planting trees (McMichael 2010).

CULTURAL PROGRAM

Tufara Muhammad Waller oversees Highlander's cultural program, including the We Shall Overcome Fund. The fund, generated by royalties from the song "We Shall Overcome," was created in 1966 to "nurture grassroots efforts within African American communities to use art and activism against injustice" (Highlander Research and Education Center "We Shall Overcome Fund" 2011). Waller travels throughout the South as a part of her position, working with organizations to incorporate a culturally-based component into their programs, to assist We Shall Overcome Fund recipients, and build networks and relationships (Williams, personal communication Mar 13, 2011). In 2009, Highlander organized or facilitated fourteen cultural events associated with organizing efforts across the region and nation. An annual We Shall Overcome Cultural Workers Weekend brings grantees together to share their work, learn from each other, and strategize for their increased effectiveness (Highlander Research and Education Center "2009 Annual Report" 2010, 5).

MULTILINGUAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Responding to a changing demographic in the South, Highlander in recent years has initiated new programs and reworked existing ones to be inclusive of a growing Latino population. The Latino population brings challenges of settling in an area with no previous history of their habitation, and of a different language. To meet the emerging needs, Highlander offers workshops to develop the ability of translators who are both bilingual and understand the nature of leadership development and community capacity building. Highlander offers translation services at any event or workshop it organizes if Spanish speakers are present. The organization has even translated its entire website into Spanish to increase their accessibility to

a Latino population (Highlander Research and Education Center "Current Programs" 2010).

The community of Highlander participants and collaborators spans eighty years and now extends outside the borders of the United States. The creation of relationships while at Highlander and beyond is an integral part of the Highlander idea. Thus, every Labor Day, Highlander invites anyone who has ever participated in any fashion with it to come back to Highlander for a Homecoming event. The event includes two days of speeches, workshops, singing, dancing, and the sharing of meals (Williams, personal communication Feb 23, 2011).

In addition to relationships made through its workshops and leadership institutes, Highlander has been and continues to actively participate in numerous noteworthy collaborations. Of the several it engages in today, one of particular interest is Stay Together Appalachian Youth, a recent creation with Appalshop's Appalachian Media Institute and High Rocks (a youth leadership program in West Virginia) that aims to engage emerging Appalachian youth leaders in creating their own opportunities for learning, leading, and creating positive change. The collaboration was youth-initiated and is youth-led. In 2009, participants in Seeds of Fire convened with other youth at Appalshop to study together the history of the juvenile justice system and its connections to the economy, as well as the current controversies around coal extraction and mountaintop removal. The group organized a workshop during a 2009 summit of the Central Appalachia Regional Network, another group that Highlander is a member of (Highlander Research and Education Center "2009 Annual Report" 2010, 8).

Highlander is more than an idea. The serene natural and cultivated landscape and simple buildings of Highlander work in tandem to reinforce and enable the goal of the organization of being an ontologically restorative and democratic place for personal growth. Highlander's location, at least relative to the locations of its attendees, was critical for its success. According to Horton, "[Highlander] has to be contained, unified, concentrated to get the sense of the people who are there. We get them physically away from their

everyday life so they can begin to think about something that is terribly important" (Conti and Robert 1989, 23). Highlander's remote location requires stepping back from one's community and participating in an intentional journey.

When Highlander opened at its current location in New Market, Tennessee, it managed 106 acres of land. The first buildings - Horton's house, the Workshop (which also houses kitchen, dining, and daycare spaces), the adjacent dormitory, the library, and another living space (now the home of McMichael) - were built with a similar architectural style. Still in use today, the buildings are scattered lengthwise across the steep hillside; with their backs couched snugly into the land, their long front sides open to sweeping views of rolling farmland and the Smoky Mountains through almost entirely glazed walls and wrapping porches. The main spaces of each of these buildings (with the exception of the dormitory) were inspired by traditional yurt design; they are nearly round and feature vaulted ceilings. The form serves as a reminder, regardless of whether a workshop is in session or not, that Highlander unequivocally takes a non-hierarchical approach to education. Wooden rocking chairs trace the perimeter of the main workshop space. In such a formation, no group or person is given a preferential position. At the Social Change Workshop, Highlander facilitators scattered themselves around the circle, and activities and demonstrations took place in the center.

At Highlander, not only were participants expected to learn together, but they were also expected to eat together, sleep in the same room, and relax together. As such, the dining hall, located in the same building and directly underneath the Workshop, features several large tables, each holding multiple seats. During my visit, unrestricted views of the mountains enticed many to eat on outside picnic benches. Outdoor activities often congregate under a pavilion and a nearby campfire pit. During Seeds of Fire and homecoming, the pavilion is used for a variety of performances.

The library is meant to serve as a space for archival materials as well as place for participants to conduct research. As such, not only are materials about Highlander kept (of which there are many), but so are publications, videos, and musical recordings distributed by other organizations or schools on relevant topics, such as popular education, economic justice, the civil rights movement, or land stewardship. Today, the library also houses a bookstore, making many titles available for participants to purchase.

Down the hill, closer to the entryway of Highlander's property, is a newer building that houses the main administrative offices of the staff. A small white house nearby is a recreation of Highlander's original

building at Monteagle. Also at this lower edge is Highlander's black wooden barn, outside of which one can often see a dozen or so black and brown cows. Recently, Highlander purchased an additional eighty-one acres of adjacent land that came with an orchard of five hundred apple trees, forested paths, and a house in which the interns now reside. With this new land came a new focus on land stewardship, which Highlander hopes to encourage in future years by hiring an employee committed exclusively to managing the orchard and new organic garden, as well as organizing programming around these outdoor amenities. Staff also hope to use an upcoming capital campaign to renovate existing facilities or build new ones that are more energy efficient (Williams, personal communication Mar 13, 2011).

The histories and legacies of the organization and those who attended are apparent at the Highlander farm. Although such notaries as Martin Luther King Jr. or Rosa Parks attended Highlander at its Monteagle location, their legacy lives on at this location through photographs and paintings on the walls and stories shared within the space. Thousands have come to this location since the early 1970s; I was well aware during my visit that I was sitting in the same spaces that I had seen in archival photographs during my prior research.

WHAT IS SUCCESS, ACCORDING TO HIGHLANDER?...AND HOW IS IT MEASURED?

I used both former writings of Horton, interviews with Horton and past staff, and conducted an interview with current staff member Susan Williams to identify how Highlander defines success. I found that many of my notions of successful community capacity building, apparent in the measurements I describe in Chapter Two, were also integral to Highlander's notion of success.

Success for Highlander has always been tied to the increased leadership skills exhibited by former participants and their subsequent actions. For some participants, this meant being able to act as an informal leader for change in their community or assume a formal position of leadership. For others already in leadership positions, this meant that they were able to achieve new goals as a result of their Highlander experience (Peters and Bell 1989, 52). Most individuals who seek out Highlander are already engaged in their communities but desire to do so more effectively. Williams stated that success is about creating life-

long leaders committed to bettering communities as opposed to enabling someone to work towards an issue and ending their commitment when the issue disappears. "It's important that you can do things and you feel able to do things," Williams says. A Highlander participant should be able to say, "I now feel like I can work on something, no matter what I do, no matter where I am" (personal communication Feb 23, 2011).

Highlander's strategy of creating social change starts with the development of leaders. Inherent in this strategy is the expectation that these leaders will then enable others to become leaders, thus multiplying the effect of Highlander's work. While spin-offs of Highlander could include new programs or organizing efforts, the actual human beings incorporated into participants' work can also be considered spin-offs of Highlander. Williams cites the Citizenship Schools as one of Highlander's most successful projects. The schools enabled not only individual learning but also the creation of new educators who could bring the schools to new locations, allowing the project to grow into a movement. The Citizenship Schools also changed a political situation, which is another of Highlander's aspirations. Everything that Highlander works on has a political purpose. Thus, Highlander works to change systems, whether they are set up by governments, companies, or otherwise. Lastly, success is about tying people together. Part of success is that "people feel part of a river of people who struggle" (Williams, personal communication Feb 23, 2011). In this way, success for Highlander is about increasing awareness of a community for support that is available to those attempting to make change in their own communities.

On *who* should judge success, Horton stated, "At Highlander, it's the people you work with who decide if you are doing a good job and if you are effective. You need to learn to be valued by the people you work with. Success at Highlander is not what your peers think but rather what the people we work with think" (Conti and Robert 1989, 25). The organization uses written evaluations at the end of every workshop to gage the satisfaction of and relevancy of the session for participants. At the end of the Social Change Workshop, I was asked to complete a final evaluation that consisted of three questions asked in metaphor: *What am I planting? What am I weeding? What am I growing?* They were collected, photocopied, and then given to participants to serve as personal reminders.

This evaluative tool has limited use for Highlander staff, however, and they recognize that it is not measuring what they regard as real success. According to Williams, measuring the changes people make in their communities after they leave Highlander is incredibly difficult. Some types of changes (assumption

of new roles, the creation of new programs, new organizing efforts) may be more apparent, but Williams notes that there are always a number of variables that can affect an outcome. Additionally, there is no standard timeline for affecting change; change can happen instantly, take many years, or begin long after a Highlander experience. Highlander cannot simply take credit for the work that others are doing, and with a sufficient time lapse after one's participation at Highlander, it is possible that the two parties will not be in communication (Williams, personal communication Mar 13, 2011).

To this day, Highlander does not have a systematic way of gathering comprehensive information from which to measure its success. While this is partly due to the complicated nature of social change, it may also be partly because Highlander does not have a formalized network of former and current participants (Williams, personal communication Mar 13, 2011). As such, it is easy to lose track of the whereabouts and activities of individuals.

HIGHLANDER, EVALUATED AGAINST SEVEN MEASURES OF SUCCESS

1. THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY LEADERS.

Highlander has been successful since its inception at creating constituencies of leaders who make positive change in their respective arenas. Although it's most well-known leaders – Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, and the college students of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee – came out during Highlander's work in the civil rights movement, Highlander has made lesser-known, yet significant, leaders before and after, leaders who improved working conditions in factories or mandated the end of environmentally-degrading landfills. Today, Highlander offers Seeds of Fire and Threads, two leadership institutes for youth and leaders in various economic justice movements, respectively. The organization's cultural program supports the leadership abilities of politically-minded artists and cultural organizers (Highlander Research and Education Center "Current Programs" 2010).

2. AN INCREASE IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

Most people who journey to Highlander do so because they are already engaged in their communities and want to become more effective or would like to begin taking a more active role in civic activity. Muhammad Waller believes that if people begin looking for help outside their community, then

"you know they are ready to move" (personal communication). Thus, Highlander's role is to support these people by enabling them to grow as leaders and giving them the analytical and organizing skills they need to be effective in their efforts and produce change.

Highlander's efforts at increasing civic engagement affect individuals beyond those who attend one of the organization's programs. Those who interact with participants may be influenced as well. For example, participants of Seeds of Fire go back to their communities with a curriculum for organizing their own mini-camps in their home communities. Highlander staff will visit Seeds of Fire alumni in the field to assist them with their efforts. Youth who attend these mini-camps thus enter Highlander's sphere of influence, and in doing so learn about critical community matters and the need to engage them (Williams, personal communication Mar 13, 2011).

3. A GROWING NETWORK OF PARTICIPANTS, COLLABORATORS, AND SUPPORTERS.

Highlander is both approached by groups interested in the organization's assistance and seeks out groups that it feels would benefit from attending. The network also grows through word-of-mouth communication, wherein participants go back to their communities, talk about Highlander, and pique the interests of others. Many of those who attended desegregation workshops in the 1950s, for example, were often told of them by friends or neighbors who had recently returned from one (Williams, personal communication Feb 23, 2011).

The ever-expanding network of participants, collaborators, and supporters is apparent every year at homecoming, when anyone who has ever been affiliated with Highlander is invited to return to the farm for a weekend-long celebration. Despite the thousands of names attached to Highlander, the organization does not maintain a central database containing the complete list of participants and their current contact information. Every participant receives the contact information for those within their specific program, but there is no way for participants to link across programs (Williams, personal communication Mar 13, 2011). Given Highlander's attempts to bridge divides across topics and regions, it seems it would also try to bridge a temporal divide. For a recent Highlander participant, a potential in-the-field community of support – those who came to Highlander previously – could prove to be a tremendous support for his or her endeavors.

4. THE CREATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

Highlander creates knowledge through its model of popular education, wherein participants' prior experiences are reconsidered as sources from which to extract knowledge. The strategies that formalize during workshops could themselves be considered new knowledge, as they are often innovative conglomerations of previously unconsidered experiential information and/or professional expertise. For example, during a Highlander workshop in the 1980s on the pending construction of new synthetic fuel plants, participants requested the expertise of economists and engineers so that they come to a conclusion on the severity of the new plants and strategize a response. What was discovered, and subsequently acted upon, was that the new plants were neither affordable (hence intense government subsidy) nor technically sound (they were essentially pilot projects). This information was combined under a framework for activism to create a new plan of action (Williams, personal communication Feb 23, 2011).

5. THE CREATION OF SPIN-OFF PROJECTS.

For Highlander, spin-off "projects" include programs, new organizations, and even people. The organization has undoubtedly affected leaders to create spin-offs for positive community change, although because of numerous other contextual influences on individuals, as well as Highlander's weak system of maintaining contact with former participants, there are potentially myriad spin-offs that Highlander is unaware of. Highlander's most prominent project, the Citizenship Schools of the 1950s and 1960s, was dependent upon a model that was replicable and could multiply. Highlander was thus able to step out of the movement once there was enough energy behind it with the assurance that the schools would continue.

Highlander also enables unforeseen collaborations by connecting individuals from disparate locations with similar struggles. Sometimes people meet at workshops and create something together afterwards. Other times, Highlander will see a potential for connection and provide the introduction. One such example of this was a collaboration that began between Appalshop's Roadside Theater and the Free Southern Theater, the cultural branch of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, which was based in New Orleans. Horton knew of the two groups, and after Horton notified the Free Southern

Theater of Roadside Theater's work, John O'Neal contacted and met with Dudley Cocke (the Free Southern Theater and Roadside Theater's directors, respectively). A multi-decade collaboration ensued (Cocke, personal communication).

6. THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE INITIATIVE.

Personnel/Organizational Culture and Structure:

Although for a long time Highlander's name was synonymous with Myles Horton (and perhaps for some is still), Highlander has not depended on his guidance or leadership for nearly thirty years. He was a charismatic personality, and his ideas appealed to many. His ideas, however, were ultimately not dependent on his participation. Thus, although it took many years for Highlander to "move beyond Myles," the Highlander idea has been upheld despite the inevitable turnover of Highlander staff (Williams, personal communication Mar 13, 2011).

Relevancy:

Long-term, direct relationships have historically enabled to Highlander to stay on the front edge of movements, seeing them from their beginnings and pushing them to grow. The organization's work is specified topically by the organizations it works with and the common needs Highlander staff identify across constituencies. Highlander's relationships today with leaders across the South and Appalachia provide direct connections to emerging social, economic, environmental, or political issues.

Funding:

Highlander staff often know what themes and issues they will be working around in the near future (i.e. immigrant rights or mountain top removal) from what is happening contextually within the region. However, they often cannot specifically predict who they will be working with, what exactly they will focus on with them, and what these individuals or groups will do after they leave. These uncertainties can make it difficult to apply to private foundations that necessitate a clear outline of how funds will be spent ahead of time. Highlander has been able to diversify its funding base and has been successful in acquiring private funds without stipulations; additionally, thirty-three percent of its income in 2009 came from individual contributions, workshop fees, bookstore sales, and other miscellaneous sources (Highlander Research and Education Center "2009 Annual Report" 2010, 20).

7. THE SUCCESSFUL EXECUTION OF STATED GOALS

Highlander has served "as a catalyst for grassroots organizing and movement building in Appalachia and the South," identifying movements and struggles as they emerge and providing relevant assistance and leadership development to improve the work of community leaders. Its agendas are extracted from the work of people "fighting for justice, equality and sustainability," thus "supporting their efforts to take collective action to shape their own destiny." Democratic space is created at Highlander that supports the principles of popular education "where people gain knowledge, hope and courage, expanding their ideas of what is possible." Through leadership institutes, workshops, and field work, Highlander does "develop leadership and help create and support strong, democratic organizations that work for justice, equality and sustainability in their own communities." Despite a weak system for managing the expansive network of the Highlander community, the organization has a record of building "broad movements for social, economic, and restorative environmental change" (Highlander Research and Education Center "About Us" 2010).

FOLIO OF IMAGES FROM HIGHLANDER

90: CIRCLE OF ROCKING CHAIRS INSIDE THE WORKSHOP

91: WORKSHOP (RIGHT) AND BEDROOMS (LEFT)

92-93: SUNRISE VISTA AT HIGHLANDER, FROM OUTSIDE THE WORKSHOP

94: SIGNAGE ON THE HILLSIDE

95: INTERACTIVE POPULAR EDUCATION "SPIRAL"

[ALL PHOTOGRAPHS WERE TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR]
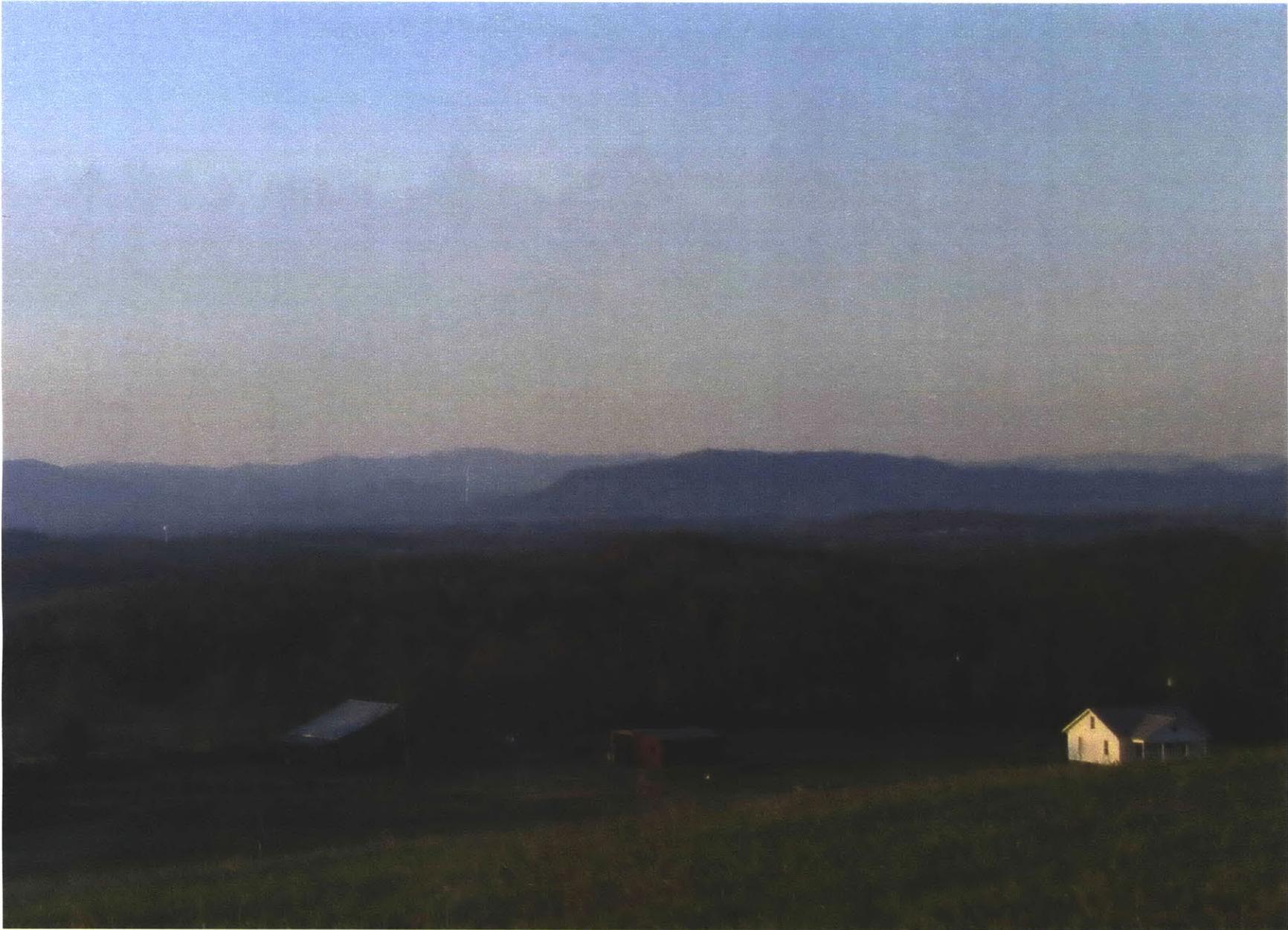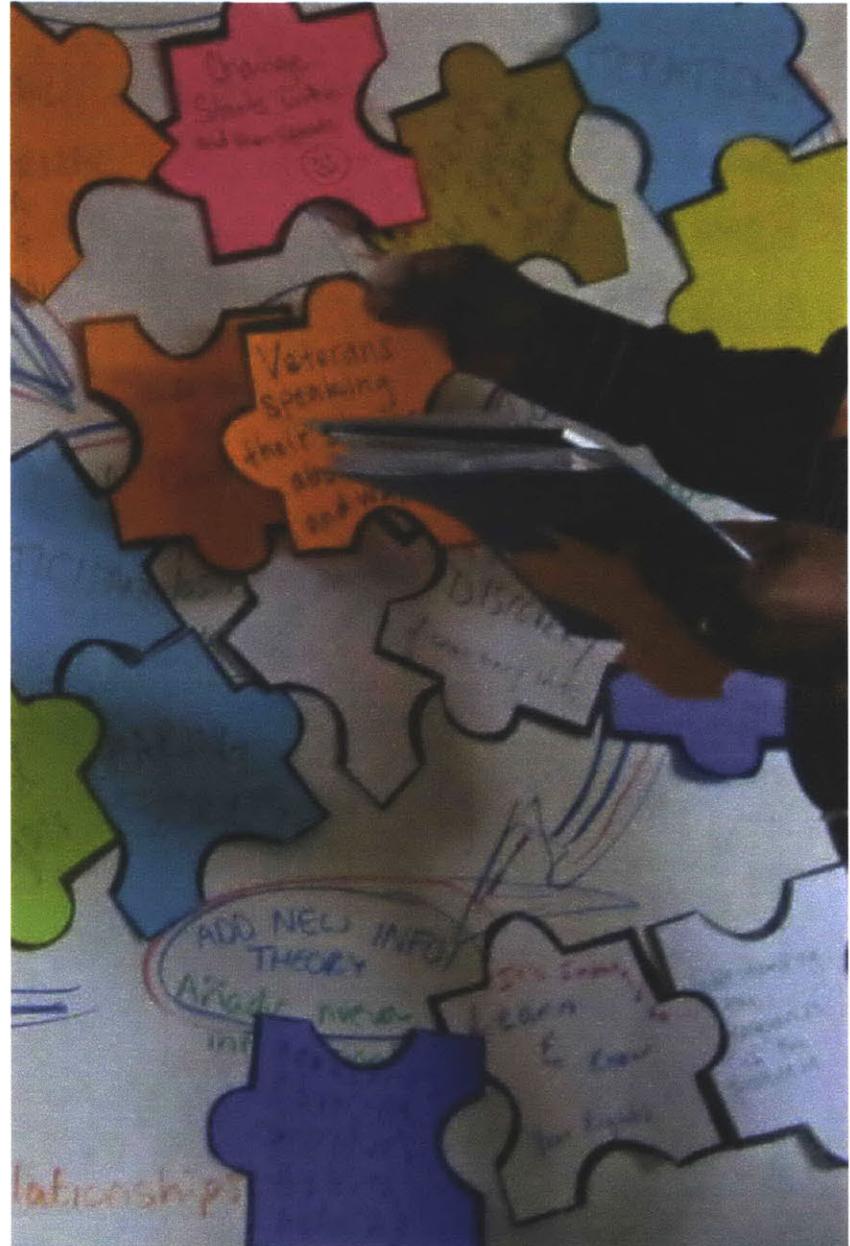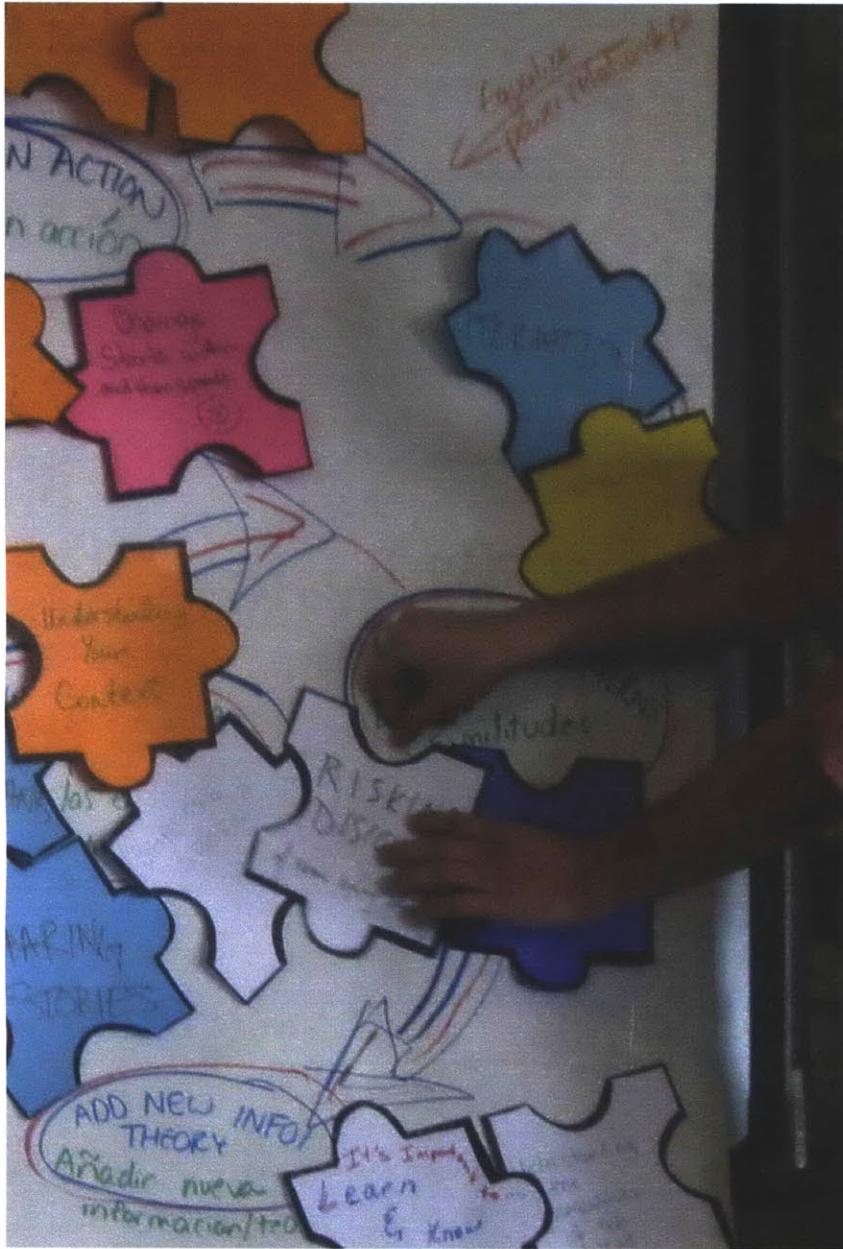
APPALSHOP

"Our goals are to enlist the power of education, media, theater, music, and other arts: to document, disseminate, and revitalize the lasting traditions and contemporary creativity of Appalachia; to tell stories the commercial cultural industries don't tell, challenging stereotypes with Appalachian voices and visions; to support communities' efforts to achieve justice and equity and solve their own problems in their own ways; to celebrate cultural diversity as a positive social value; and to participate in regional, national, and global dialogue toward these ends" (Appalshop "About Us" 2010).

"Despite all the riches under ground, the most important riches of the area are above ground; they are the people of eastern Kentucky. It is your understanding coupled with your creative thinking that can find the creative solutions to problems that exist. You can find the opportunity in the problem, open it up, articulate it and bring new thing into existence. And by doing so create a new brighter future for all people of eastern Kentucky."

- Robert Kennedy at Alice Lloyd College in Pippa Passes, Kentucky. February 13, 1968 (Appalshop 2004).

On any given day, the Appalshop office hums quietly. In their respective corners, artists are busy. A filmmaker works away to finish a grant for film archival assistance. Groups mill around the coffee pot, at couches, and in office doorways, discussing projects and holding light conversation, and then scatter up stairways and down hallways. In the afternoon, a radio programmer leaves his office and heads down to the ground floor for his regular radio spot on WMMT FM 88.7 Mountain Community Radio. He emerges upstairs sometime later, just as young Pick n' Bow musicians fill the lower conference room, tentatively plucking and bowing behind closed doors. Another filmmaker prepares to head up to the nearby town of Jenkins to assist in the planning of events to commemorate the one-hundredth year since its founding.

The office may be quiet, but Appalshop has projected the voices of Appalachians confidently and loudly for over forty years. In its resilient efforts to tell an Appalachian story of good and bad, it has created ardent supporters across the region and nation, as well as skeptics who do not understand the value of its work and a vocal contingent who oppose its existence. For as warm and good-natured as Appalshop members are, they have stirred up contention from communities and big businesses, pushing forward difficult yet critically-needed regional dialogue and action.

HISTORICAL, SPATIAL, AND IDEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

In the fall of 1969, a small film workshop opened its doors in Whitesburg, a small mountain town in the coalfields of eastern Kentucky. The Office of Economic Opportunity, an agency assigned to oversee the federal government's War on Poverty programs, distributed grant funding to start eight film workshops scattered throughout the country's economically struggling regions and cities to train young adults for the television industry and Hollywood (Abbate-Winkel 1995, 68). However, in the hollows of Appalachia, the goals of the first filmmakers diverged from the mandated goals. Rather than focusing on the acquisition of technical skills for the purpose of leaving the region and gaining employment elsewhere, they saw an opportunity to create a means for staying in the region, doing meaningful work, and skills to create a livelihood that enabled them to stay and critically investigate their region (Barret, personal communication).

Whitesburg was chosen to house the Appalachian branch of the nation-wide film workshop

program, because the town demonstrated prior progressive leadership and a capacity for accepting and supporting such an endeavor. The Letcher County seat was the home of both Harry Caudill, a lawyer, activist, and author of *Night Comes to the Cumberlands*, and Tom Gish, the outspoken editor of the newspaper *The Mountain Eagle* (Abbate-Winkel 1995, 61).

The Appalachia Film Workshop opened at a contentious moment in the nation's and region's history. "The Vietnam War was going on," Herb Smith, one of the first participants, recalls. "We were angry about our country's international policies. We were seeing young people our age being sent off to fight in the jungles of Southeast Asia. We were searching for a way to not be in that machine." The other machine – that of the coal industry, then and still the largest industry and employer in the region – was also wreaking havoc on the morale of Appalachian residents. "These companies really had this old model," says Smith. "It wasn't democracy or participatory. It was 'This is what we're doing. This is your role. Trust and obey'" (personal communication).

Despite its regional leadership, Whitesburg and Letcher County were not immune to the dramatic effects caused by an ailing coal industry. Smith, a life-long Letcher County resident himself, recalls:

> I was born in '52, and from the time I was born until '73, it had been all out-migration. People expected to leave. The county lost half its population…I graduated from high school in 1970, and there was this expectation that you would leave. There were three hundred of us who entered Whitesburg High School as freshmen. One-hundred eighty-five of us graduated. A lot of those people, their families left, and then there was a number that just dropped out…By May of 1970, one-hundred eighty-five of us graduated who graduated from Whitesburg High as seniors…I would say, at least one-hundred fifty of them were gone by the end of June with no idea of ever coming back…It was the pattern. It was just as though there were no choices. There was no other idea of how you would stay. (personal communication)

THE APPALACHIAN IMAGE

Dudley Cocke, the co-founder and director of Appalshop's Roadside Theater, recalls the sentiments of many Appalachians during the 1960s and 1970s as the region was thrust into the national spotlight. "There was a particular moment," he says, "when the story of Appalachia, because of the War on Poverty, was being told by journalists around the country as well as outside of the country. So a lot of other people

were telling Central Appalachia's story, the coalfields' story, the poverty story. But those voices were voices who had not come up in the culture" (personal communication). The images were interpreted out of context and reinforced existing demeaning stereotypes of the Appalachian region and its people.

At the same time, a new interest in Appalachian culture was materializing within the region. Appalachian Studies programs began to appear in many of the region's universities and colleges due, in part, to the leadership of the historian, writer, and activist Helen Lewis. Eliot Wigginton's Foxfire program of cultural journalism for high school students in Rabun Gap, Georgia, began in 1967 (Abbate-Winkel 1995, 85). Appalachian citizens were beginning to organize in response to the conditions for workers in the coal mining industry. The beginnings of a regional groundswell were in place, as were the challenges posed by the relationship with an external audience, at the birth of the film workshop.

BILL RICHARDSON AND THE "APPALCORE"

Bill Richardson, a recent graduate from Yale University's architecture program, was the first director of the workshop. Having a strong interest in film, but no formal education in it himself, he treated the experience as an opportunity for many people to learn side-by-side (Bienko 1992, 1-2). Although he was the official director, he gave the participants – most of them local high school youth - autonomy and decision-making authority. He treated the high school students with respect, encouraging them to investigate self-identified interests and develop and implement their own ideas (Abbate-Winkel 1995, 78-79). Richardson's approach to leadership and organizational structure was a strong influence on early and future participants and the ensuing direction and development of the organization for the next forty years. Many of its early participants would continue with the organization through the following decades; in fact, many members of the 'Appalcore,' as they called themselves, continue to work at Appalshop today.

INITIAL EXPLORATIONS

Although guidelines and even a curriculum were determined by the Office of Economic Opportunity for the workshop, both Richardson and the participants had other objectives for the project. Elizabeth Barret, an early participant who is still a filmmaker with the organization today, recalls that amongst participants,

there was "a strong feeling that, 'we're going to get these skills. We don't want to go work in the TV industry, the feature film industry, or do commercial work'" (personal communication). Technical skills were not the ultimate goal for these youth. Rather, they provided an opportunity for deep exploration. Smith explains:

> ...there was this really interesting phenomenon that we cared a lot about. And that was that there was a cadre of people here who remembered this area before large-scale mining... Previous to 1912, before the railroad came, there wasn't any large-scale mining because they couldn't get the coal out...We were fascinated by the stories they told about free, industrial Letcher County...

> One of the ideas that we grasped pretty early was hard times in this part of the country came not of a lack of modernization but from the way that modernization occurred here. We wanted to learn from the older folks of how they lived previous to this. We wanted this not just as folklorists as documenters of old stuff, but as models for the future. How could we make a goal of it, if the industry was bowing out? ...We thought as young people that we had to build something that was based on those older models.

> So we made films about chair makers and quilters and others who were holding on to things that we valued...It's not about the way a quilter uses a needle, or the way a chair maker uses an ax. To us the crucial stuff wasn't that technical ability. The crucial stuff was like, how you get your own expectations to this level where you are a person who is determining his or her own destiny as opposed to being acted upon by others. (personal communication)

Thus, instead of a vocational program, the film workshop turned into a community-based media center. They used methods associated unbeknownst to them similar to those of participatory action research (Abbate-Winkel 1995, 85). "The films were going to be about life, history, culture, and social issues of Appalachia. It was going to be another sort of outcome from the workshop. There was going to be work that was produced in the region, about the region, and it was going to be shared in the region and beyond" (Barret, personal communication).

The idea of the film workshop – of using film to document and learn about one's own cultural heritage and propose an alternative way of living to the coal fields – and the opportunity it presented to youth in the area was revolutionary, especially for that region. The early members disseminated their work to universities and other organizations in the area, and eventually more people became aware of

Appalshop. Barret joined Appalshop in 1974 after seeing several of its films while attending the University of Kentucky and learning about it in an Appalachian Studies course. She recalls her initial captivation with the organization, a sentiment shared by many who joined early on:

> ...people from the region began to have some awareness of Appalshop. And then once people got here it was very exciting, because the whole thing was controlled by the people who worked here. The structure was an alternative kind of structure. If you got involved, you got involved...As somebody who was twenty-one, I was really beginning to learn about the place I was from. I was going deeper and deeper into Letcher County and the surrounding area. I was really getting an education. (personal communication)

Barret's "awakening" was not unique. Other participants were rediscovering their roots and nuances of their culture, as well as their responsibility as Appalachians to work for change. Early participant Alan Bennett remarked on a cassette tape recording:

> As I began to work on film, dealing with people in the mountains, I began to realize a lot of my roots...had been trained out of me by high school and college...I've learned that, as a filmmaker, there's a lot of things worth preserving and that there's a lot of current social issues that are worth confronting. We can deal with them more effectively that people who don't have to live it everyday. (quoted in Abbate-Winkel 1995, 76)

Being Appalachian was no longer something to be ashamed of. Participants realized that behind the over financial poverty there was a wealth of cultural heritage to be tapped for inspiring positive change.

Initial funding from the Office of Economic Opportunity was only guaranteed for the first eighteen months, and Richardson was skeptical that they would provide additional funding afterwards. Richardson formed corporation, the Appalachian Film Workshop, in the summer of 1970, and began identifying alternative funding sources (Abbate-Winkel 1995, 76). Barret states, "[Appalshop's members had] seen a lot of other War on Poverty initiatives and projects in Letcher County, and many that had ended. In this case, they were almost preparing for the end at the very beginning" (personal communication). As predicted, funding was not renewed, and President Nixon dismantled the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1974 (Abbate-Winkel 1995, 77).

From the beginning, Appalshop has had supporters, skeptics, and adversaries. The new initiative - with an "outsider" director, and an external funding source, and "a bunch of kids running around with

cameras" - drew suspicion from the local Whitesburg community. However, when some began to realize that these youth were looking at traditions and heritage with their cameras, these negative reactions were placed with support (Smith, personal communication). The youth attempted to represent local knowledge with dignity. According to the Appalachian historian Helen Lewis, the style of their early films "became a trademark of Appalshop: simple, matter of fact, straightforward, without fancy techniques...it says much about skill, tradition, self-sufficiency, and production...Tradition was early defined by Appalshop as more than romantic mountain lifestyle with dulcimers and cornshuck dolls; it included ways of making a living and patterns of subsistence and survival" (Lewis 1990, 80). Nonetheless, the "hippie" image with which Appalshop was identified early on lingered as the organization grew (Adams, personal communication). Appalshop was always able to secure funding from external sources, so it was never forced to look for local public or private allies. As films, and other subsequent art genres, began to explore more contentious issues, community reaction to Appalshop, both positively and negatively, has escalated.

THE EXPANSION OF APPALSHOP

The notion that Appalachians themselves could tell their own stories was revolutionary. Cocke recalls that the new opportunity to "suddenly be able to tell [their own stories] themselves, created excitement throughout the region, not just Letcher County...And people came to Appalshop with this excitement" (personal communication). Within the first five years, Appalshop expanded to include a photography workshop and darkroom (what would become the Mountain Photography Workshop), a theater group (what would become Roadside Theater), a recording studio (June Appal Records), a magazine (Mountain Eagle Review), and an educational media project (Abbate-Winkel 1995, 134). According to Cocke, people were asking, "If we can tell our story in film, why would we not want to tell it in all the other mediums?" (personal communication).

By 1977, the organization had grown from a training center with one paid employee to a production center run by a collective of artists. In 1982, Richardson (who had previously left the organization) designed and built a thirteen thousand square foot production, distribution, and exhibition facility. With the ever-growing prominence of Appalshop's work and collaborations, it has since then established itself as a regional

cultural center (Lewis 1990, 80).

Appalshop is still rooted in the ideas of Richardson and its earliest members. For over forty years, the organization has valued open collaboration, a flexible framework for management, artistic freedom, equitable relationships, and distributed responsibilities across all members. With these tenets, Appalshop has created a democratic space, not only for artistic production, but also for building and supporting individual and collective leadership committed to engaging the core challenges of the region.

The extraordinary organizational growth that occurred early in its existence was possible, in part, because Richardson and the other Appalshop members were open to the ideas and efforts of anyone who wanted to collaborate. "I don't think in the beginning there was a master plan," says Smith. "The flexibility ended up being a very positive thing…There wasn't that 'No, we're a film workshop only.' The lack of this master plan at this point enabled Appalshop to adapt and adjust. So that growth was kind of an organic growth" (personal communication). The consequence of a genuine openness to collaborate, but limited financial and personnel resources, was the distribution of responsibilities such as fund raising or product distribution, typically allocated to designated individuals, on to the artists. Thus, the utmost commitment from each person to his or her work was essential, not only for the good of Appalshop but also for continued employment.

With the emphasis on individual pursuit and creative process, Appalshop has never instituted or encouraged certain methods of models for engaging with context and community over others. What resulted was not only a cadre of projects but numerous community engagement approaches as well. The inclusion of various media and artistic expressions, as well as the incorporation of emerging technology, also expanded the spectrum of possible methods. To add further complexity to the situation, because Appalshop has now been around long enough, is that those that were "enabled" initially are now both following their own pursuits as well working to critically engage others to build community capacity. As such, Appalshop employs no single methodology; rather, many methods are used, each with distinct intentions and desired

outcomes. Appalshop as an organization falls not just on one rung Arnstein's on ladder (described in Chapter Two), but rather is spread across "citizen control," "delegated power," "partnership" and "informing" rungs.

Sometimes, community individuals are the subject matter of an Appalshop production. These instances occur both when individuals approach Appalshop to assist with their efforts, as was the case for Pickering's *Buffalo Creek* films, and when Appalshop seeks them out, which happened when Barret produced *Stranger With a Camera* (Pickering, personal communication; Barret, personal communication). The act of sharing one's story and seeing it become part of a larger narrative and a completed product can be empowering for many (Pickering, personal communication). This method echoes those used by advocacy organizations to bring visibility a particular community struggle and promote the needs of a particular group of people.

Some projects are created to build or create relationships within or between communities. Roadside Theater's work with Pregones Theater in the Bronx is an example of a project intended to build relationships, understanding, and production between two distinct communities. Through Appalshop's Thousand Kites project (described under 'Projects'), the group staged a series of performances and story circle sessions to record stories and built a community around the injustices of the criminal justice system between towns across state of Virginia (Cocke, personal communication).

Still other Appalshop projects hand over control to community residents for the purpose of building leadership and increasing civic engagement. This happens most explicitly through the Appalachian Media Institute with youth from the region. The Community Media Initiative, volunteer radio programming positions, and amateur theater productions are also means for achieving such ends.

The added benefit of using media and arts for these projects comes from the multiple products that are created in each project. One product is the change that a method has on its participants. The other is the actual artistic creation itself. The latter product is distributable, audible, or visible to more that those who participated in its creation. This phenomenon means that the potential scale of impact could extend beyond these individuals.

Appalshop's organizational structure has evolved over time; today, it defies definition. "It's typical of Appalshop that different people have different interpretations of the organization's structure," says Pickering (personal communication). Smith referred to it as a collective, while Pickering thought that "in a collective, everybody makes all the decisions. We may have been that way at one point, but we're not anymore" (Smith, personal communication; Pickering, personal communication). This indefinable structure has managed to hold a fluctuating number of full -or part-time employees together, from one in 1969, to approximately thirty today. Central to Appalshop's operations is an administrative core that includes a financial administrator, a managing director, a sales and grants administrator, and a marketing and sales director. The core staff are the only Appalshop employees who interact with all projects across the organization (Adams, personal communication).

The various media deployed by Appalshop are divided into separate divisions, or "projects." There is currently no executive director overseeing all of the projects, and only twice in its history has the Appalshop board voted to create such a position. The first happened in the late 1970s, when it was decided that Appalshop needed someone to fundraise for the entire organization and give the newly created projects direction. The second time happened in the mid 1980s, when someone needed to be dedicated entirely to managing the buying, renovating, and moving into a new workspace (Pickering, personal communication).

Direction within each division varies. For example, Roadside Theater has both a managing director and artistic director; WMMT has a station manager; Appalshop Films has the "the Film Union" consisting of all the filmmakers at the organization. One person, currently Natasha Watts, is exclusively in charge of the Appalachian Media Institute. The Community Media Initiative, Appalshop's other outreach program, is directed by Mimi Pickering, who is also a full-time Film Union member herself (Appalshop "Directory" 2011).

When Appalshop began, the board consisted of Richardson and the six original core members. Decisions were made unanimously; although democratic, there was no process for what happened if

consensus was not achieved. This could slow down decision-making and project development (Kirby, personal communication). Today, the board of directors contains forty-one members today, including everyone currently employed who has been there at least one year, many former members, and several individuals who have worked collaboratively with Appalshop or bring particular expertise. They vote by majority now. Almost anyone who has been a member of Appalshop can be on the board, and membership to the board is permanent. An executive board consisting of a chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer, meets weekly (Adams, personal communication).

Appalshop members attribute a loose organizational structure to both enabling and detracting the organization from achieving its stated goals. On the one hand, the lack of a clearly delineated structure with job titles and preset expectations, or a hierarchical structure guided by one person, means that the creative work of individuals is not restricted. "Arguably, a group of independent people running along together will be more creative than the same group of people under central direction. And the creativity from Appalshop is remarkable," says Rich Kirby, a programmer at WMMT and musician (Kirby, personal communication). Projects proceed organically, informed by the creative process rather than a predetermined path. While one person may be in charge of providing the creative direction, writing the grant, doing the interviews, completing production, and distributing one project, group work and dialogue emerges from an open-ended structure. Smith states:

> At Appalshop...we don't have very well-defined job descriptions. Jobs run into one another...These kinds of titles – they really don't fit with the way we work. We spend a lot of time talking as a group. We critique the work as it comes in and have screenings as the material is put together and talk about what works and what doesn't. (quoted in Williamson and Arnold 1994, 22 - 23)

This independence also comes with drawbacks, for job security is not assured. Barret states that "people have had to learn to be entrepreneurial within the organization...We all have multiple projects at various stages that we are trying to pull off" (personal communication). While this entrepreneurial mentality arguably spurs innovative work, Kirby also notes that "self management...is just a blue ton of work" (personal communication).

Additionally, coming together as a board is a difficult and arduous task. "We all as board members contribute a lot of time to governing and running the organization, and it's time that takes away from artistic work and other types of work," Pickering says. As no one is charged with the responsibility of pulling together the divisions into a coherent whole, these board meetings often reflect the atomization of the divisions. The interests of the various divisions, or even that of individuals, usually supersede the good of the entire organization. Pickering expresses concerns over this situation:

> It's hard to have the institutional interests of the organization represented and worked for. I think those interests are really important if the organization is going to survive. There has to be somewhat more institutionalizing of it...It is difficult for people to separate the interests of their project or their personal interest from what might be the greater interest of the organization as a whole. (personal communication)

Kirby echoes Pickering's concerns, stating:

> "We're so introspective. We spend so much time talking about our own affairs and our own structure. It's really noteworthy, and frankly frustrating to me to be in an organization that has such a social mission and yet spends very little time internally talking about the world around us. We talk about how we are going to do our work and how we are going to pay for it and not what the work is, except in smaller units, like within projects. (personal communication)

Amongst some Appalshop members, there is a common desire for some kind of formal or informal leadership to look after the vision, direction (and cooperation) of the entire organization. Kirby says that while he senses a shared worldview among Appalshop members, there is "not anything really explicit...It would be nice to know, to have some sense, of shared perspectives and opinions about this fast-changing world that we are in" (personal communication). Pickering posits that good leadership would be beneficial to the larger institution and its internal divisions, but recognizes that unless this leadership role is a paid position, it will be hard to get. Even then, most people there do not want to take on this role (personal communication).

Without a clear vision, whether it comes from one leader or from a joint effort amongst the divisions, Appalshop places its future in a vulnerable position. Barret worries about how Appalshop will change to keep up with a rapidly changing regional context, as well as with emerging technologies. Both Pickering and Barret expressed concerns about how Appalshop is and will continue to transition over to a

new cadre of members. Many of the organization's initial members still work there today, but some have left and eventually others will retire. An unstated vision now could mean a drastically different Appalshop in the future. At the same time, Barret notes that there is a different expectation amongst some of the newer employees about what work at Appalshop should entail. Whereas Appalshop was made entirely by the Appalcore, new Appalshop members are inheriting something that is not entirely theirs'. Barret worries about how Appalshop will continue to a level of motivation that has enabled its work in the past (personal communication).

PROJECTS

Appalshop today manages a diverse set of projects. They continue to exist as long as they have someone to take responsibility for it, funding, and a need to fill. Over the years, projects that have lost one or more of these components have been terminated. While their termination has not proven to be detrimental to the overall success of Appalshop, it does begin to shed light on a source of vulnerability for the organization. An over-dependency on specific personnel or funding sources can change the course or terminate a project all together if that person leaves or funding is cut. Brief descriptions of the various projects in existence today follow.

APPALSHOP FILMS

The original division of Appalshop continues to this day, with approximately ten filmmakers involved in the 'Film Union.' As Smith states, Appalshop Films "makes films about things we like and about things we don't like" (personal communication). Appalshop Films, as many of the other projects do, makes pieces that document and celebrate regional cultural traditions, crafts, people, and landscapes, as well as pieces about relevant and quite often contentious issues being debated within the region and the nation. Many films are used by community groups; others are shown on Kentucky Educational Television, a state-wide public television station (Pickering, personal communication). The films and filmmakers have received numerous accolades over its four-decade span, from Sundance Film Festival screening to artistic scholar service awards.

Organized by Film Union member Mimi Pickering since the early 1990s, the Community Media Initiative "provides training and technical assistance to a variety of organizations through digital storytelling workshops, and works with grassroots groups and public interest advocates to develop and implement communication strategies in support of civic discourse, local problem solving, and social and economic justice organizing"(Appalshop "Community Media Initiative" 2010). According to Pickering, it "has been a lot of things" over its lifespan. It has worked with both radio and video, sometimes within the region with local partners like Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, other times outside the region, like a series of digital storytelling workshops it organized in the Mississippi delta. Pickering notes that the longer term engagements have proven to have greater impact on the capacities of participants to make change, but she also says that short-term workshops can be powerful for those "who have never thought that they could make a movie, be in a movie, or have their story told" (personal communication).

ROADSIDE THEATER

Roadside Theater began in 1975 when Dudley Cocke and his friend and colleague Don Baker approached Appalshop regarding their interest in creating a theater group. During the first twelve years of the theater, pieces focused "retelling the Appalachian history from a people's point of view," as opposed to the official history of the region told from the coal industry perspective. Roadside Theater then transitioned to an exploration of intercultural plays, "connecting the oral history to the oral histories of other people in other places, particularly other struggling cultures and communities" (Cocke, personal communication). The theater has incorporated professional, folk, and amateur actors into its ensemble, has created collaborative projects with theater groups in the Bronx; New Orleans; Williamsburg, Virginia; among many others, and, prior to severe national funding cuts in 1997 to the National Endowment for the Arts, had visited over one thousand communities in forty-three states (Cocke 2011, 1).

In an email to the author received on March 15, 2011, Cocke wrote that while 80% of theater patrons nationally are from the wealthiest 15% of the population, 80% of Roadside Theater's audience is from the middle class, working class, and poor. As such, Roadside Theater uses a variety of methods to

engage the communities it visits to create empowering experiences. For example, to ensure an audience of the target demographic, the theater will ask their host site to assemble an ecumenical choir from local black churches, white churches, and community choir groups. Community members affiliated with those participating will attend out of an interest to see their friends perform and a curiosity to hear a sound "that they've never had in that community before." Roadside Theater performances often serve as prompts for conversation. Issues of race and class, often explored in performances, are often explored further through story circles or opportunities for the audience members to create their own performances (Cocke, personal communication).

THOUSAND KITES

Thousand Kites is Appalshop's most interdisciplinary project to date, combining the efforts of theater, radio, film, and music into an on-the-ground and web-based platform for citizen empowerment project working to increase dialogue on social and civil rights issues in the criminal justice system. The program is operated by Appalshop staff from various divisions in collaboration with various advocacy and arts organizations, including Highlander. Thousand Kites work is fueled by the belief that "the criminal justice system is the most pressing civil rights issue in the United States" and that story telling and listening builds a foundation for people to organize against these injustices (Appalshop "Thousand Kites" 2011).

In the 1990s, the Appalachian region began seeing the construction of federal high-security supermax prisons in the region. As the regional incarcerated population grew, Thousand Kites founder Nick Szuberla began receiving letters from inmates who had heard his hip-hop radio show on WMMT. The letters often spoke of the injustices occurring within prisons. The project began in formally in 1998 with the organization of radio programs for prisoners and their families. Radio soon became a means for inmates and the families to broadcast messages to each other, to tell personal stories about the criminal justice system, and express themselves creatively through music and spoken word poetry. Audio collected on the radio and through call-in opportunities has been documented and made public on the Thousand Kites website (Appalshop "Thousand Kites" 2011).

Donna Porterfield of Roadside Theater wrote a two-act play with the same name. The first act is

a unfolds as a reading by a dozen actors, wherein a collection of stories from people affected by the prison system – not only the incarcerated population, but also their families, the communities they come from, the employees of prisons, and the communities that prisons are located in - are shared. The actors too are associated with the system, and at the end of the first act they introduce themselves and share their affiliation. The second act "goes to the audience," as Cocke explains, and audience members tell their own stories as they relate to those heard in the first. Through the sharing of their own testimonials, "They deepen the story on the stage," says Cocke. Both acts are recorded and uploaded to the main web interface of Thousand Kites (Cocke, personal communication).

WMMT MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY RADIO

Established in 1985, WMMT is, according to Kirby, "real people radio" (Kirby, personal communication). Found on both at 88.7 on the FM dial and now also streaming online (for the "displaced hillbillies out there, as well as many wannabe hillbillies," WMMT is operated by several full and part time staff and operated with the assistance of approximately forty local volunteers. (WMMT Mountain Community Radio 2010). Unlike most radio stations that try to appeal to carve out an audience around a specific musical genre, WMMT programming is reflective of a wide range of preferences in the region. Kirby believes that what is heard on WMMT is reflective of the people in the region, as the cadre of volunteers bring their own preferences and interests to the radio waves. At one time, WMMT organized the Community Correspondents Corps, a program rooted in the idea of citizen journalism. This project proved to be too time and energy intensive for the short-staffed station (Kirby, personal communication).

APPALACHIAN MEDIA INSTITUTE

The Appalachian Media Institute is a media training and leadership program for young people to "develop the skills and critical thinking abilities necessary to become leaders in creating sustainable futures for their communities" (Appalshop "About AMI" 2010). The program works to build self-confidence, creativity, and civic responsibility in it participants by creating an experience that allows them to initiate dialogue and action around social issues in their community.

Initiated in 1988, the program operated for many years as exclusively as a full-time video-production summer program. In addition to the summer program, the Institute now also operates "labs" during the spring and fall seasons, wherein groups meet twice a week to develop an array of radio, digital film, and other pieces. There is an intensive application process to be "hired" as an intern. This is done in part because staff seek to discover underlying "creative flair" that is not always apparent in a region with little to no arts education programming. Staff ask questions like "If you could produce anything, what would it be, and why is that important to you?" and "What do you think of eastern Kentucky?" to see if someone has a particularly unique perspective on an issue or has a unusual thought about how to investigate and shoot such footage. The intensive process also validates the program as a job (as opposed to a summer camp) that comes not just with a paycheck but also significant responsibility and expectation (Watts, personal communication).

The Institute helps young people explore how media production skills can be used to ask, and begin to answer, critical questions of themselves and their communities. During the summer, interns work in teams to bring a video project from conceptualization to completion. The ideas, the process, and the artistic direction and aesthetic are determined not by staff but by interns. There is, however, an expectation within the Institute that high quality work will be produced. "You can't just produce anything," says Watts. During the Institute, staff "push and push and push," the interns while providing them assistance and support by giving teams Appalshop mentors and bringing artists from the organization into design critiques (Watts, personal communication).

TRADITIONAL MUSIC PROJECT

The project today organizes a Pick n' Bow program for school children in four school districts. Trying to fill a gap left by underfunded music programs in public schools, musicians participate in a weekly afterschool program teaching children (and interested community members) an indigenous style of music. The project also organizes a monthly jam session as well as Old Time Days, an annual event of workshops and concerts (Ratliff, personal communication).

June Appal Recordings

June Appal Recordings was established in 1974 as a way for local artists to have their work recorded and distributed regionally and nationally. Since its inception it has recorded both traditional mountain music and contemporary musicians, both legendary names and emerging artists, from the region. The recording studio is no longer functioning, but the label still actively distributes it products.

Mountain Review

The *Mountain Review*, a quarterly journal of poems, photography, fiction stories and articles by Appalachians, was distributed between 1974 and 1981, ceasing when funding from the National Endowment for the Arts expired. It had never been widely circulated, however, going mostly to scholars and libraries outside the region. Staff working on the project lost motivation over time and left, and other staff were too busy with other work to adopt the project (Abbate-Winkel 1995, 137).

Mountain Photography

Mountain Photography was a photography education workshop operated in the early 1980s in part by the esteemed photographer Wendy Ewald. Using a process she developed prior to coming to Whitesburg, she shared cameras with her young students and guided them through an exploration of their surroundings and their identity. She sought to instill in them more than technical proficiency. Rather, she hoped that what she was doing was a "key to a creative process that they may use in other ways...[for] problem solving in other ways" (University of California 2002). Her project at Appalshop, however, ended when she left to pursue similar projects internationally (Barret, personal communication).

COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP

Today, Appalshop's reputation in and its relationship to the community of Whitesburg are tenuous. In addition to the "hippie" label it still carries, the organization has also been branded as "anti-coal" by many, which, for a region whose economic crux is the coal industry, is a reason for concern (Adams, personal communication). Interestingly, although Appalshop has produced a lot of work on issues surrounding the

industry, the work is often more investigative than advocating against coal (films have, for example, looked at the working conditions of coal mining women, at mining disasters, or coal ash spills). Additionally, coal-related pieces make up only a small proportion of Appalshop's total output. Nonetheless, the topic is already highly controversial in the region, and Appalshop is a vocal participant in the conversation.

An online Whitesburg forum on the website Topix.com reveals a lively, ongoing dialogue between supporters of Appalshop and a very vocal contingent of "appalhead" adversaries. In September of 2009, a Whitesburg residents wrote, "I think they are a bunch of 'Tree Hugging Freaks'…They probably think we can run the world on peace and love (like the 60's hippies) and eliminate coal…They should be ran outta Letcher County." Others countered with sentiments of support, saying "If it wasn't for these so called 'appalheads'…you'd be making not even half of what you do in the coal mines."

Appalshop's efforts historically have been focused more on regional themes and topics that on one-on-one relationship building in Whitesburg. Its efforts in respect to the actual town are acupunctural. The organization has maintained distance from city officials and other groups in Whitesburg with whom they could collaborate, in part because of their history of skepticism with each other. Interestingly, "when you get outside of Letcher County, you'll hear nothing but good stuff about Appalshop" (Adams, personal communication). While Appalshop's production is valued by the region and the nation, their host community still seems uncertain about their presence.

PLACE

The town of Whitesburg is tucked between steep Appalachian mountainsides and laced by the convolutions of the Kentucky River. Men and women wearing distinctive coal mining attire are ubiquitous on the streets after working hours. According to Amelia Kirby, owner of Summit City Café, the town has seen a slow growth of local economic activity, although one still sees vacant storefronts throughout the town (Amelia Kirby, personal communication). Appalshop is located on Madison Street, just east of the center of town.

With facades clad with wood planking and very few windows on the ground floor, Appalshop's

three-story office assumes an introverted profile, looking more like a private office than a space for public interaction. Entered from the side, the structure contains a gallery-style foyer, a conference room, a darkroom, and the WMMT radio station on the ground floor. The second floor is punctured by a large light well, next to which is a space with couches and tables for informal gathering. The second floor also contains the main administrative offices, a kitchen, and the offices of radio programmers. The Film Union and the Appalachian Media Institute offices are housed on the third floor. In 2000, Appalshop purchased the Boone Motor Building down the street from its main office. The space contains gallery and performance space, and is used frequently by interns of the Appalachian Median Institute (Appalshop 2007). The main office of Roadside Theater is located in Norton, Virginia, thirty miles south of Whitesburg.

WHAT IS SUCCESS, ACCORDING TO APPALSHOP?...AND HOW IS IT MEASURED?

Given the individualistic nature of Appalshop, there is no organization-wide definition for success. Each member and each project can have a distinct definition of success and a subsequent metric for measuring its success. Across my interviewees, however, I discovered that success is measured at two levels: that of the artist, and that of the community.

Mimi Pickering defines success partly in respect to her personal artistic pursuit of "creating something or artistic value and worth, from the perspective of the creator; feeling the satisfaction of having created something that's meaningful to you and you find artistically engaging." She adds that not completing a project she has begun is personally unsuccessful (Pickering, personal communication). Barret and Smith also note that success has to do with personally believing that they have made a well-crafted film of artistic merit (Smith, personal communication; Barret, personal communication). For Dudley Cocke, success means that the organization is continually learning. "We look at our work on a continuum and as an experiment," he says. For Roadside Theater, a measure of success is being able to continually learn from past projects and implement the lessons in future projects. Reflection during and after a project is key to maintaining a high learning curve (Cocke, personal communication).

There is a strong conviction, however, that their artistic pursuits are not done in vain. A successful project is one that is meaningful and relevant to the audience and has the potential to affect them. Pickering expands her description of success, stating, "If [your] work can have an effect on other people: from the standpoint of enjoying something, that they also find a rewarding experience in an artistic sense, or having the work be used as part of empowering a community or organizing around an issue. That's a real sign of success" (Pickering, personal communication). Smith echoes this notion, stating, "You hope that there's something [in your film] that's going to speak to people and have an effect" (Smith, personal communication).

Having an effect on policy is also a measure of success for Appalshop. Smith says his most successful project was a film he created for the Broad Form Deed Campaign the mid-1980s in collaboration with Kentuckians for the Commonwealth. Broad form deeds were signed in the 1880s and 1890s to separate ownership of the surface from ownership of the minerals below. The owner of the mineral rights below was not held liable for disrupting the surface of the land. When mining was primarily a subsurface activity, this was not a critical concern to the landowner, but when surface mining practices emerged in the middle of the twentieth century, landowners began to speak out. Smith produced a film on the issues surrounding the broad form deed. It was shown across the entire state of Kentucky on Kentucky Educational Television just days before an amendment to repeal the law was coming up for public vote. 82% of the public voted in favor of repealing the law they deemed to be unconstitutional. Although the film was one part of a larger educational campaign headed by Kentuckians for the Commonwealth, Smith believes that his film – and the strategic timing of its debut – influenced the vote (Smith, personal communication).

Finally, Appalshop looks to affect individual transformation in its most intimate participants. Pickering says:

> I also think the things we do, like the Appalachian Media Institute…[is about] engaging the young people – coming to understand media literacy, how to make media, coming to understand their own culture and heritage and appreciation in that. The project is more about leadership develop than creating another generation of filmmakers. A lot of graduates of that program are young people who might have followed the more tradition path of "getting an education and getting out." Instead, they've got an education, and a lot of them have come back to do different things in the region. (personal communication).

Roadside Theater Director Dudley Cocke says that full engagement of the audience is one measure of success. The theater strives to engage the audience in the "entire continuum" of a theatrical product (Cocker, personal communication). From the initial research, to the script, to production, and finally to touring, the theater gives the audience the opportunity to contribute to the work forming.

APPALSHOP, EVALUATED AGAINST SEVEN MEASURES OF SUCCESS

1. THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY LEADERS.

The original film workshop enabled young participants from the region the opportunity to play leading roles in an emerging regional movement for re-thinking Appalachia as a place for living and working, and with a heritage to celebrate. The first participants who were trained were given the responsibility and autonomy to create their own work, as well as trust with handling the technical equipment. They then became trainers for subsequent groups, and Appalshop's openness for collaboration allowed others with various artistic interests to emerge as leading socially-minded and politically-active artists (Barret, personal communication). Thus, the workshop was never a place for technical training, but rather a platform for emerging leaders to develop their voices.

Since much of Appalshop's work is distributable in nature (and depends on distribution for income), the organization's members have become leaders of a regional community. With their work – be it in radio, theater, film, or music – they actively supplement regional dialogues today over sometimes contentious issues. Their productions are not advocacy pieces; that is, they are not biased (at least overtly) towards or against particular issues. Instead, they often take the form of narratives, documentaries, or investigatory work. They discover facts, opinions, and stories, and present them for the regional audience to react to and discuss. The members of Appalshop have become community leaders by serving as informants – creating or discovering knowledge and disseminating it.

The mission of the Appalachian Media Institute harkens to Appalshop's early goal of being more than a vocational program. "We not trying to produce a new generation of filmmakers," says Natasha Watts, the Institute's interim director. The program is explicitly about developing leadership in youth from the

region. Although interns do acquire technical skills, and some have gone on to use them professionally, "in the end it's about leadership, and that leadership derives from the fact that they have complete and utter ownership over everything," notes Watts. "It's their idea, it's their production list, it's their editing, it's their marketing…[The students are] extremely independent in all aspects…and they are held to a high standard." In a place like eastern Kentucky, which Watts describes to be as one where there is little sense of self worth among youth or an expectation of them to perform to a high standard, the Appalachian Media Institute builds confidence by building high-quality media projects (Watts, personal communication).

2. AN INCREASE IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

Appalshop increases civic engagement for the members or participants of Appalshop, and for those who interact in some way with their artistic products. In its infancy, Appalshop was a way for civically minded individuals from the region to stay in the region and engage in local and regional events and issues. The organization continues to provide this platform for those who are committed to the region. In addition to the actual employees of Appalshop, this opportunity is shared with local residents: they can support WMMT by being a volunteer programmer, or teach traditional music in local schools. Through their exposure to the filmmaking process, youth interns of the Appalachian Media Institute have the opportunity to explore their surroundings, see the value and importance of local heritage, and uncover information about their particular topics of interest. The Institute provides an unusual opportunity to discuss and explore contentious issues that no one wants to speak of otherwise. Watts recalls her experience as an intern with the Institute as "uncomfortable," but ultimately life-changing, because she was used to living in or around the struggles of the region – extreme poverty, the mining industry, environmental degradation, lack of quality public education, drug abuse – but they were never spoken of. "You'd just exist within it…and that's what it was," she recalls. At the Institute, however, interns spend time looking at films about the region, and talk about them, and then go out and explore it for themselves. Watts' experience was like many others, which while uncomfortable at first, finally allowed her to engage with her community (Watts, personal communication).

The various divisions of Appalshop increase civic engagement through collaborations with

communities, community groups, and advocacy organizations. Roadside Theater uses performances as a way to start a conversation about issues such as race, class, or the prison system, and then engage the audience with story circles afterwards so that individuals can actively share their stories and actively engage them in personal yet omniscient struggles (Cocke, personal communication). After being asked by a West Virginia community to record its struggles with a local chemical plant, filmmaker Mimi Pickering used digital video not only to produce a final film, *Chemical Valley*, but to work iteratively with the community, so that community groups, as well as national campaigns, could use short, edited pieces almost instantly to organize around. The film was shown on Point Of View (a documentary film series on the Public Broadcasting Station) and generated attention. Pickering recalls, "we had calls from a number of unions of people working at various chemical plants where there had been different health and safety issues, and so they wanted to get the film and use it to show in their community and among their union members." Thus, not only was increased engagement enabled in the specific community Pickering worked with, but by a larger, national topically-based community (Pickering, personal communication).

3. A GROWING NETWORK OF PARTICIPANTS, COLLABORATORS, AND SUPPORTERS.

The first collaborators of Appalshop were those who came to start up new divisions within the organization. They used the Appalshop platform to support their endeavors, while simultaneously fortifying the entire initiative. Collaborations today occur primarily on a per-project basis. Depending on the length of the project, this can span from a few days or weeks to many years. The Community Media Initiative has collaborated with organizations from the Mississippi Delta in week-long digital storytelling workshops (Pickering, personal communication). Roadside Theater has developed multi-year collaborations with the Free Southern Theater in New Orleans, Pregones Theater in the Bronx, and Native American artists in Zuni, New Mexico (Roadside Theater 2001).

Apparent in the entire collection of Appalshop's work is that, as the organization has matured and the network of participants, collaborators, and supporters grown numerically, it has also grown geographically. Appalshop has intentionally pushed beyond the region and even the country to establish collaborative relationships. These experiences reflect the underlying belief of Appalshop that they experience struggles

similar to those of other disenfranchised communities. In addition to the theater collaborations listed above, the Film Union has collaborated with filmmakers from Indonesia (Appalshop 2008). These projects have offered the organization the opportunity to expand their dialogue of critical regional concerns across a large audience and create something entirely new with the collaborating partner.

The Appalachian Media Institute reaches beyond the region to draw interns from various parts of the country in hopes of diversifying the group. Watts recalls her experience as an intern, in which she roomed with an African-American girl from the Delta. Having never worked closely with anyone who was not white, she was initially uncomfortable. Just as the actual work of the Institute makes interns confront contentious issues, the entire living experience does as well. "Everything that you never had to speak about is on the plate, every day...twenty-four hours a day." The experience challenged her to explore the racial diversity that is present in other regions of the country. Watts recalls this experience as a major contributor to her growth that summer (Watts, personal communication).

4. THE CREATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

From the beginning, methods used in traditional participatory action research have been incorporated Appalshop's media projects. The knowledge is created or discovered by the use of media, which provides an opportunity to critically sense their environs. Knowledge is then captured and recorded in their films, songs, radio programs, and theatrical performances. The act of documentation can change ideas about what locally is an asset, as was the case in Appalshop's earliest films, or highlight assets of interest, like their more recent films that look at prominent regional singers and performers. Documentation has also assisted activists and advocates in their various struggles, as recorded evidence can provide a powerful tool to leverage for public support.

5. THE CREATION OF SPIN-OFF PROJECTS.

Appalshop has generated a number of spin-off projects, both within its first few years and throughout its history, that are housed within the organization as new projects and divisions. The presence of the initial film workshop and the opportunity it presented to Appalachian residents to tell their own stories inspired

others to begin telling their own stories through various media. The novelty of the initial endeavor and its informal organizational structure made it an available, accessible facilitator for personal exploration, individual growth, and social development. Smith recalls that the sentiment of Appalshop that made it possible:

> Look, we're here for the people in this part of the country to say whatever they've got to say, through whatever medium we can make available. Come to us. We ain't got no cash. We ain't gonna *fund* ya, but we'll scramble with ya. And we'll try to piece it together, so that we can all do it, do what we're interested in doing. (quoted in Williamson and Arnold 1994, 401-402)

Appalshop has been in Whitesburg long enough that "Appalshop babies" – those nominally connected but not directly affiliated with the organization - have started to revitalize downtown Whitesburg. Pickering says that they have been able to work with city officials and tourism groups to make Whitesburg and Letcher County more hospitable to visitors. These collaborations, she adds, have not been possible with Appalshop, because historically Appalshop has been standoffish (Pickering, personal communication). Amelia Kirby, daughter of Rich Kirby and Beth Bingham, both Appalshop employees, started Summit City Café several years ago. The downtown cafe seeks to prove that alternatives to the status quo are possible and sustainable in rural Kentucky by serving healthy, organic foods and hosting live music (often on regional or national tours). Amelia Kirby remembers the skepticism she faced from local residents as she was renovating the historic storefront property (Amelia Kirby, personal communication). Fortunately, the café is financially sound today and continues to expand its culinary and musical offerings.

The Center for Rural Strategies, a non-profit located in 2001 in Whitesburg, is "a definite extension of what Appalshop has been doing" (Pickering, personal communication). The organization seeks to use media and communications tools creatively to make positive change in the economic and social conditions of rural communities globally, and collaborates with other non-profits to help them strategically incorporate media and communications into their work (Center for Rural Strategies 2011). The center was started by a former Appalshop employee; today, four out of the seven employees are former members of the Appalshop. Pickering says that the work the individuals did while at Appalshop informs what they do now, but they

have taken it to a larger scale beyond the Appalachian region (personal communication). Lastly, the Cowan Creek Mountain Music School was started a decade ago as a result of the Traditional Music Project. The summer program consists of a week of intensive musical instruction for youth at least eleven years old through adults. Regional masters teach beginning to advanced workshop in traditional fiddle, banjo, guitar, mandolin, singing, square dancing and storytelling (Cowan Creek Mountain Music School 2011).

6. THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE INITIATIVE

Personnel/Organizational Culture and Structure:

The lessons provided by Richardson's leadership and approach very early on enabled him to vanquish many of his responsibilities and share them (and eventually turn them over entirely) to the other members of Appalshop. Because of the organization's structure, individual projects can be vulnerable if they are entirely dependent on one person for direction. If that person leaves, the project ends, as was the case for the Mountain Photography project. Other employees did not have the time and/or expertise to absorb the project. Appalshop's continuation is not dependent on the presence of one leader. At the same time, a lack of overall leadership has resulted in an organization without a clear vision for its current and future work. Many within Appalshop wonder how the organization will transition in the future as its original members leave or retire. While the shared tenets of their mission may stay the same, there is worry about how they will be interpreted by newcomers (Barret, personal communication; Pickering, personal communication). Additionally, because of the "atomization" of Appalshop described previously, there has been little effort made to create cross-disciplinary work.

Relevancy:

Although the impetus for Appalshop came from an external agent, Richardson's and the young filmmakers' initial focus on investigating, capturing, or celebrating local culture, has remained consistent throughout its history. Over the years, Appalshop has been involved with many of the region's current events or emerging struggles, in both purely informative and advocating roles. The subject matter of their work, be it a radio series, a film, or a performance, continues to be drawn from emerging or existing regional concerns, like the growing rural prison industry, as well as the regional and local traditions that are still vibrant.

Twenty-five years ago, Appalshop was one of numerous similar institutions nationally in what Cocke refers to as "a multi-cultural, democratic arts movement." Today, because of significant cuts in public funding for the arts over the past decades, Appalshop stands with just a few cohorts. Cocke believes that the dwindling of the movement coincides with a general decline of democratic dialogue across all sectors nationally. Referencing his current work to reinstate the significance of the democratic arts, Cocke wrote in an email to the author on March 10, 2011 that the nonprofit arts that exist today need to become "an integral part of a U.S. democracy movement, advocating that the movement – through its critical discourse about artistic excellence and equal opportunity for expression - create accountability to democratic cultural values and to the global struggle for cultural equity." In this respect, the work of Appalshop as one of a few a democratic arts organizations is more relevant than ever to the future of national democracy.

Funding:

Barret believes that Appalshop's financial situation has been and will continue to be is the organization's biggest source of vulnerability. Historically, the organization strived to create a funding pool composed by equal parts sales, private funding, and public funding. For the past ten years, Appalshop has depended heavily on private funding. Kirby worries of the danger inherent in a situation wherein an organization that serves the public receives funding from private sources, and where the actual constituency lies. On a more pragmatic level, Appalshop employees have to take on numerous projects to ensure some level of job stability, which can be exhausting to maintain over time (Kirby, personal communication).

7. THE SUCCESSFUL EXECUTION OF STATED GOALS

The initial goal of Appalshop was to create a viable alternative to stay in the Appalachian region without working for the coal industry. This goal, as demonstrated by the still-employed Appalcore, has been successfully achieved. Appalshop created an approach to working and provided the necessary technical skills to implement it, neither of which were present in the region. Watts also notes that many Appalachian Media Institute interns will return to the region after they graduate college to pursue various interests. Although we cannot assume that their choice to do so is a direct result of their experience at the Institute, Watts believes that the experience of exploring one's own community and producing meaningful work that

they have as interns could definitely be an influence (personal communication).

The goals in Appalshop's mission statement are timid in relation to what I perceive to be the underlying hopes of Appalshop's members. As a group, they do accomplish their stated goals: they do share the traditions of Appalachia; they do tell the common man's side of the tale; they do support communities' struggles for justice; they do celebrate the diversity of the region; and they broaden their own dialogue to interface with others at a national and global scale. However, I learned from Appalshop's employees that behind all of their work is the hope that their voice – their collective voice of Appalachians - will be heard, and larger, systemic change will happen. "I know we thought that there would be more change by now," Smith says. "There is a part of it that's sad…What you hope for is that the reality would have changed enough in the last forty years so that you don't have to make a film about bad mining practices anymore, or that the film you made about bad mining practices in the Seventies is now obsolete…" (personal communication). Appalshop, however, still responds to the challenges of the coal industry in its work, as well as the numerous other critical injustices and social concerns that have developed in this forty years.

130: MAIN STREET, WHITESBURG, KENTUCKY (TAKEN BY P.JONES)

131: SIGN ON THE SIDE OF THE APPALSHOP STUDIO (SOURCE: FLIKR.COM, COURTESY OF 'CONSPIRACYOFHAPPINESS')

132: APPALSHOP, FROM THE PARKING LOT (LEFT), BOONE MOTOR BUILDING (BEHIND RIGHT)

133: INTERIOR OF APPALSHOP, FROM THE GROUND FLOOR

134: NEARBY VALLEY FILL (TAKEN BY P.JONES)

135: NEARBY MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL (TAKEN BY P.JONES)

(PHOTOGRAPHS WERE TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE)

THE VILLAGE OF ARTS
AND HUMANITIES

"The Village of Arts and Humanities' mission is to build community through innovative arts, educational, social, construction, and economic and youth development programs. In all of its projects and activities, the Village seeks to support justice to the humanity and social conditions of people who live in inner city North Philadelphia and in similar urban communities" (The Village of Arts and Humanities "About Us" 2010)

"People are realizing that our community is a great resource. We are a gold mine. We are like a piece of coal. Diamond in the rough."

– Reverend Clarence Hester (quoted in Hufford and Miller 2005, 63)

Along a small stretch of Germantown Avenue in North Philadelphia, something was markedly different. Despite the bleak late winter sky that comprised the backdrop of my visit to the neighborhood, bright colors were abundant. Instead of vacant parcels, there were parks filled with artwork. Undulating half-height walls covered entirely by irregular shards of color tile delineated some of spaces. Others were filled with benches and sculptures also treated with mosaic. Walls overlooking the parks and alleys were painted with gigantic murals, some inspired by African Dogon imagery, others depicting magical scenes of monstrous flowers, powerful angels, and spirited children. Fallow garden plots hinted at forthcoming cultivation. Instead of abandoned buildings and boarded up storefronts there were buildings with re-inspired facades. Their windows provided glimpses of colorful interiors and youthful energy.

The main education center of the Village of Arts and Humanities sits at a kink in Germantown Avenue at the corner of Alder Street, about three miles from downtown Philadelphia. The physical and social fabric of the city morphs considerably during the short fifteen-minute ride on the 23 bus. Departing a dense downtown, one enters neighborhoods of increasing vacancy. After the flux of development around Temple University, the bus comes to the neighborhood of the Village. Once the "workshop to the world," many of North Philadelphia's factories closed in the 1950s, and many local merchants left the area the following decade because of civil rights riots (Hufford and Miller 2005, 18). The area, known to some today as "the Badlands" has been a battleground of the city's drug wars.

In the midst of a tenuous landscape, the Village of Arts and Humanities continues to rebuild a village center with community members through both physical transformation and artistic production. The Village believes that "placing art in vulnerable places and art making is key to improving the lives of vulnerable people" (The Village of Arts and Humanities "About Us" 2010). However, the Village does more than place and make art. At the Village, placing art and transforming the physical landscape is about "undoing the searing effects of systematized racism and poverty" (Hufford and Miller 2005, 40). Artistic expression and production is used first as a vehicle for developing individual capacity for leadership, and then as a means for addressing chronic issues that the community deals with constructively. In this way, the process of creating art is also a process of identifying and responding to the myriad challenges faced

by the neighborhood. In the Center for Documentary Studies' publication *Local Heroes Changing America*, Yeh states, "The Village is where art and society and politics and social work are all merged into one, and this is where the arts are the skeleton and the backbone of everything we deliver. I always say that art is not just the product that we produce, like a mural a park, and a performance. It's much more essential to our daily activities. Art is creativity in thinking, in methodology, in implementation" (quoted in Rudy Bruner Foundation 2001, 10).

HISTORICAL, SPATIAL, AND IDEOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT

The timeline of the Village can be divided into two distinct periods. The first began with its founding in 1986 by Lily Yeh and continued until her departure in 2002. The second period commenced with the assumption of directorship by Kumani Gantt and continues until present day under Executive Director Elizabeth Grimaldi. I suggest this division, because with the transition of leaders came a dramatic change in leadership style and subsequent philosophy for community engagement. This has altered the ways in which community members participate and the roles they play in the direction of the Village.

LILY YEH

The early years of the Village tell a story of personal volition and vision. In 1986 Arthur Hall, who for nearly twenty years had directed the Ile Ife Black Humanitarian Center in North Philadelphia, called upon his friend and colleague, artist Lily Yeh, for assistance. The nationally-known choreographer and African dancer asked her to work with a $2,500 grant he had received from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts to restore a vacant lot next to the studio (Jackson and Moskin 2004, 4). Born in China, Yeh grew up in Taiwan, and moved to the United States in the 1960s to attend the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Fine Arts. She was a professional artist and professor at the Philadelphia University of the Arts when Hall requested her assistance (Leggiere 2000).

Yeh initially did not want to take on the challenge, fearing that she would flounder without any prior experience with construction or working with landscapes, and that she would mesh with the almost entirely African-American community. Yet she accepted the challenge. An obvious outsider, she was initially met

with skepticism and suspicion. With the assistance of two then-drug addicts, Joseph (JoJo) Williams and James "Big Man" Maxton, as well as a cadre of local youth, she constructed sculptures covered with mosaics, gardens, pathways, and a stage, and painted a mural covering the entire exterior side of the Hall's studio facing the park. Now called *Ile Ife* Park (translated from the Ibo language in Nigeria as "house of love"), this was the first of twelve art parks that would be created throughout the Village (Rudy Bruner Foundation 2001, 8).

Yeh recalled later that she "did not start out to create a detailed system for doing [her] work" nor did she ever intend "to create an organization to sustain [her] work and the work of others..." (Jackson and Moskin 2004, 4). Yet three years later, after transforming other vacant lots in the neighborhood, she founded the Village of Arts and Humanities and gave up her position at the university. Yeh recruited Stephen Sayre, a writer and builder, to assist her with the renovation of Arthur Hall's then abandoned three-story facility into an education center. Shortly afterwards, the Village began inviting youth from the neighborhood to attend arts classes after school (Rudy Bruner Foundation 2001, 9).

Yeh's "living sculpture" grew steadily, incrementally, and organically. Empty buildings were renovated into art studios, classrooms spaces, multipurpose rooms, offices, and housing. Vacant lots became gardens, tree farms, meditation parks and art parks. Through the process of creating and maintaining community spaces, social relationships were also created. Anyone who wanted to help was invited to participate in the process of making, and some individuals, like Big Man, came back enthusiastically time and again. New construction, art classes, gardens, health programs, celebrations and cultural events brought builders, children, gardeners, the elderly, and neighbors to the Village (Rudy Bruner Foundation 2001, 7-9).

The early 1990s saw the introduction of performance art in the built environment. The first plays were drawn from neighbors' stories and were performed in outdoor performance spaces scattered throughout the Village. These productions became a yearly tradition, and as word of them spread outside the Village, the group, comprised of neighborhood youth, began traveling beyond its boundaries, and even internationally to countries like Mexico and Ireland (Salisbury 2001).

During her later years at the Village, Yeh began exploring similar community-based arts endeavors

abroad in Africa, South America, and Asia. She believed that the Village was staffed by highly skilled individuals and had good rapport, communication, and interaction with the surrounding community. In 2003, Yeh resigned to focus her energy on efforts abroad, setting up the organization Barefoot Artists to bring the Village concept and model to other locations (Barefoot Artists 2011).

Yeh took two significant actions before leaving to address possible difficulties for the Village as it transitioned to a new leader. Yeh realized that documentation of her methods, which were particular to the community-based arts field, could prove useful for both the Village staff and for others engaged in similar community building work elsewhere. With assistance she created *Warrior Angel: The Work of Lily Yeh*, a report that documents her core beliefs and methods. In *Warrior Angel*, Yeh stated that the Village's ultimate intention was and continues to be "to build a new kind of urban village where people are reconnected with their families, sheltered in descent housing, sustained by meaningful work, nurtured by the care from one another, and thus can protect and raise their children together" (Jackson and Moskin 2004, 6). Her second significant action – her final "gift," as she called it, to the North Philadelphia community - was the initiation of a community-wide, participatory planning process called "Shared Prosperity," which intended to spread the re-envisioning process apparent in the Village more equitably across the entire neighborhood. Described in the North Philadelphia Green Corridor Plan, the project strove to "weld the various grassroots revitalization efforts of many community groups in our area into a unified force. Guided by a shared vision for one future and supported by a clearly defined methodology, the unified force will focus on the transformation of this inner city area into a place of great vitality and joy" (Hufford and Miller 2005, 33).

A steering committee of twenty-five community members was formed, including pastors representing various congregations, members of nonprofit organizations representing various social service and educational constituencies, and local business leaders (Hufford and Miller 2005, 34). They partnered with students and faculty from University of Pennsylvania's Penn Praxis and Temple University's Urban Design Studio. Over the course of many months, they together developed a five-year plan for community development that the group could then leverage for funding and organizing. A large public meeting was attended by over several hundred community residents, wherein students and steering committee members

had ideas on display and residents could casually meet them and respond to their proposals (35). The ethos of Shared Prosperity – to spread brainstorming and decision-making responsibilities across all willing neighborhood residents – was incorporated into the Village's own methodology, ultimately transforming the role of internal leadership and the organization's relationship to the greater community.

PASSING THE TORCH

In 2004, Baltimore-based theater artist and poet Kumani Gantt succeeded Yeh. The transition was celebrated during the nighttime culmination of the Village's annual harvest celebration, *Kujenga Pamoja* (Swahili for "Together We Build"). Yeh, standing atop a knoll in one of the Village's parks, held a torch in her hand as Gantt processed slowly towards her along a labyrinthine pathway, and celebrants around the park sang "This Little Light of Mine." With the reception of the torch from Yeh's extended arm, and the reciting of an original poem "Psalm for an Impending Rapture," Yeh completed her eighteen-year directorship at the Village (Hufford and Miller 2005, 12).

Under Gantt's aegis, the Village focused less on the physical expansion of the Village and more so on the programs activating them. Gantt brought talented theater directors to the Village to assist with the production of youth performances. One such performance, *Secret History: The Philadelphia Story*, involved youth from the Village and from People's Light & Theatre in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The actors, from two distinct backgrounds, performed a script written by a New York-based theater director that was based on recorded interviews with the participants. The project provided an outlet for the Village's youth to share stories and talk about difficult issues – living paycheck to paycheck, dealing with family deaths from street violence, teen pregnancy – and share with a group they would not have interfaced with otherwise. The play was performed at the Painted Bride Art Center in Philadelphia, an organization the Village has collaborated with for a number of years (Wink 2009).

Under Gantt, youth art classes became more intensive, with each student being able to focus on only one class per ten-week term. The decision reflected Gantt's desire to raise the standards of the afterschool arts program by pushing for the creation of high quality products and strong, skill sets that were translatable beyond the classroom. "I felt we were offering too many classes with not enough depth," she said. "Now

we're like, "Okay, you want to make a music video? Prove it…The skills you get creating an artistic project absolutely translate into skills you need to succeed in life," she says. "We're working to support young people so they can make it through" (Rubino 2006).

The current executive director, Elizabeth Grimaldi, assumed leadership in July of 2009. She is carrying out a project begun by Gantt called "Digging Deeper." The project was funded by a $60,000 grant from the Pew Center for Arts and Humanities to enable the Village to "engage in a planning process to develop a strategy for restoring the "Village Heart." According to Grimaldi, Digging Deeper will explore how the Village's "land and facilities can be leveraged to maximize creative energy and function…to make sure that our space is conducive to [artists'] work" (Grimaldi "SimVillage" 2010).

The Village continues to emphasize land stewardship in other ways as well. Owning fifty-six lots of land and seven buildings, it also maintains an additional eighty-seven lots of city-owned and abandoned private land with the assistance of Philadelphia Green (Grimaldi "Feedback on Vacant-lot Fund Cut" 2010). An herb garden on the premises is used in conjunction with herb identification and cooking courses. An adjacent garden of raised beds was built with the assistance of youth volunteers from City Year (a nation-wide non-profit organization offering year-long service opportunities). According to an announcement posted to the Village's Facebook page on March 7, 2011, in recognition of its ongoing environmental work, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter chose the Village as the place to celebrate the one-month countdown to the annual Philly Clean-Up in March of 2011. The afternoon was filled with festivities for the community, including Afro-Caribbean drumming, dancing, a barbeque, and remarks from the Mayor.

Grimaldi hopes to expand the Village's role as a vital neighborhood center by inviting other organizations to the site. Spell's Writing Center recently opened a creative writing center for youth on Alder Street behind the Village's main education center. A vocational construction program is renting out the top floor of the center. Additionally, Grimaldi was supportive of the opening of a Free Library of Philadelphia-operated computer hotspot nearby (personal communication).

Yeh's beliefs, if not her methodology, undermine the core values that drive the Village today. Because of her vision and optimism, she saw potential in anyone and anything, no matter how forlorn, and kept projects open and inclusive to anyone wanting to participate. She believed that the capacity for creativity, joy and compassion existed in everyone and could be rekindled through the creative process (Jackson and Moskin 2004, 11). She believed that, as people rebuilt spaces within their community, they were not only restoring a sense of place, but the individual relationships created through this process were also rebuilding a social fabric. As the Village gained recognition and interest from city officials, funders, and local organizations, Yeh came to believe that leveraging external support and creating collaborations could benefit her community.

Yeh approached the development of the Village from an artist's perspective. She credits this way of working "without structure or methodology" as the reason behind the "sustained growth and increased stability" of the Village (Jackson and Moskin 2004, 1). She had no grand vision or preconceived plan, but rather worked incrementally, taking advantage of what came her way and letting it unfold organically. She stated:

> Because I am an artist, I worked very differently from a city planner, social worker, or community developer. Although I lacked basic knowledge for the community revitalization work I was called to do (in the fields of construction, finance, and urban studies), I was well equipped with the artist's skills of improvisation, invention, and spontaneous action. In particular, I knew the power of action. I would respond to an impulse or idea, to an inspiration, exploring it through the creative process to understand where the idea came from and where it might lead. The result of this exploration was the art product, a mural, a garden, a piece of sculpture, or a celebration. (Jackson and Moskin 2004, 1)

This flexibility and comfort in the unknown allowed Yeh to take advantage of whoever and whatever materials or funding came her way. She recalls working in a "hyper-alert state" at all times so that she could identify such assets that were becoming available. She took the lead for her projects from the issues, needs, and interests of the community, many of which she learned about through informal conversation with

residents (Jackson and Moskin 2004, 12).

Yeh's approach to development was synonymous to a very personal endeavor. She later said, "My work is a testimony for the power of an individual to create a call to action" (Jackson and Moskin 2004, 2). Because of this, Yeh alone imagined ideas and projects. She often began by envisioning a desired end result abstractly and then looking for opportunities – critical collaborators, spaces, materials – that could help her achieve it. She would then discuss her idea with a small circle of collaborators that would help her craft it into a more proposal. During this period she would approach other artists or organizations with whom she was interested in collaborating (15-16).

Yeh was always concerned with successfully executing a project. Only after she felt assured that the project could materialize with the constellation of identified collaborators and funding sources would Yeh invite the community to provide feedback and additional creative brainstorming. According to *Warrior Angel*, "eventually, the originally envisioned product [became] deeply influenced by the participatory process itself" (Jackson and Moskin 2004, 18). Her projects were open to anyone who wanted to participate. John Ballard, a member of the Shared Prosperity Steering Committee, recalled that this level of participation "was unusual there, because most of the time they only pick certain people. But anybody in the neighborhood that wanted to come and help was welcome" (Hufford and Miller 2005, 3).

Because Yeh was the only one choreographing the process, it was not uncommon that staff and volunteers felt confused and that the process was unfolding randomly. "Her hands-on, spur-of-the-moment style of direction" often caused confusion amongst employees and volunteers. Not everyone appreciated ambiguity, especially those "who [had] been deeply involved in the planning and logistics of a project" (Jackson and Moskin 2004, 22). Despite this ambiguity, Lily put great trust in her staff, volunteers, community members and other stakeholders who she felt understood the potential and profundity of a project and had the capacity to take on responsibility. She had no formal metric to measure ability or trust, but rather trusted her instincts, assigning various roles and responsibilities proportionate to participants' perceived abilities. Along the way, she would support her "crew" with opportunities to learn new skills. Often, she would even connect an inspired participant with a professional from the field of interest to serve

as a mentor or provide additional training (21).

Yeh's beliefs – of finding potential in anyone and anything, of encouraging participation, and of building a community by building individual relationships - directly influenced the central tenets underlying the Shared Prosperity planning project. However, the project advanced the role and responsibilities of neighborhood residents in a conscious effort towards building community capacity. By engaging community residents from the beginning, the project created opportunities for them to be visionaries.

Mary Hufford and Rosina Miller of the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Folklore and Ethnography identify the four key principles to Shared Prosperity as (1) incubating resident leadership, (2) equalizing all participants, (3) building trust and respect through personal relationships, and (4) "backtalking business as usual" (2005, 4-7). To further the goals of Shared Prosperity, the Village incorporated them into its own operations. The result was a dramatic change of leadership style and, consequently, a revised relationship with the neighborhood.

Today, the Village runs not on the vision of one charismatic leader, but rather on the collective vision from a body of community members and staff. Envisioning and implementing at the Village are collective and inclusive. Although Grimaldi, like her predecessor Gantt, is an artist by training and practice, she does not maintain a strong grip over either idea generation or the aesthetic of what is produced. Although her assumption of directorship is certainly a reflection of her individual pursuits and personal goals, she has succeeded in distributing authorship of the projects and artistic products of the Village to the students and teaching artists. Saunders remarks that "the role of leadership has changed…Now, it is more community-led and community-inspired…as opposed to being a vision by the executive director, The executive director is in a position to support the vision that is already being created on the ground" (personal communication). As a result, the Village has new opportunities for developing leadership amongst community members.

Much of what happens at the Village today is envisioned through participatory activities with youth. "They are the voice of the community," says Saunders, noting that because most come from within walking distance, they represent their families, friends, and neighbors within the Village vicinity (personal

communication.) They are critically involved from the most conceptual envisioning phases onwards. This is different than the method used during Yeh's tenure, wherein she envisioned a project, pieced together the necessary building blocks, and then opened it up for community-wide participation. Here, residents themselves sow the seeds of projects. Going forward, physical changes made to the Village, and the projects or programs that are offered, will be a response to the ideas generated and the decisions made collectively. Rather than one person perceiving the needs of the collective, now the opinions of many are vocalized and heard. Feedback comes primarily through students and those adults who participate in the Village's health and economic programs. Grimaldi recalls the initiation of a collaborative photography project between youth and grandparents based on the voiced need from the latter group for a way for them to use computers (personal communication). In art classes, the Village staff elicit suggestions for upcoming course offerings (Saunders, personal communication).

The Teen Leadership Corps program epitomizes the intentions of Shared Prosperity that were absorbed the Village. The weekly leadership development course, described further under 'Current Programs', builds leadership amongst the Village's youth by giving them reign to self-direct a process of collective investigation, learning, production, and service. The program is directed by Serena Saunders, the education director and a teaching artist at the Village, and El Sawyer, the Village's program director. In this venue, they position themselves as mediators. Saunders says, "If we see [the conversation] going in a direction that maybe is not the most useful direction, we can insert ourselves...We do give them some room to see if they see it themselves, which they do sometimes." Saunders and Sawyer always prepare a framework for the year and back-up plans for each class, but "then we'll give them room within that to create their own opportunities and activities." Because of this approach, "students have been able to step up in way they wouldn't have been able to if we were in that position for them" (personal communication).

Shared Prosperity's intentions are also present in the pedagogy of the Village's art courses. The goal of these courses is twofold, according to Saunders. She states, "We teach art in a way that is not 'art for arts sake.' We want our students to be able to take what they learn and apply it to life, or earn income from it at some point, or be exposed to new things that may turn into opportunity for income...but that's not our

main goal. Our main goal is really to be an outlet for the students, for them to have somewhere to go to be creative, to be themselves…It's not as important that they can sew a dress as that they have somewhere to go after school…to learn positive things and be around positive people" (personal communication). Although technical fluency is stressed, the underlying purpose for the Village's art courses is to set an example of a safe, democratic space for personal expression.

Classes stress a creative process based on communal learning. Saunders says, "The way we put together the curriculum and the way we teach our classes isn't really so much 'teacher at the pedestal, students in the chair…Throughout the week [in the art classes] they have a lot of opportunities to present to each other, talk to each other, and make decisions." Classes are designed to elicit discussion between students, and allow students to present their work to each other. Additionally, students are often allowed space to make decisions that affect their personal work, the collective project, or the direction of the class (personal communication).

Courses are tailored to the individual interests of the students who enroll. Saunders recounts the story of a particularly quiet student who joined a Art of Fashion class. The student was not forced to participate in ways that made her uncomfortable. Rather, they discovered that she was interested, comfortable, and incredibly talented at sewing. She has now made several dresses and is learning increasingly complicated tasks (personal communication).

CURRENT ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

An executive director, currently Elizabeth Grimaldi, oversees and guides activities and projects at the Village of Arts and Humanities. A staff of approximately five teaching artists organize and operate arts and leadership courses. Depending on the types of programs desired by youth, the Village will seek teaching artists to teach one course or collaborate temporarily on a per-project basis. The Village employs several neighborhood residents to maintain the Village's many facilities and properties. Until recently, they also maintained many city-owned vacant properties in the neighborhood. A five-member board of directors, as well as three directors emeritus (including Lily Yeh) provide direction for the Village (The Village of Arts

and Humanities "Contact Us" 2010).

At the core of the Village's programming is its selection of arts courses that are offered in the fall and spring for local youth ages thirteen to nineteen. Classes last several months and typically meet twice a week after school from 4:00pm to 6:00pm. Leadership development, building confidence, and self-expression are integral to every course. Participants are asked to pay a twenty-five dollar materials fee. A snack and drink are provided at each session for all students (The Village of Arts and Humanities "Fall 2010 Art Programs" 2010).

ART COURSES

Course offerings are determined based on what students show interest in, and current students' opinions are actively sought to gage interest (Saunders, personal communication). A changing selection of courses are offered each season, including graphic design, fashion design, song writing and production, video, photography, dance, and spoken word and poetry. The products of these courses over the years have been externally recognized and awarded. A Facebook post on May 11, 2010 announced recently that students received a Wachovia Emerging Leaders Award for a community media project that designs websites for local businesses and artists.

TEEN LEADERSHIP CORPS

The Teen Leadership Corps is a weekly leadership development course for teenagers in the community. Although managed by the Village staff, the course is led by the participating students. The group's work is framed around four central themes of arts and culture, entrepreneurship, college readiness, and community service, within which students can decide what projects to take on, what cultural events to attend, what special speakers or performers they would like to invite to the Village, and where and how to do community service. In addition to the weekly meetings, participants also partake in summer internships and go on an annual retreat together. Recent projects within the Village, like a café that operates during the

summer, have been the result of the ideas and energy of students in the Teen Leadership Corps (Saunders, personal communication).

ONGOING COMMUNITY WORK

The daily offerings of the Village are not exclusive to teenagers. In addition to youth programming, the Village has offered health services and parenting classes for neighborhood residents. Nutrition education, health care, pregnancy prevention, cooking, and a myriad of related programs including Narcotics Anonymous help teach residents to care for themselves and their families (Rudy Bruner Foundation 2001, 19-20).

EVENTS

Celebration is a key component of the Village. Events are held with a grandeur and spectacle that reflects the importance of fostering personal relationships and relationships with place. Such place-based artistic events – be they parades, festivals, concerts, recitals, of film screenings – celebrate the accomplishments of specific individuals or groups. In the organization's early years, the completion of any construction project the entire neighborhood was invited to the grounds for a party of dancing, entertainment, and food. Today, every semester of coursework culminates with a community showing of the work. Grimaldi believes that the Village places higher emphasis on these celebrations than other organizations probably do, making them into grand events with food, a band, dancing, and interactive activities or games (personal communication). This is intentional, however, because it fosters a sense of connection between individuals who are sharing in an experience, and it validates the work of its residents. They also provide light-hearted but meaningful entertainment for residents and youth. One student I spoke with recounted the previous day's excitement, as Mayor Nutter had visited the Village as part of a Clean-up Day celebration, and mentioned how "fun" the Village was and always is for him.

"[Students] are coming with needs outside the curriculum," says Saunders. As such, more is demanded of the Village staff beyond their roles as teachers. They concurrently act as guidance counselors, mentors, and therapists, assisting students with homework, college applications, or simply listening to issues they are struggling with. According to Saunders, students often suffer from depression, low self-esteem, an inability to express themselves at home or at school, or difficult family situations. For the staff to be successful in their expanded role, trust has to be built between students and staff. Staff achieve this both by being consistent – always being available when students ask for help – and by being a good listener. Saunders states that the Village staff "listen and look as much as [they] teach and talk" (personal communication). One student I spoke with remarked, "it's like a family here. It's very supportive. They care about you as more than a student. More like a person."

PLACE

Yeh was influenced by her background in Chinese landscape painting, in which "they talk about the dustless world – *wu chen shih jie* – a world of pristine beauty, tranquility, and time that transcends temporal time" (Hufford and Miller 2005, 25). In each of her spatial creations, she sought "the sense of what the [Chinese] tradition calls a luminous place, a place where [she] could locate the sacred in the mundane" (Leggiere 2000). The luminosity of the Village is felt both by those who visit briefly, and those who come there daily. During my visit, a student who showed me around the Village said that the place was "therapeutic," adding that the place was an escape from the problems of the neighborhood.

The Village puts its history on display for all to see. Saunders notes how many who come to the Village – whether they are former participants or tourists – are moved by what they see, because for many, "Lily Yeh has a bigger than life presence today." For those who know about the Village's past, however, the human touch on every mural, sculpture, or garden conjures stories of individual and community perseverance and accomplishment. "The history becomes important to you even though you were not there," says Saunders

" (personal communication). In this way, the physical space of the Village connects its current community to those of its past.

Some employees at the Village believe that land transformation is essential for locally undoing the inequitable impacts of larger systematic problems like racism and poverty, or as Hufford and Miller say, "backtalking business as usual" (Hufford and Miller 2005, 7). The Village's indigenous transformation provides an alternative to the typical type of redevelopment that occurs in disenfranchised neighborhoods. Brian Kelly, who oversaw Shared Prosperity, describes that situation as one in which "folks come into the community and buy property and make money off of the community, and the community…actually isn't benefitting from what's going on" (2005, 7). The development of the Village took the evidence of long-standing inequities – vacant parcels and abandoned buildings – and turned them into positive assets that could produce a place built from what existed and yet entirely new simultaneously.

Today the "Village Heart" includes parks that are uplifting and energizing, like Kujenja Pamoja Park and Eagles Youth Park. Other parks are meant to be calming, like Meditation Park, with its two-story Tree of Life mosaic and allusions to African Dogon imagery, Islamic courtyards, and Chinese gardens. Others, like Ile Ife Park, provide space for performance. Angel Alley, with a mural of nine Ethiopian angel icons, and other alleys provide bursts of unexpected color in often dark and unconsidered spaces. Spaces are productive with flower, vegetable, and herb gardens, as well as a tree farm, in which trees are grown and then replanted throughout the neighborhood (Rudy Bruner Foundation 2001, 9-12).

The main education center is a lively, well-worn space, bubbling with constant activity. When I visited, the group of students waiting for the Art of Fashion class to begin slowly gathered on the ground floor, while students coming for the digital media class ran upstairs. The ground floor, except for a reception area at the front and a small storage closet in the back, is one open space. The space is conducive to myriad activities, from practicing runway struts to holding community meetings. The second floor houses a well-stocked computer lab filled with new Mac computers. The third floor now houses a vocation construction program managed by a separate non-profit.

In the midst of my visit, just before the Art of Fashion class was to start, I realized that many of the

people inside the Village with me were not actually students of the Village. Rather, they were boyfriends, girlfriends, younger siblings, parents, and children in the neighborhood who were still too young to participate but were genuinely curious about the Village. The receptionist at the front desk was watching a fellow staff member's newborn baby, and Saunders' small dog was following dozens of feet around him. The Village felt like more than an education center; rather, it was an inviting neighborhood hangout.

MEASURING THE VILLAGE'S SUCCESS

WHAT IS SUCCESS, ACCORDING TO THE VILLAGE?...AND HOW IS IT MEASURED?

Although Yeh might have identified success partly with her own personal fulfillment and satisfaction as an artist, she took great efforts to bring individuals into her process, fostering personal relationships as well as connections to specific places. She measured each project critically during and afterwards, determining if they had been appropriately participatory, and were ultimately relevant to initially-identified needs. These evaluations would inform her subsequent projects (Jackson and Moskin 2004, 23-24).

Despite a change of leadership style, success at the Village is still defined by the individual. The Village finds success in individual growth, and this is made possible in part the development of personal relationships. Grimaldi says that "it's the depth of the relationship with the teens that we serve that we're all most proud of...it is the whole holistic approach – not that they just come from four to six, and have after-school activity, and then leave, but that the staff know their parents, we can call their schools and talk to them..." (personal communication).

Success at the Village today, however, is not only about relationship-building. Rather, it is about individual transformation, and an explicit emphasis is placed on developing community leaders. Just as the creation of the Village happened parcel by parcel, building community capacity and social change happens at the Village person by person. Success is the creation of a place (both physical and figurative) and an opportunity that enables individual development and growth. For Grimaldi, this means giving youth "a safe space where they get to try something. They can succeed, they can fail, but they do it in a space where they get excited and then want to learn more" (personal communication). For Saunders, she recognizes

success when she sees "…a difference in students from the time they come in until the time they leave. It's a much more urgent success that's needed to get them to that lifelong success…Success is a daily experience" (personal communication).

Success at the Village is hard to measure, for dramatic individual transformations often do not generate significant quantitative evidence of change. Saunders says the Village staff "look at success on a very one-to-one basis, on an intimate basis. We see success as a personal experience; not something that we can really justify in numbers…We find the more important gage or measure of success is" (personal communication).

At the end of the year, the Village's activities are translated into statistics reflecting the number of students attending programs and number of students that return. Of these measures, the latter is more important. Grimaldi says that "while a large number of students is great, we put more value on students who keep returning and grow with the Village…for a number of years…" (personal communication). Saunders, however, measures success everyday. She says it's apparent when students are "lifting their heads up when they walk…believing in themselves…taking education more serious…" that small but incremental successes are being made (personal communication).

THE VILLAGE, EVALUATED AGAINST SEVEN MEASURES OF SUCCESS

1. THE CREATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY LEADERS.

The history of the Village is riddled with stories of community figures who rose to become leaders as a result of working with Yeh. James "Big Man" Maxton, a drug addict of nearly twenty-two years, was one of Yeh's first participants and helped create Ile Ife Park. He kept returning to help Yeh with the creation other parks, and terminated his drug addiction. In addition to becoming an accomplished artist himself, he also became a community leader, formally as the Village's operations director (until his death in 2005) and informally as an inspiration to his friends. Kelly Tannen, former director of development, remarked that, "there are various people in the community that we probably aren't even aware of that are growing and learning out of the Village because they know Big Man, and they see what the Village is doing. I think that's

hard to measure and hard to describe" (Hufford and Miller 2005, 27).

Today, art courses create a positive physical and social environment, one that challenges students to think critically, act confidently and responsibly, take risks, and pushes them to grow as both artists and leaders. In the Art of Fashion class I attended, I observed what Hufford and Miller describe as "artistic stagings of leadership, in which a member of the community takes a risk, steps forward into the limelight, and is upheld by the community" (2005, 83). During the class, students gathered together at one end of the room, practicing short pieces of choreography. The teaching assistant, a recent Art of Fashion alumnus, was gave feedback and suggestions to each student. Then, he turned up the music and each student was allowed to have his or her own chance to perform on the "runway." During one run, Saunders challenged the students to each strike a pose at the end of the runway that was both a variation on a piece of choreography the group had learned together and also fit their own personality. While one student walked, the others lent encouragement vocally and worked on dance moves together. After a number of chances to practice their runs, they came back together to practice a dance collectively. The course created a safe, supportive, and fun environment, enabling the class to advance as a group and for individuals to take chances and express themselves individually.

2. AN INCREASE IN CIVIC ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.

The Village excels at making spaces and activities that community residents can come to together. Thus, the increase of civic engagement is not about the individual's increase in engagement but as importantly about an increase in collective civic engagement. Engagement is visualized and memorialized at the Village. Community engagement is apparent in transformed spaces and public art projects. Currently, it is manifested not only in the maintenance of these spaces but by the collective activities that fill them. Annual celebrations, exhibitions, and community clean-up days follow in the Village tradition of collectivized civic engagement.

Art courses provide a lens for critically viewing the community. Through the digital film class, for example, student are forced to ask questions and confront the challenges of their neighborhood, as well as unearth facets worth celebrating. In the past they have gone into the community to elicit and capture stories

to put into documentaries. They have also looked at larger issues. In 2010, the class created and submitted a video to a national youth video competition organized by the American Friends Service Committee and the National Priorities Project. The "If I Had A Trillion Dollars" competition asked youth what they would do with a trillion dollars, the total amount the federal government had spent on war in Iraq and Afghanistan as of May 30, 2010 (American Friends Service Committee 2010). The youth of the Village won the competition.

3. THE CREATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE.

The Village continues to create a body of knowledge on how a neighborhood can redevelop itself indigenously. Like a library shelf of books, the Village's documentation of this knowledge presents itself in the cadre of renewed spaces lined up across the Village Heart, each with its own stories and lessons.

While Highlander and Appalshop document knowledge in formats relevant to their respective audiences, so too does the Village. The nature of the Village's primary audience is far different than those of the other organizations, however. While Highlander's audience is comprised of activists, existing leaders, and researchers or practitioners of popular education across the South and Appalachia, and Appalshop produces for the common Appalachian citizen, the Village's audience is first and foremost the neighboring community. Many within this body do not see themselves as change-makers or artists. However, they live within the vicinity of the Village. Thus, the Village documents and shares its knowledge to the local community in the most relevant formats: inhabitable spaces, on-site events, and celebrations. Spaces are accessible to all residents, and end-of-the-semester exhibits display the work of students.

4. A GROWING NETWORK OF PARTICIPANTS, COLLABORATORS, AND SUPPORTERS.

The Village seems to have no problem filling its courses. When I visited, there were young children inside the main education center, unable to participate due to their age, but no doubt excited for the day to come when they would be old enough. Many of the Village's participants come back each season to participate in different courses, and many will return after they have crested the upper age limit to be teaching assistants. In doing so, the Village creates collaborators from its participants. The Village does not

have a system of keeping track of former participants, however. It is the responsibility of those individuals to report back to the Village after they leave. As the Village is celebrating its twenty-fifth birthday in 2011, there are possibly hundreds of former participants living in Philadelphia and beyond. While some of these individuals could provide a possible opportunity for collaboration, this is no evidence of the Village linking up to its former participants in a meaningful way.

While the Village has interfaced with numerous individuals and organizations from across Philadelphia and beyond over its twenty-five year history, they have not developed the enduring, long-term, deep collaborations that Highlander and Appalshop have. This may have to do with the Village's relative introversion; while it recognizes the macro-issues that are affecting local conditions, the organization intentionally tackles them from a grassroots, on-the-ground approach. Therefore, the collaborations that have existed – with Nurse Sally Hammerman and Spell's Writing Center, for example - bring people and groups to the Village. It is rare that the Village's participants take part in off-site collaborations.

5. THE CREATION OF SPIN-OFF PROJECTS.

The Village was built parcel by parcel, as a series of spin-off projects. Although was the visionary for most of these, they incorporated a growing number of community participants. The projects that Big Man completed, of which there are many throughout the Village, are all spin-offs as well. The neighborhood beyond the Village's boundaries has not experienced the same physical renaissance that occurred in the Village Heart. The edges of the Village remain the edge of renewal. However, the Village's outdoor spaces allow for spin-off activities to occur within them. As they are functionally public spaces, many people in the neighborhood who are not formally a part of the Village use them. In this way, the physical spaces of the Village have the enduring ability to enable spin-off activity.

Arts and leadership programming at the Village has produced their own spin-offs. Some students develop the interest and acquire the skills to pursue higher degrees, be they in the arts or not, or find jobs related to the work they did at the Village. The Teen Leadership Corps has also produced entrepreneurial outputs. A Facebook post recently announced that the group created a start-up company to provide website design services to local businesses.

Personnel/Organizational Culture and Structure:

The Village is a successful example of how an organization can move beyond a charismatic leader's organizational and aesthetic direction. This is due in part to a planning and preparation process that began several years before Yeh's departure. During this time, the board of directors reconfigured itself to take on a more direct advisory role by incorporating individuals from outside the community who could bring various areas of expertise to the Village (Rudy Bruner Foundation 2001, 23). Yeh also recorded her beliefs and methods prior to her departure.

Instead of trying to replace one charismatic leader with another, the Village instead reconsidered the role of the executive director, making it a position more about facilitation of community ideas than creating them oneself. Leadership today is distributed amongst teaching artists and students. Students who participate in the Teen Leadership Corps especially act as leading voices at the Village, envisioning and implementing service, commercial, and cultural projects in or beyond the Village Heart.

Relevancy:

Although the surrounding neighborhood is plagued by macro issues that affect communities elsewhere, the Village has remained responsive to the challenges of the immediate neighborhood by offering relevant programming and events. Through processes prevalent within courses and in informal settings, youth, acting as representatives of the neighborhood, envision and implement ideas they deem relevant and necessary. By maintaining this continuous dialogue with dozens of community members, the Village is able to capture an up-to-date snapshot of its surrounding and its audience.

Funding:

Funding can be tenuous. According to Sawyer, about 95% of funding comes from private foundations (personal communication). The Village has historically been dependent on private foundation money. Until recently, the Village used to receive a considerable portion of its funding from the City of Philadelphia to staff a team charged with maintaining vacant properties in the neighborhood as well as land in the Village Heart. This was slashed drastically, however, when the City reduced the budget for its community land care

program (Grimaldi Feedback on Vacant-lot Fund Cut 2010).

Grimaldi also shared a story that illuminates a disconnect between the expectations of funders and the reality of certain places. The Village received grant money from MetLife to organize a digital photography course for grandparents in the neighborhood so that, in learning how to take a photograph, they would also learn basic computer and internet skills. The foundation, however, expected that grandparents would be senior citizens when in fact, at the Village, they were often in their thirties of forties. Despite the fact that these grandparents faced many of the same challenges that older grandparents do, the foundation revoked the funding (personal communication).

7. THE SUCCESSFUL EXECUTION OF STATED GOALS.

The Village has indeed built community, which is the utmost intention according to the organization's mission statement. The organization has built it relationship by relationship through its youth program and collectively through events and celebrations. However, I share a sentiment expressed in the 2001 Bruner report, which noted that the scale of the Village created limitations, and the Bruner Committee "questioned whether the programs sponsored by the Village were comprehensive enough to have a long-term impact on the neighborhood," especially given the scale of surrounding devastation (Rudy Bruner Foundation 2001, 32). Indeed, after twenty-five years of arduous work and energy, the Village still feels like an oasis amidst a desert.

FOLIO OF IMAGES FROM THE VILLAGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

164: ILE IFE PARK

165: MAIN EDUCATION CENTER OF THE VILLAGE, FROM GERMANTOWN AVENUE LOOKING SOUTH.

166: MURAL IN GUARDIAN ANGEL PARK

167: MOSAIC FLOORING IN MEDITATION PARK

168: "GATEKEEPER" OF LIONS PARK

169: MURAL IN LIONS PARK

[ALL PHOTOGRAPHS WERE TAKEN BY A YOUTH TOUR GUIDE FROM THE VILLAGE]
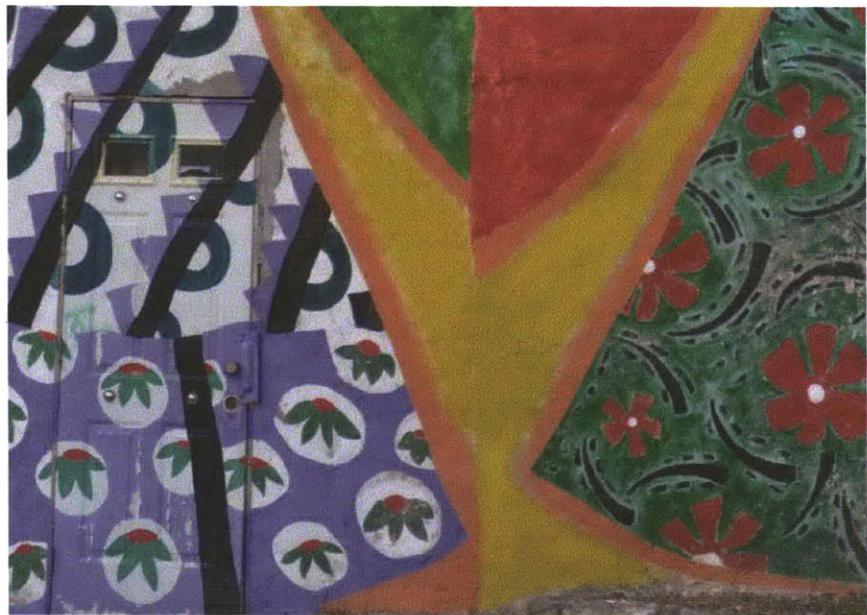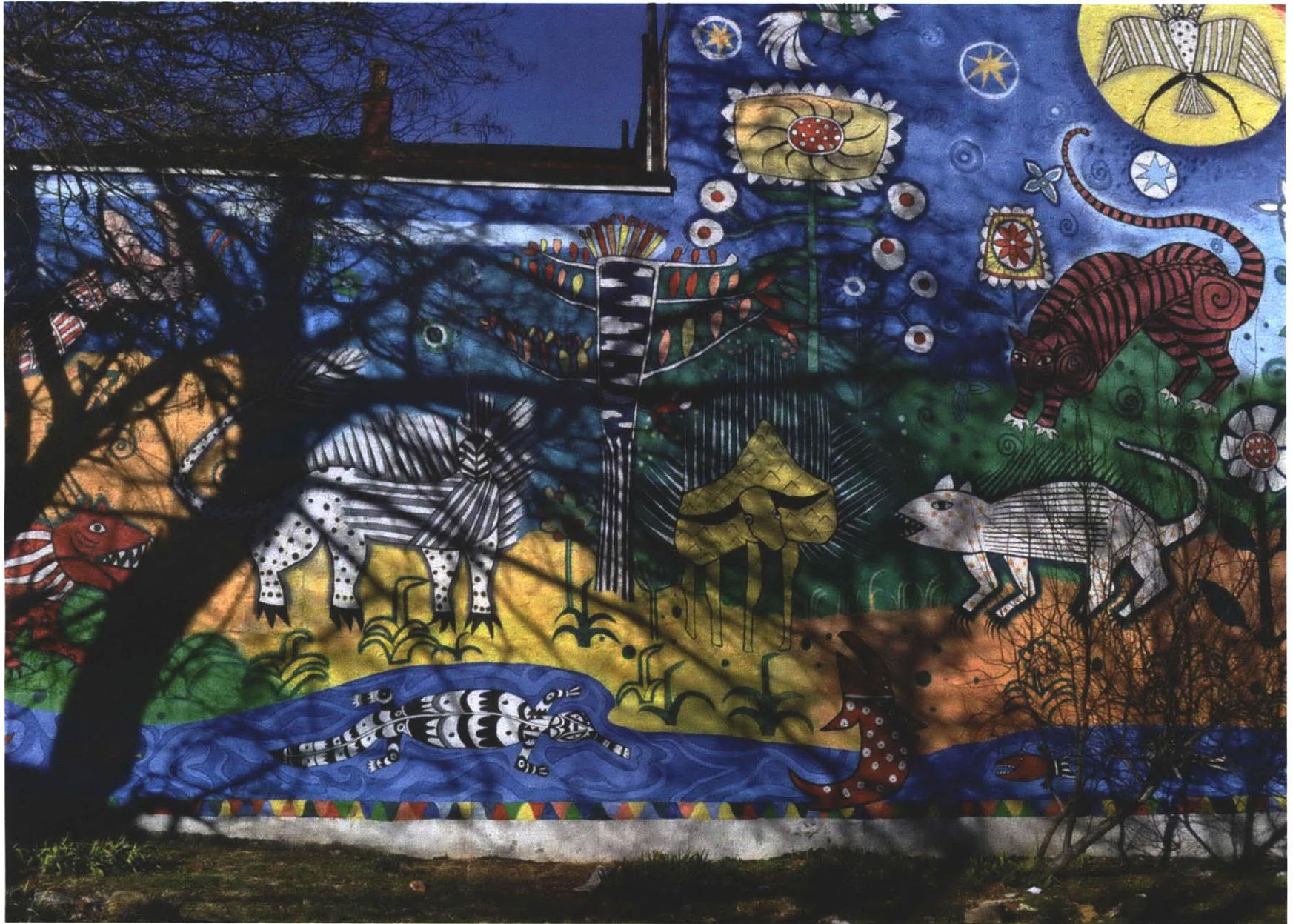
INGREDIENTS OF SUCCESS

ESSENTIAL INGREDIENTS

RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORSHIP ARE DISTRIBUTED AMONG AND SHARED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS. 01

LEADERS GUIDE RATHER THAN PRESCRIBE. 02

INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY IS LINKED TO THE ABILITY TO ACT COLLECTIVELY. 03

THE RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

THE MISSION IS POWERFUL AND INSPIRING, BROAD YET CLEARLY DEFINED. 04

THE INITIATIVE STRIVES FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE PRODUCTS IT CREATES. 05

THE INITIATIVE IDENTIFIES, BUILDS ON, AND TRANSFORMS PERCEPTIONS OF EXISTING COMMUNITY ASSETS. 06

PROJECTS ARE RESPONSIVE TO LOCAL CONDITIONS AND RELEVANT TO CURRENT ISSUES. 07

FRAMEWORK FOR ENGAGEMENT

ENHANCING INGREDIENTS

PARTICIPANTS COLLABORATE WITH PARTIES FROM WITHIN AND FROM ELSEWHERE. 08

THE INITIATIVE DISSEMINATES KNOWLEDGE. 09

THE APPROACH IS MULTIDISCIPLINARY AND ADDRESSES MULTIPLE TARGETS. 10

THE INITIATIVE SEEKS TECHNICAL, MATERIAL, AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM A BROAD RANGE OF SOURCES, BOTH EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL. 11

SPACE FOR BUILDING LEADERSHIP

This research investigates how initiatives succeed in building individual and community capacity for leadership. From the initial evaluation of eight case studies against a set of measurements for successful capacity building, components of ethos, process, and organizational logistics that multiple initiatives shared were identified. These eleven "ingredients for success" were then tested through an in-depth investigation of three case studies. In doing so, the nuances of each one became clearer, as did their relative importance, and how they rely on each other to function as a larger system for building capacity.

The ingredients of success that follow are described first in general terms to allow for variations that result because of differences in approach[2] or from contextual particularities. Afterwards, the main case studies are woven into a dialogue with each other in order to (1) reveal gaps or weaknesses within each initiative, shedding light on areas for improvement or reconsideration, (2) reveal possible fundamental challenges present in a particular capacity building typology, (3) identify the value-added of arts and design, and (4) raise larger contextual issues. Such issues are addressed in the final chapter of this thesis.

IN A SUCCESSFUL CAPACITY-BUILDING INITIATIVE:

1. RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORSHIP ARE DISTRIBUTED AMONG AND SHARED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS.

A redefinition of traditional roles and the reallocation of responsibility and authorship enables participants to enact each step that leaders take to produce positive community change while engaged with the initiative. The opportunity to initiate an idea, project, or aesthetic vision is not the task of only those within the initiative, but belongs in the hands of participants. With support, assistance, trust, and guidance from the initiative personnel, participants can realize their capacity to take on the responsibilities of leadership that are essential to responding to community challenges.

In each case study, expectations for participants are higher than those in their communities. The initiatives' target communities generally do not hold high expectations for their members, and the depressed

FIGURE 3 (LEFT):

ESSENTIAL AND
ENHANCING INGREDIENTS
FOR SUCCESSFUL
CAPACITY BUILDING
(CREATED BY THE AUTHOR)

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2   Four approaches to capacity building were described in Chapter Two: artistic production, physical transformation, knowledge creation, and individual development.

community psyches affect community members' perceptions of their own abilities and potential for leadership. At the Highlander Research and Education Center, Myles Horton noted that many participants from the disenfranchised communities he worked with did not respect their own experiences enough to consider them sources of knowledge (Kennedy 1981, 3). Natasha Watts, Appalshop's Appalachian Media Institute interim director, says that there is little sense of self worth among youth in the community, and that they are never expected to do meaningful "real work" (personal communication). At the Village of Arts and Humanities, Executive Director Elizabeth Grimaldi believes that youth in North Philadelphia are not encouraged to pursue their talents further, as they might be elsewhere, remarking that "when a kid from North Philadelphia does a piece of art they get a 'good job' and it gets hung on the wall, and that's it" (personal communication).

The psyche of the communities described above – a lack of self-respect, a lack of confidence in one's abilities, and an expectation for low performance – echo Paulo Freire's descriptions of oppression. He states that "self depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed...They call themselves ignorant and say the 'professor' is the one who has knowledge and to whom they should listen...Almost never do they realize that they, too, 'know things' they have learned in their relations with the world and other men" (Freire 1970, 50). These symptoms can inhibit building their capacity for leadership unless addressed directly.

Capacity-building initiatives intentionally break the "leader-follower" hierarchy present in many social structures today, including traditional teacher-student relationships and those between employers and their employees. "Restructuring," according to Walter and Marks in *Experimental Learning and Change*, is a deliberate or planned reorganization of some aspect of a social structure that affects individual behavior (quoted in Peters and Bell 1989, 60). In doing so, the relationship between the initiative employee and the participant, and more broadly between the initiative and the community, becomes not one of one-directional giving and receiving but rather one of distributed or collaborative creation. A restructured social structure requires an acknowledgement from both of these parties that responsibility and authorship can and should be accepted and shared amongst participants. Trust between parties is also essential for distribution, as participants must feel safe enough to take risks, and initiative members must feel comfortable handing over

projects for others to complete. Lastly, emotional, technical, and material support may be necessary from the initiative to assist participants in their new roles.

Highlander staff member Monica Hernandez described at the Social Change Workshop how distributing responsibility is essential for individuals to build capacity for leadership. According to Hernandez, because of a misconception about what leadership is, many individuals from oppressed communities do not feel that they are "leaders" and thus do not have the responsibility to act. Convincing individuals that they can take on the responsibilities of leadership requires redefining what leadership is. Leadership is not a talent that someone is born with or develops through extensive education; rather, it is a process that participants are unknowingly already familiar with (personal communication).

In her own work with Highlander, Hernandez has been able to build leadership among immigrant mothers throughout the South. They, like many other groups Highlander has worked with, did not believe they had the abilities necessary to assume leadership. Hernandez began asking them to discuss problems they faced everyday. They gave numerous responses, from navigating a new country to taking care of their children. When Hernandez asked them how they dealt with these challenges, their responses usually included many the traits of leadership: they perceived and identified a problem, they connected with others who also had that problem, and then they worked together to craft a solution. The realization amongst immigrant mothers that they already possessed the foundational traits of leadership was dramatic, Hernandez remembers. Once this realization occurred, Hernandez says that she was able to delegate various responsibilities among the groups, providing assistance and guidance as they organized (personal communication).

The assumption of responsibility over a project that these immigrant mothers experienced is similar to that which happened at the initiation of Appalshop and continues today with the Appalachian Media Institute. Through Richardson's act of turning over the cameras and artistic direction to the young participants, he gave them authorship over an entire process, from sensing contextual interests and concerns, through the initiation of the investigation of their choosing, to interfacing with community members and asking questions, to representing their work as a final product and sharing it. The Appalachian Media Institute continues this tradition of distributed authorship today, showing youth that they can use their own

voice to incite local and regional dialogue.

The phenomenon of authorship is most often discussed in reference to artists and the arts. Authorship can create challenges any time an artist opens up his or her creative process to collaborators, even if the collaborators are trained artists. Many artists thus shy away from working with "untrained" community members for fear of how to balance their control and aesthetic expression with an inclusive community process. Mismanagement of authorship in a capacity-building forum, however, can affect the initiative's overall success. Authorship and responsibility must be shared among participants, and yet the artist is charged with producing something representative of expectations higher than those traditionally attributed to members of the community at large.

This research finds that the challenges of authorship are not exclusive to the arts. Similar challenges also arise in organizing. In a transcribed conversation that Tufara Muhammad Waller, the director of Highlander's cultural programs, had with cultural organizer Javiera Benavente, Benavente states:

> Some artists who work in communities hold on to their power as artists for fear that if they pass it on, they will no longer be needed. I think this is very similar to a dynamic that happens with social service providers and organizers who, while they come at the work from very different places, make a living by virtue of the fact that injustice exists in the world. Sometimes, we hold onto the power we gain by being gatekeepers between communities and outside resources and, in the process, we perpetuate some of the very injustices that we want to dismantle. (Benavente 2008)

In a scenario in which the organizer or artist retains all authorship, community members are involved in creation processes, but the generating concept, process, aesthetic, and final product are ultimately the vision of one person. Organizers, like artists, often expect to receive certain recognition from their work, fearing that many minds and hands at work will deprive them of this, or that their talents will become irrelevant, as Benavente states. Many of Appalshop's projects are not explicitly intended for building community leadership. Although numerous films, radio and music pieces, and performances incorporate individuals from the community and are intended to achieve positive community impact, Appalshop members usually maintain ownership over the director's chair. This is not a criticism of Appalshop; rather, it serves to highlight the effect of retaining authorship rights. While there can still be dramatic and positive

effects on an individual or a community when roles are not redefined, capacity for leadership is not directly impacted.

This lesson is illustrated as well by comparing the two periods of the Village of Arts and Humanities. Lily Yeh redefined the roles of individuals previously seen as outcasts or nuisances. Her first collaborators were local drug addicts and youth hanging out on the street. Through their work with Yeh, they became engaged neighborhood citizens. Not only were they viewed differently by their neighbors, but they also saw themselves has individuals with leadership potential. James "Big Man" Maxton's transformation went even further; his own artistic interests became a model for others, and his leadership was formalized when he became employee and board member of the Village. Yeh's writing of her process in Warrior Angel: The Work of Lily Yeh, however, reveals a process of community participation typical for her work, wherein the extreme role redefinition experienced by Big Man is exemplary. She was receptive to community input and often assigned responsibilities within a project to those who exhibited capacity (Jackson and Moskin 2004, 18-19). However, as is often the case at Appalshop, Yeh maintained hold of her projects' vision and direction.

Today, neighborhood youth interface with the Village differently. Art and leadership courses are designed on the premise of a redefined student-teacher relationship, wherein artistic vision is given over to the youth, and faculty use their expertise to facilitate the students' ideas. Youth are also tasked with providing input regarding the direction of the Village. Many projects, like the café, as well as course offering options, come as a result of youth interest and implementation (Saunders, personal communication).

While complete control over authorship by an artist can impede the efforts of a capacity-building initiative, so to can a scenario in which all authorship is rescinded from the artist to inexperienced community members. Here, the expertise of the artist in regard to both process and product is disvalued. Some community-based arts initiatives fall into this trap (although none that were researched in this thesis), thinking that any retention of authorship will hurt the capacity-building process. However, an artist can add innovation to a working process that enhances the leadership development experience for community members, from rethinking the usage of existing space or material, to illuminating linkages between disparate

ideas. An artist's skill can also assist in the creation of a product of high artistic or aesthetic merit that builds community identity and pride.

2. LEADERS GUIDE RATHER THAN PRESCRIBE.

As the roles of participants in a successful capacity-building initiative are intentionally redefined, so too is the role of the leader, be it the director of the initiative or of a particular program within it. When leadership is distributed and shared amongst participants, the "leader" can benefit participants the most by serving as a guide.

Of the three cases, the Highlander Research and Education Center epitomizes the guiding leader concept. The initiative's ultimate goal is to empower participants to implement change when they return to their communities. As such, Highlander staff create a democratic process, sharing leadership and responsibility with participants so that participants can (1) enact the steps a leader would take in other situations, and (2) experience a democratic model for enacting change that they can recreate in their communities.

In the model of popular education used at Highlander, staff guide participants through a collective learning process based on the sharing of individual knowledge. As such, participation by all is necessary for a highly productive and effective experience. As I witnessed at the Social Change Workshop, Highlander staff guide the discussion and present opportunities for everyone to speak, share, learn from each other, and develop a plan. At the beginning of the weekend, the group was asked to collectively decide on a set of rules to adhere to over the following days. Always seated in a circle, Highlander staff were positioned randomly throughout, and initiated discussions on various topics with questions rather than statements. Little time was spent listening to the facilitators speak. More often, participants worked or discussed various topics in large and small groups. On the final day, time was allotted for a series of small group sessions around topics of the groups' choosing. Staff members, each with various skills and backgrounds, then made themselves available to the relevant groups.

At Appalshop's initiation, Bill Richardson guided youth through the process of putting together a story, but ultimately let them take ownership of the creative process. Today, Appalshop members still facilitate

opportunities for community members to engage in parts of a process that builds leadership, although the "grip" that facilitators hold is often stronger than that found at Highlander. Filmmakers facilitate an experience for community members to tell their stories, and through the Community Media Initiative participants are provided with technical assistance but are ultimately in charge of taking their projects through to a final product. Many of Roadside Theater's works are constructed as flexible frameworks that communities can then specify rather than as rigid, preset structures. In this way, the theater's productions facilitate opportunities for exchanging stories, group learning, and community organizing.

Appalachian Media Institute instructors fill roles reminiscent of Richardson. Natasha Watts, its interim director and a former participant, says, "We give them the skills that we know, but we don't tell them how to use them, we don't tell them where to go…In the end they have to give all the initiative." Watts describes that the students generate ideas together, and engage in discussions and critiques collectively. While each team of students is assigned a mentor from the Film Union, they offer assistance through the form of suggestions, not prescriptions (personal communication).

With the transition of Lily Yeh to Kumani Gantt in 2004, leadership at the Village of Arts and Humanities became less about one person leading a group and more about collective envisioning and action. Serena Saunders says that today the executive director "is in a position to support the vision that is already being made on the ground." The aesthetic of work coming out of the Village today is that of youth, of teaching artists, and of collaborating artists, not just of Grimaldi. As the Village's Teen Leadership Corps is geared explicitly towards leadership development, Serena Saunders and El Sawyer, the staff overseeing the program, intentionally take positions as guides or "mediators," as Saunders says, rather than as traditional teachers. Of their approach to the course, Saunders states, "We'll know what their year looks like and then we'll give them room within that to create their own opportunities and activities." Each week in Teen Leadership Corps, participants initiate and direct collective dialogues and project development. Saunders and Sawyer insert themselves only if they believe the conversation could go in a more productive direction that students are overlooking (Saunders, personal communication).

Leaders with strong voices can be problematic, regardless of their mission or approach to capacity

building. Both the Village and Highlander were associated for a long time with Yeh and Horton, respectively. As a leader, Yeh held control of the process of sensing and envisioning. Although she included community in meaningful ways and altered many lives, she was the primary author of the Village's spatial transformation. Today, the Village is often thought of synonymously with its first leader, despite Yeh's departure from the organization in 2004.

Horton's leadership style was different than Yeh's, as his vision was to elicit and assist the visions of others. His commitment to and passion towards his work became so well-known, broadcast not only through the actual social changes Highlander supported but also through various media, that Highlander is often still synonymous with Horton. Highlander "was a one-man show when Myles was there," says Herb Smith of Appalshop (personal communication). Susan Williams, who joined Highlander in the 1980s, recalls that Horton actually retired in the late 1970s and turned Highlander over to another director. He lived on the grounds of Highlander until his death in 1990, but he was not involved in workshops. Regardless of this, Williams believes that because his name was so closely identified with Highlander, it took the organization nearly a decade to move past him after his death (personal communication Mar 13, 2011).

Despite the constraints that a prominent figurehead can bring for a capacity-building initiative, a leader with a strong personal identity can also assist the development of an initiative. Horton and Yeh both earned reputations as charismatic individuals. People trusted Horton and believed in the vision he put forth. Yeh was on a personal mission, and her magnetism brought good attention from those interested in collaboration, volunteering at the Village, or funding its work. Both leaders advanced the work of their respective organizations, albeit in distinct fashions.

Conversely, the Village's following two directors, Gantt and Grimaldi, have not held the spotlight like Yeh did, approaching their position somewhat more invisibly and including community members in the decision-making and direction-making of the Village. Bill Richardson at Appalshop also was never in the spotlight like Yeh and Horton were, and yet the organization was still able to development rapidly. The idea of Appalshop was enticing enough on its own, and Richardson's steady guidance enabled those who were interested to become involved.

3. INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY IS LINKED TO THE ABILITY TO ACT COLLECTIVELY.

Through processes and projects, successful capacity-building initiatives develop a mutually fortifying relationship between the individual capacity to act and the collective capacity to act. Collective action is not a mere aggregation of the separate actions of individuals; rather, it refers to the ability to take action as a group. Although responsibility, authorship, and leadership are distributed among participants in successful capacity-building initiatives, their ideas and actions are harnessed together, accumulating knowledge and synchronizing actions that enable groups to approach larger, more difficult challenges together than they would separately. The process of acting together also benefits individual leadership development, as it provides participants with a broader knowledge base to learn from, and they learn the critical skill of working with others towards making change that is essential for future leadership.

According to Susan Williams, the Highlander Research and Education Center's model of popular education has always been rooted in the belief that "people, if you bring them together, can really help each other and come up with good ideas" for advancing shared social agendas (personal communication Feb 23, 2011). Valuing both the individual and a collective process of analysis and project development, the Highlander method brings individuals from across regions together, thus linking scattered, individual efforts together into a common, cohesive movement. In doing so, the group can develop a larger social agenda, while individual knowledge to affect local change also increases. This strategy thus has the potential to affect change at multiple scales, from on-the-ground development in small communities, to dramatic revisions in corporate, state, or national policy. Highlander also cross-pollinates struggles to build larger constituencies for change. The initiative's leadership training institute, Threads, is a contemporary example of such an effort, as representatives from groups across the South and Appalachia fighting various economic injustices, be they around coal mining, oil drilling practices, or immigrant rights, are brought together to learn from each other and identify areas of overlap (Highlander Research and Education Center "Current Programs" 2010).

Highlander's history also illustrates the importance of collective agency for supporting participants during difficult struggles. During the civil rights movement, for example, Highlander provided an inclusive

space where people from all races could discuss, learn, play music, and eat together (Highlander Research and Education Center "History" 2010). They were able to build personal relationships that would ultimately support them when they returned to their respective picket lines or boycotts. The efforts of scattered individuals were bolstered by being part of a larger group with a shared vision while at Highlander.

Although most of Appalshop's projects are taken on by individuals or in small groups, the body of work that has been produced under the initiative's umbrella throughout its history has a coherence to it that identifies it as the product of a group, not that of independent artists. The accumulated works of Appalshop provide a thorough representation of modern Appalachia, although the collective action of the entire initiative could be strengthened by increased dialogue, interaction, and project development between divisions.

Today, interns at the Appalachian Media Institute work in a fashion similar to that which happens at Highlander. They encounter the steps of producing a documentary video in small teams, discuss critical community challenges together, and critique their work as an entire group. In doing so, interns learn storytelling and technical skills from each other, broaden their perspectives by hearing other viewpoints, and have the opportunity to add their voices to a larger agenda-driven dialogue forwarded by the Institute (Watts, personal communication).

Roadside Theater's play *Thousand Kites* is essentially a framework for collective action between the actors and the audience. Stories from those affiliated with the criminal justice systems are shared through the reading of the first act, after which those of the actors' are told, who are also associated with system. When the second act starts, a democratic, inclusive space for adding to the collective story has already been created, and audience members are asked to help build a deeper dialogue and share their own stories (Cocke, personal communication). This space and process are akin to those that happen at Highlander, as all individuals present are able to add to the whole and also glean knowledge from it.

The transformed buildings and outdoor spaces within the Village of Arts and Humanities are the result of Lily Yeh's ability to choreograph a process for building together. The Shared Prosperity project further injected the opportunity for collective action into the Village's activities. Today, the Village

distributes leadership and authorship amongst its teaching artists and participants. Youth participants of the Teen Leadership Corps work in a manner similar to that which happens at Highlander and the Appalachian Media Institute. Guided through a process of collective analysis, learning, organizing, and project development, they develop leadership skills individually, while their efforts are woven together to produce larger projects.

4. THE MISSION IS POWERFUL AND INSPIRING, BROAD YET CLEARLY DEFINED.

"Mission" here refers to the goal, objective, or intention of the initiative, and describes the desired outcome or future condition or the way in which an initiative ideally imagines the world to function around it. A mission should contain a powerful message that inspires individuals to believe in the purpose of the initiative. It should hold the interest and commitment of individuals over a long duration of time and capture a shared desire for continual improvement. A broad mission is both holistic and intentionally unspecific, thus providing longevity, continuity, flexibility, reinvention and reinterpretation. It holds an idea and a vision constant, while allowing the challenges of the present day to be tackled. A mission that is too broad, however, may also be problematic, as the initiative may suffer from a lack of identity, coherence, and direction.

A comparison of mission statements across the three case studies reveals noteworthy similarities. For example, each case study defines its target community broadly. In doing so, they broadcast a message of inclusion, potentially attracting interest and participation from a wider audience. The Highlander Research and Education Center defines its community not by demographic or location, but rather as a group that is "fighting for justice, equality and sustainability" (Highlander Research and Education Center "About Us"). Appalshop and the Village of Arts and Humanities both define their communities geographically, theirs being all Appalachians and residents of North Philadelphia, respectively.

Each case study's mission also notes the vehicles used in its approach. Highlander uses "popular education, participatory research, and cultural work," while Appalshop uses "education, media, theater, music, and other arts" and the Village lists "arts, educational, social, construction, and economic and youth development programs" (Appalshop "About Us" 2010; Highlander Research and Education Center "About

Us" 2010; The Village of Arts and Humanities "About Us" 2010). The vehicles are broad and many, reflective of a holistic approach primed to address complex community issues. Interestingly, both arts organizations list artistic and non-artistic vehicles.

Lastly, the mission statements of each organization reflect their recognition of being part of a larger struggle for social change. Highlander connects itself to a network of "strong, democratic organizations that work for justice, equality and sustainability in their own communities and that join with others to build broad movements for social, economic, and restorative environmental change" (Highlander Research and Education Center "About Us" 2010). Appalshop reaches out to communities who are already working to "achieve justice and equity and solve their own problems," and also see themselves as a voice in a "regional, national, and global dialogue" towards this end (Appalshop "About Us" 2010). The Village supports urban communities similar to its own across North Philadelphia and beyond (The Village of Arts and Humanities "About Us" 2010).

5. THE INITIATIVE STRIVES FOR EXCELLENCE IN THE PRODUCTS IT CREATES.

Many of the prior ingredients reflect the need for reallocating sensing and envisioning responsibilities to community participants, but this ingredient considers the standard to which projects are implemented in a capacity-building process. A product of excellence reflects a critically considered and developed concept and is completed with apparent proficiency and skill. Products of excellence are essential for a successful capacity-building initiative in a disenfranchised community, as they can raise community expectations for its members and increase a community's visibility beyond itself. Creating excellent products thus requires an emphasis placed on both process and final product.

A product of excellence can have a direct positive impact on its creator. Natasha Watts says that the Appalachian Media Institute explicitly strives for high-merit products for the benefit of participants, because "culturally speaking, [they are] in a place where there's no personal worth." Through the process of developing their projects, interns learn that they have the capacity to identify a concern, envision a project, and, with the technical assistance of instructors, represent their response as a tangible product. In this way, interns are able to become leaders in a change-seeking regional dialogue and gain self-confidence as a

result. To create products of merit, the responsibility to perform is instilled into the interns, in part through an intensive application process and expectations to act as though they were employed at a job. Staff push interns to improve their projects and skill set, and support them with mentors from the Film Union. "Young people are never expected to do real work…" says Watts of the region. At the Appalachian Media Institute, interns begin knowing that there is an expectation to do "real work," as well as a high standard for that work (personal communication).

Executive Director Elizabeth Grimaldi of the Village of Arts and Humanities echoes Watt's belief that standards for members of disenfranchised communities are low. On the difference between the Village and the status quo, she states:

> Society doesn't expect enough of its young people [as is the case in this neighborhood]. If a kid here in North Philadelphia does a great painting, someone will hang it in a school district building…They applaud the kid and pat them on the back…They don't support them with the tools they need. They don't say, "that was a good start. Now let's push it. We're going to give you the paint box and the equipment and the classes and the teachers to take it to the next level. Very few artists are satisfied with [the first draft]. You have to expect more. You have to strive for perfection. (personal communication)

Youth who enroll in arts courses at the Village are expected to produce products of artistic excellence, and those in Teen Leadership Corps are expected to create high-quality plans, proposals, and activities. In both cases, they are given the guidance, technical assistance, and materials to do so.

Highlander also produces plans, proposals, and leaders of excellence. This accomplishment is significant first and foremost for Highlander's participants, as many come not realizing their latent potential for leadership or for enacting change. Despite this, Highlander's products are ultimately imbued with innovation and confidence. Its high-quality products have successfully affected positive changes in numerous social, economic, and environmental struggles.

The products of an initiative, be they films, performances, parks, active leaders, or otherwise, are often the interface between the initiative and its target community and a broader context. Surrounding communities, critics, the media, decision-making bodies, potential collaborators, and grantees discern the initiative's reputation and community's general capability from such products. Thus, a high-quality physical

space, artistic product, plan, or leader can have immediate and enduring value to the community. The quality and consideration of the physical spaces designed in the Village continue to provide safe and stimulating spaces to play, relax, and congregate for the community. Highlander produces leaders that, after one struggle is won, fight for the next. Bernice Reagan Robinson, an acclaimed "alumna" of Highlander, became an active organizer during the civil rights movement. When the movement waned, however, she moved on to other struggles – those of poor Appalachians, of immigrants, and of homosexuals (Phenix and Selver 1985).

Additionally, a high-quality product arguably garners more attention (both good and bad) than an average or low-quality product does. This ultimately means that more attention will be paid to the specific cause of the work or the initiative's broader social agenda. Elizabeth Barret's *Stranger With a Camera*, which garnered national attention when it was released, continues to be an asset to the region and those who watch it (Barret, personal communication). The Village Heart continues to draw designers and community developers to North Philadelphia who wish to explore the place as a successful model of alternative community development.

6. THE INITIATIVE IDENTIFIES, BUILDS ON, AND TRANSFORMS PERCEPTIONS OF EXISTING COMMUNITY ASSETS.

Successful capacity-building initiatives take an asset-oriented approach to their work; that is, they recognize and build off of what is present already in the community. In *Building Communities from the Inside Out*, John Kretzmann and John McKnight describe that assets can be individuals or groups of people (youth, the elderly, specific ethnic groups, associations or institutions), physical places or tangible products (historic buildings, abandoned structures, vacant parcels, natural features), or intangible talents, knowledge, and cultural traditions (1993, 6-7; 311). The three case studies in this thesis do more than simply identify and build on these assets, however. Additionally, through a consideration of aesthetic representation, they transform the community's perception of the potential of said assets.

Kretzmann and McKnight state that there is a strong argument for using a capacity-oriented approach. "Historic evidence indicates that significant community development takes place only when local community people are committed to investing themselves and their resources in the efforts," they claim

(1993, 5). The driving forces behind all three case study organizations are the local people. Often they are involved formally with organizational operations, as is the case with the Village of Arts and Humanities and Highlander. At Highlander, they also bring their agendas to the organization. They are the subject matter of arts and media projects at Appalshop and the Village. At the Village, local people – youth, drug addicts, and others - provided the energy to restore and rebuild vacant lots and buildings (Rudy Bruner Foundation 2001, 8).

Asset-based approaches can build relationships and rebuild communities. Highlander has always absorbed the cultural assets of the communities they work with – their traditions, songs, stories, and poems – and uses them to build relationships and keep communities together through difficult times. The many songs sung during the civil rights movement supported the battered spirits of those in picket lines, demonstrations, and boycotts (Cocke, personal communication). Highlander staff have collected cultural assets over the course of the organization's history and continue to use them even as they transition to new groups. In doing so, they create a sense of continuity between seemingly disparate groups, suggesting, in essence, that they are all part of one larger struggle for change (Williams, personal communication Feb 23, 2011).

The familiarity of existing assets provides a lever for increasing efficacy in capacity building. Traditions and heritage crafts, familiar faces, and existing community leaders and associations can make a new project appear to be an obvious outgrowth of the community rather than an import. Myles Horton claimed that Highlander managed to survive unlike many other folk schools that were created around the same time. One reason why this continued presence was possible was because it "maintained a sensitivity to southern culture and a commitment to transform it" (Glen 1989, 129). Today, Highlander works with existing community leaders who are known already amongst their constituency. The organization builds knowledge from the experiences these leaders bring to Highlander, and infuses their processes and products with the cultural heritage of the region. Homebred Appalachian culture is celebrated through the work of Appalshop. Traditional mountain music, stories, crafts, and skills have historically been at the center of the group's work. As Herb Smith describes, Appalshop focuses on these indigenous assets to provide an

alternative way of living in modern Appalachia (personal communication). The Village draws on imagery from African and African-American cultures; additionally, many of its art classes offered today – hip hop, spoken word, performance – are demographically-relevant forms of expression, and can pique the interests of potential new participants.

The aesthetic of products developed from existing community assets is representative of both the creators and the community; thus, such products can serve to redefine the community's identity for others and promote empathy between communities. The communities studied in this research have historically struggled to maintain a self-determined identity. African-Americans who came to Highlander in the 1950s and 1960s were reacting to an identity negotiated by the imposition of limitations to the rights of their race. Appalachians faced a usurpation of regional identity first from the strong grip of coal companies in the early twentieth century, and then from the national cameras of the War on Poverty in the 1960s. A historical deprivation of resources allocated to North Philadelphia by the City, an exodus of the middle class to suburban regions, and a rise in negligent activity (drug dealing and abuse, as well as crime) in its neighborhoods, among other things, paint a bleak and one-sided picture of the area. However, a project of aesthetic merit can restore a self-determined identity.

Appalshop began on the premise of controlling the aesthetic representation of the Appalachian region and it people, and the initiative has maintained an allegiance to its indigenous perspective. The work not only attempts to reconsider Appalachia's image nationally; it also attempts to change its image within the region by celebrating the good and voicing core societal challenges. Natasha Watts, interim director of the Appalachian Media Institute and a native eastern Kentuckian, believes that the region's major issues – poverty, drug abuse, poor education – go unspoken of (personal communication). Herb Smith attributes this compliance to the oppressed mentality imposed on the region's population by large coal companies (personal communication). By speaking about unspeakable topics, Appalshop tries to represent the current conditions of the region while also inciting productive dialogue around them. In doing so, they have caused discomfort and provoked skepticism and anger among people locally and within the region. Watts recalls how uncomfortable she was initially as an intern at the Appalachian Media Institute, because she was

tasked with confronting issues that she had been able to circumvent previously (personal communication). As Appalshop often reveals stories that are damaging to the systems at work within the region, they incite controversy from many who are socially or economically bound to the continuation of the status quo.

The Village of Arts and Humanities restores community identity for its neighborhood in North Philadelphia through the physical transformation of the Village Heart, the events and celebrations it plans for the community, as well as many of the projects that are created through its arts programming. The aesthetic of their implementation represents the surrounding community and offers an internally generated identity to counter that which is externally imposed on it. Through arts projects designed to interface with community residents, youth are given the opportunity to connect their creativity and skills to core community concerns. Because they retain authorship over their own process and product, the representation of their subject matter reflects the perceptions, opinions, and identities of the youth. Additionally, they become the vehicles for reinvigorating their community with self-determined identity.

Although the final products of Highlander's approach are not artistic, their ideas, plans, proposals, and leaders are aesthetic representations of both those who were intimately involved in their creation and the communities they come from. Rooted in the experiences, knowledge, and heritage that individuals bring and share collectively, final products have a collective aesthetic, representing the body of participants who came together at Highlander. Highlander's products thus represent the potential for indigenous community and regional potential for inducing change.

7. PROJECTS ARE RESPONSIVE TO LOCAL CONDITIONS AND RELEVANT TO CURRENT ISSUES.

Successful capacity-building initiatives develop projects that are responsive to changing physical, cultural, political, social, and/or economic contexts at local, regional, and potentially national and global scales. They stay on the front edge of issues and controversies as they emerge and reassess and redirect their efforts as they wane. They are flexible, willing to change course or develop new projects that respond to these changes in order to maintain relevancy.

The Highlander Research and Education Center lends its support to struggles present at a regional and even national scale. Highlander states that it is a resource for individuals and groups from the regions

of Appalachia and the South, although the struggles they have been a part of are relevant nationally, be they for desegregation in the 1950s or immigrants' rights today. By being in constant contact with the leaders of a large number of geographically dispersed communities, Highlander has always maintained an acute awareness of the ebb and flow of various social struggles, and positioned itself at the center of such struggles early on before they became movements. Working on one issue often sheds light on other peripheral issues; for example, working with segregated labor unions enlightened Horton and his staff on the rising need for desegregation workshops (Conti and Robert 1989, 16-17). Having an umbrella view of regional issues that is made possible by having tentacles into many communities enables Highlander to stay relevant and provide critical and timely assistance to community leaders.

Appalshop also maintains relevancy across geographic scales. The initiative's members see a connection between the social conditions of small coal towns, the environmental consequences of mining regionally, and the economic forces at play nationally for the energy commodity. Thus, while the exact subjects of many of Appalshop's works are localized, they usually carry regional or national relevancy. Mimi Pickering's films *The Buffalo Creek Flood: An Act of Man* and *Buffalo Creek: Revisited* tell the story of one West Virginia community's hardship after a coal-waste dam collapses, but topically the films reverberate throughout a region that intimately knows the environmental effects of the coal industry (Pickering 1975; Pickering 1984). Additionally, the organization explicitly believes that similarities exist across all peoples who are struggling, regardless or race or geography. The decade-long collaboration between Roadside Theater and Pregones Theater in the Bronx began because the theater staff found that the geographically and demographically distinct groups shared similar underlying social struggles (Cocke, personal communication).

Appalshop, unlike Highlander, does not always attempt to directly affect on-the-ground change. The organization does not systematically work between local and regional scales; that is, there are no institutionalized ways in which work done on the local level is linked to actionable items at a regional scale or to policy-changing measures. While the hope is often there, the structure is not. Thousand Kites, one of a few exceptions, works systematically across many communities within a region by collecting and linking stories together into a larger effort to change policy and increase national dialogue around the criminal

justice system (Cocker, personal communication).

The Village of Arts and Humanities begins at the ultra-local level of the neighborhood and defines its community geographically. Although the Village continues to make meaningful change in the North Philadelphia neighborhood, it does not deliberately attempt to affect change at larger scales. The Village recognizes that it confronts issues that other communities face, stating that it works to improve social conditions in "similar urban communities" in its mission statement, but by and large this connection remains in spirit and is not manifested through action (The Village of Arts and Humanities "About Us" 2010). Many of the connections between the Village and larger scales or themes have been produced by researchers of the Village, not by the work of the Village staff or participants. That said, the Village's long-term, granular attention on the multiple challenges of one neighborhood has arguably affected a more holistic positive social change than the other cases have done for their respective constituencies.

8. PARTICIPANTS COLLABORATE WITH PARTIES FROM WITHIN AND FROM ELSEWHERE.

Collaboration describes a mutually beneficial relationship in which knowledge and resources flow in two directions. Although not essential for capacity-building initiatives, collaborations present opportunities for learning from and with each other, for developing a common social agenda, or for creating an entirely new project. Collaboration with another entity outside an initiative's target community also enables an initiative to increase its visibility and engage a diverse audience.

The Highlander model of popular education is built on the idea of collaboration between and among individuals. To achieve capacity building at the scale of a movement, collaborations with leaders and organizers from various communities are critical, and every workshop is essentially a collaborative effort between representatives from various locations and backgrounds. Highlander has been a pivotal member of many extended collaborations as well. It partnered with the Congress of Industrial Organizations in the 1930s and 1940s, joined forces with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Southern Christian Leadership Association in the 1950s and 1960s, and works with numerous regional and national justice, arts, and academic groups today (Highlander Research and Education Center "History" 2010). Highlander's Seeds of Fire youth camp has also collaborated with Appalshop's Appalachian Media

Institute in recent summers (Watts, personal communications).

Appalshop has also developed a number of multi-year collaborations with other community-based arts initiatives inside and outside the region. For Appalshop, collaborations are used both to strengthen relationships amongst Appalachians and to grow and share in multicultural projects. Through the Traditional Music Project, Appalshop has collaborated with well-respected musicians from the region to create performances, recordings, and educational workshops (Ratliff, personal communication). The Film Union has participated in collaborations with other film studios as far away as Indonesia (Appalshop 2008).

Appalshop's Roadside Theater has designed one of the organization's longest and richest collaborations with Pregones Theater in the Bronx. Cocke recalls that their interest in working together began in the 1990s after several years of looking at published government poverty statistics. "We were playing tag," says Cocke. "We must be cousins." The groups' work together began as a simple cultural exchange; Roadside Theater would go to the Bronx and perform, and Bronx performers would go to Kentucky and perform there. In the process they learned about each other's community by visiting schools, community centers, and senior centers (personal communication). After several years doing this, Cocke recalls that they each knew enough about the other that they could make something new together in hopes "not that something homogenous has been made, but that each tradition has been strengthened and something new has been made." The groups together developed Betsy, an intercultural narrative that "simultaneously strengthens the Puerto Rican/Dominican tradition and the Appalachian tradition" (personal communication).

The majority of the Village's collaborations historically and currently happen on-site. The Village has collaborated with universities, other arts organizations, and gardening and greening programs to produce projects or spaces in the Village Heart. Beginning during Yeh's last year at the organization, a local nurse has come weekly to the Village, collaborating with staff to develop various health-related programs for residents. Spell's Writing Center, a Philadelphia-wide creative writing non-profit for youth, recently converted a storage space into a library and writing center on the premises of the Village (Grimaldi, personal communication). A vocational construction school also opened recently on the third floor of the Village's main education center. (Sawyer, personal communication). Down the road, the Free Library of Philadelphia

recently opened a computer hot-spot. Grimaldi states that she is explicitly pushing for the continuation of this type of on-site collaboration to create a critical mass of amenities for the neighborhood (Grimaldi, personal communication).

The Village has at times involved a partner of distinctly different background, such as the collaborative play that was performed by students from the Village and from a predominantly upper-middle class white group (Wink 2009). However, the extent of intercultural or interracial exchange at the Village is less than that at both Highlander and Appalshop.

9. THE INITIATIVE DISSEMINATES KNOWLEDGE.

The dissemination of knowledge to audiences outside the community is a common ingredient amongst successful capacity building initiatives. Although it is not an essential component for positive change within the community, dissemination can indirectly amplify or enrich work being done internally. Disseminating knowledge to various audiences – to similar communities, to distinctly different communities, to city or regional offices, to academics, to like-minded activists - can increase the visibility of the community, the challenges it faces, and the responses the community and the initiative are making. It requires, however, that the initiative document, analyze, synthesize, reflect on, and assess their projects – a process that can be consumptive of time and energy.

Disenfranchised communities are often politically less visible than their middle and upper class counterparts. F.R. Ankersmit states in *Aesthetic Politics* that there is an aesthetic gap between those that are supposed to be represented (i.e. all citizens) and how (and to what extent) they are represented. Just as there is a gap between what is being painted and what appears on the canvas, systems of governance represent particular communities (presumably the ones the decision-makers come from) and overlook or under-represent other (Ankersmit 1996). Although there are potentially many methods for increasing community visibility, both Highlander and Appalshop intentionally disseminate knowledge to expand dialogue and action around issues of concern. Highlander's strongest vehicle for dissemination is the body of individuals it educates. Despite its peripheral geographic location in rural Tennessee, the organization has developed a reputation as a center for leadership training and base building. By pulling together leaders

for enrichment and sending them back to their communities with new knowledge and the charge of to take action, Highlander is able to disseminate knowledge from a small corner of Tennessee across the South and Appalachia. As Highlander's work is often done in reaction to injustice, a measurement for successful dissemination could be the increase of controversy that ensues.

The regionally relevant and distributable nature of much of Appalshop's work, paired with its remote location, necessitates an approach contingent on the dissemination of the organization's arts and media products through and beyond the local and regional community. Today, Appalshop consciously promotes and distributes its films, plays, and other works extensively during and after completion. (Pickering, personal communication). Not only does their work inform, but like Highlander's it also incites often-contentious dialogue. Appalshop brings to the surface many heavy issues relevant to eastern Kentucky and Appalachia that no one else wants to mention, much less discuss. Thus, dissemination in the case of Appalshop has the effect of creating controversy, although arguably a necessary and productive controversy.

Dissemination in itself can have an empowering effect on participants, as often dissemination is followed by recognition and increased external interest. Early efforts in disseminating Appalshop's films by Richardson produced a positive response from audiences around the region and excited the young filmmakers. They understood from this response that what they were doing was being appreciated, and it increased their interest to continue filming (Pickering, personal communication). The same effect occurs today for the interns of the Appalachian Media Institute through the local dissemination of their completed works at the end of the summer (Watts, personal communication).

An initiative that disseminates knowledge on the methods used by the initiative can make the initiative a model for others to learn from. For portions of Highlander's history, staff actively wrote and distributed research, as well as published work on Highlander's methodology. They stopped doing this, however, in the 1990s. Today, while information is delivered through a website, a Facebook page, and a newsletter, its sole vehicle for dissemination of knowledge is its body of participants.

The Village also disseminates information about itself and its activities through a website, an active Facebook page, and blog that Grimaldi occasionally posts to. Knowledge, however, is not disseminated

beyond the community. As such, very few people it seems know about the Village, including residents of North Philadelphia and those involved in alternative design and community-based art practices. However, the Village's audience is first and foremost the neighboring community. Because they are within the vicinity of the Village, the initiative disseminates its knowledge to the local community in the most relevant format: on-site events and celebrations. At the end of every semester, for example, the Village organizes exhibitions and celebrations to display the work of students (Grimaldi, personal communication).

The Village does not suffer internally from a lack of broader dissemination; it manages to collaborate with a number of organizations, it is funded and has a stable and committed staff, and most importantly, participants of its programs develop leadership and artistic skills. An intentional effort to disseminate knowledge outside the community is an opportunity for the Village to gain visibility as a model for others to learn from and to actually connect to the "similar urban communities" it claims to support in its mission statement.

10. THE APPROACH IS MULTIDISCIPLINARY AND ADDRESSES MULTIPLE TARGETS.

By drawing from a number of disciplines concurrently, successful capacity-building initiatives implement a holistic approach to working with their communities. This approach is reflective of their recognition of the many sub-communities defined by demographics (by age group, ethnicity, gender), ability, interest, or need that co-exist within a community, as well as the many struggles that these specific sub-communities confront. A multi-prong approach can provide multiple routes for individuals to engage critical community issues. The subsequent constellation of disciplines used and targets creates a robust problem-solving toolbox of innovative approaches, the possibility for sub-communities to interact, and the opportunity to garner attention from a wider spectrum of external audiences.

Appalshop's multiple divisions provide numerous routes to civic engagement for Appalachians. They can share stories, disseminate information, and play music on the radio. Youth can use filmmaking at the Appalachian Media Institute to explore social concerns. Appalachians can share their struggles and heritage through films made by the Film Union. They can participate in Roadside Theater's story circles or interactive plays to incite a larger dialogue.

Across divisions, an array of issues is addressed. Some issues, like those around the coal and rural prison industries, are addressed by multiple divisions. Besides Thousand Kites, however, there is little evidence of collaboration between divisions. The "atomization," of divisions within Appalshop, discussed in Chapter Three, disables significant interaction across disciplines. With a greater ability for divisions to collaborate, community members who have similar topical interests but prefer different modes of expression could interact and perhaps produce a stronger product collectively.

If an Appalshop project captures the complexity of the particular topic it is addressing, however, the project can appeal to and impact a number of audiences. Elizabeth Barret's *Stranger With a Camera*, a film about the shooting of a Canadian filmmaker (who was documenting poverty in eastern Kentucky) by a local man in the 1960s, spoke to numerous audiences, many of whom she never foresaw showing interest (Barret 2000). As the film spoke to larger issues of representation and ethics in media, it was used by film schools, journalism schools, church groups, Habitat for Humanity and other groups that who were providing services, by anthropologists, and even mental health professionals. The film garnered positive attention, not only for Appalshop, but for issues that are still relevant today surrounding poverty, the ethics of doing service work, and miscommunication and distrust between peoples (Barret, personal communication).

The multiple disciplines used and many community issues targeted by the Village of Arts and Humanities are expressed spatially in the Village Heart. The strategy of using vacant spaces and parcels in a cluster (as opposed to scattered throughout a neighborhood) creates a holistic center wherein many activities serving multiple sub-communities exist adjacently and often concurrently. Outdoor public spaces draw the interests of artists, gardeners, and designers, those looking for a place to relax and those looking for a place to play. The spiritual underpinnings of much of Yeh's work also draw those seeking meditative space.

Today's art programming, which includes theater, fashion, photography, filmmaking, and music production, enables youth to decide on a vehicle for self-expression, and sometimes for engaging with critical issues. Classes are crafted to incorporate related disciplines; for example, in the fashion class I observed, some students were designing, drawing, and sewing, while other "models" were working on choreography.

The Highlander Research and Education Center does not incorporate multiple disciplines into its

approach to building capacity; rather, it applies one methodology across disciplines. Participants throughout Highlander's history have infused various disciplines and attacked many social challenges through its methodology. This variety is apparent in part by the array of backgrounds of participants who have come to Highlander over its history. Even within the Social Change Workshop I attended, there were urban farmers; formal educators of sociology, public health, and rhetoric; popular educators; anti-war activists; gay rights organizers; college students; and ministers.

11. THE INITIATIVE SEEKS TECHNICAL, MATERIAL, AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM A BROAD RANGE OF SOURCES, BOTH EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL.

The expertise and resources available within an initiative do not have to limit the scope of its projects and programs. Successful capacity-building initiatives recognize that seeking assistance may be essential at times for expanding their potential to adequately respond to complex community challenges. When the absence of resources in a community is identified as a barrier to an initiative's success, these initiatives look for assistance from individuals and groups outside of the community.

While the Highlander Research and Education Center's methodology has always emphasized the past experiences of individuals as the primary source of knowledge necessary for constructing solutions, it also acknowledges that assistance or expertise can be sought to provide the necessary technical knowledge to be able to make informed decisions. In this instance, the role of the expert is auxiliary. New knowledge is absorbed and interpreted by Highlander participants who then determine its usefulness. Williams recalls a synthetic fuels workshop at Highlander that she attended in the 1980s that illustrates this process. The workshop was held to address growing concerns about plans by the State of Tennessee to construct synthetic fuel power plants in a number of communities. The federal government was already subsidizing the project, and plans were moving forward rapidly without engaging the future host communities. Economists and technology experts were brought in to the workshop to provide their distinct vantages. From this, the group determined that not only was the project financially infeasible (hence the subsidy), but the technologies were still in an experimental piloting phase. While Williams believes that the group could have come to this conclusion on their own eventually, they did not have the luxury of time to do so. Additionally, in this

instance, the group knew its argument would need technical validity. The assistance of new information from external experts enabled the group to construct an educated response (Williams, personal communication Feb 23, 2011).

External assistance is sought in a similar fashion by the Village of Arts and Humanities. For her first parks, Lily Yeh sought assistance from Philadelphia Green for gardening materials and horticultural assistance. As the physical development of the Village grew and construction projects took on an increasingly complex nature, it became necessary to begin collaborations with architects in Philadelphia to provide guidance building and design standards and guidelines (Rudy Bruner Foundation 2001, 16).

To introduce digital filmmaking, fashion design, music production, horticultural work, and economic development into the neighborhood, the Village has to identify individuals who have the relevant skill sets. To do so it often has to pull from outside the community. The Village taps into Philadelphia's vast pool of art-related, horticultural, and social service organizations to so that it can produce high-quality spaces and programming (Rudy Bruner Foundation 2001, 21). At the time of Yeh's departure, the board of directors was re-envisioned to be a group comprised of highly-skilled individuals from various design, arts, and community development backgrounds. Prior it had been filled by neighborhood residents; although some spots are still retained by North Philadelphians, most are external to the community and function as an advisory board (23).

Appalshop as an organization seeks external organization the least of these organizations. Certain projects, often the first in a new genre or field of inquiry, will do so. In the late 1970s Appalshop took on a series of historical documentaries intended to "fill in the blank spaces, dispel stereotypes, and tell the history from the viewpoint of the people who experienced it" (Lewis 1990, 82). The complexity of the project was something the filmmakers had never encountered previously. They thus created a team of historians, regional scholars, and researchers to assist with the storyline and framing of ideas to be presented. Typically, however, such reinforcement is not needed, especially as the filmmakers have become more seasoned with experience.

Logistically, successful capacity-building initiatives draw from an array of funding sources. All

three cases draw funding from various sources representing many interests groups, although Appalshop and the Village of Arts and Humanities draw significant portions of their funding from foundations that fund the arts. Appalshop is funded by organizations such as the Institute for Interactive Journalism, the National Performance Network, Kentucky Educational Television, the Kentucky Humanities Council, and the Community Technology Center's Network (Appalshop "Funders" 2011). The Village too receives funding from Artography, Philadelphia Green, the Philadelphia Orchard Project, and the Boyer College of Music, among other sources (The Village of Arts and Humanities 2011). Highlander is funded partly by the Central Kentucky Council for Peace & Justice, the Ms. Foundation for Women, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (for health and healthcare). Additionally, one can assume that many disciplines and interest groups are represented in the individual contributions and workshop fees that made up 27% of Highlander's 2009 income (Highlander Research and Education Center "2009 Annual Report 2010," 20).

Dependency on specific funding sources, especially private foundations, can make organizations fiscally vulnerable. Additionally, with the cuts to public arts funding in the past two decades, many community-based arts organizations have confronted the decision of closing or rethinking their strategy and audience (Cocke, personal communication). Although the situation is complex, one other potential option is revealed through this ingredient. Both Appalshop and the Village have used the arts to directly address community issues that are often not addressed by the arts (or if they are only indirectly as commentary). Looking for funding sources that fund work related to challenges existing in one's target community could provide an alternative funding source for community-based arts organizations.

The creative process systematically invokes the ingredients of success discussed above. Some of these ingredients of success are essential for any capacity-building initiative. They are common across the three case studies, although in each case they are manifested differently. The first triad of the ingredients – that *responsibility and authorship are distributed among and shared by all participants*, that *leaders guide rather than prescribe*, and that *individual capacity is linked to the ability to act collectively* – work in tandem to define the rules of engagement for developing leadership. Developing leadership through the creative process requires participants to take risks, try their ideas, and even fail along the way. The rules of engagement should encourage this vulnerability by creating:

(1) Equality. All backgrounds, prior experiences, thoughts, and ideas are considered equally, including those of the leader. The value of others comments' is shown by active listening, and decisions are made through collective discussion.

(2) Trust. Participants often come with their own personal struggles, which need to be considered as possible impediments to growth. A supportive community for overcoming such hurdles is built in part through the creation of mutual trust between participants and the initiative. A participant's trust with initiative members is made possible if the members are dependable, available, and uphold an equalized engagement with all participants. Trust can be created amongst participants through projects or activities that build group connectivity, such as collective rule-making and story-sharing.

(3) Expectation. Members of a capacity-building initiative assume that participants have the potential to develop leadership. Their expectations are higher than what participants are used to. Therefore, in addition to these spaces being comfortable, they are concurrently intensive, distributing decision-making and the responsibility to act.

The following framework of ingredients - *the mission is powerful and inspiring, broad yet clearly defined; the initiative strives for excellence in the products it creates;* it *identifies, builds on, and transforms perceptions of existing community assets;* and *projects are responsive to local conditions and relevant to current issues* - enables

a process that (a) values individual ideology and expression, (b) has a social agenda, connecting projects (at least implicitly) to core community concerns, (c) strives for excellent quality and (d) is representative of a specific place and population, drawing from and celebrating local assets.

The final ingredients were determined to be non-essential; that is, there is evidence supporting the existence of capacity building without them. These ingredients – that *participants collaborate with parties from within and from elsewhere*; that *the initiative disseminates knowledge*; that *the approach is multidisciplinary and addresses multiple targets*; and that *the initiative seeks technical, material, and financial assistance from a broad range of sources, both external and internal* – contribute to and enrich the creative process for building leadership, but are not essential.

REFLECTIONS ON CAPACITY BUILDING AND THE CREATIVE PROCESS

The assertion behind my initial definition of capacity was that making substantial, permanent, indigenous community change required more than an increase in the community's ability for implementation. Many vocational or community-based arts initiatives in disenfranchised communities provide technical skill training, which enables individuals to execute projects. Skill acquisition, while useful, is dependent on the existence of an organization that offers programs in which such skills can be used. The dependency that this creates between a community and the assistance provider prevents the community from developing internal sustainability and perpetuates its disenfranchised state. Service-based organizations, advocacy groups, and even professional organizers, while they provide immediate benefits to communities, also reinforce the divide between the capacities for sensing challenges and envisioning solutions and those for implementing. Only in turning over the entire process to a community can a long-term, catalytic, community-driven revitalization result. Myles Horton was adamant about the fundamental difference between Highlander and other adult education programs (Peters and Bell 1989, 42). While other adult education programs taught technical skills and facts, Highlander was teaching an adaptable process for effecting change.

At the initiation of this research, I likened "capacity" to "the ability to envision and implement change for oneself," and thus "capacity building" to the processes through which this ability is realized. As numerous definitions and applications exist for the approach today, however, I quickly realized that I would have to further specify my definition, answering the question "what are these initiatives building capacity *for?*"

A COMMON CREATIVE PROCESS

Through this research I discovered that all three initiatives, despite using distinct vehicles for capacity building, invoke a similar creative process. Although most often attributed to an artist's process of creating works of art, the creative process is used by all three case studies to address social agendas, regardless of whether their intention is to produce artwork or not. Like the term "capacity building, the term "creative process" too has an ambiguous definition and numerous applications. Thus, I have defined it based on

evidence from the cases.

The creative process invoked by these cases is a collective experience and requires curiosity, motivation, active participation, risk-taking, and confidence from participants. The multi-stage process actually begins before envisioning with an exercise in sensing the surrounding environment with the intention of accurately identifying challenges or curiosities. Participants then question why the observed status quo might exist and envision what an appropriate response to the identified challenge could be. After synthesizing information and resources and formulating a response, they implement a response. Such a response, be it an organized campaign, a film, or a transformed property, represents not only indigenous action to address the identified challenge, but also the creators' perceptions of the challenge. Lastly, the creators share their response, either through collective action, exhibition, or distribution.

Projects like those undertaken at Appalshop's Appalachian Media Institute or the Village of Arts and Humanities model the process of acting as a community leader. As ownership of the project from beginning to end is turned over to participants, they have full responsibility to explore their surrounding environment, identify problems or issues to question and investigate, synthesize information, produce a response (in the form of a film, radio piece, theatrical performance, or otherwise) and share their work with the community. The creative process provides a microcosm for taking on risks and responsibilities.

The ultimate intention of using the creative process in all cases is not to develop proficiency with the process for producing art. Rather, it is to instill knowledge of a process that is transferable outside of artistic pursuits to other endeavors that depend on creativity and innovation. Thus, in these capacity building initiatives, the creative process is used as an analog to the process used by leaders to enact positive change in their communities. By modeling the steps that leaders take to create community change, participants develop leadership skills they can bring to future projects.

THE ADDED VALUE OF INCORPORATING INDIGENOUS EXPRESSION

One of my driving research questions was "can the capacity-building process be enhanced by the inclusion of arts and design?" I included a non-arts initiative - the Highlander Research and Education

Center - in my final three case studies to provide a baseline against which to evaluate the arts-based cases. I came to realize soon after delving deeper into Highlander literature, however, that Highlander has actively incorporated the cultural traditions and modes of expression fully into its process for making resilient community leaders, fortifying personal relationships, and building resilient social movements.[3] Thus, there is no true baseline in this study against which the added value of the arts and design in the other two cases can be evaluated. This realization is significant in itself, however. Myles Horton believed that, while Highlander was one of many popular education schools that opened across the country at the same time, it managed to thrive long after the others folded because it was sensitive to cultural context of the South and Appalachia (Glen 1989, 129). Indeed, Highlander is more than merely cognizant and receptive to these regional cultures. It mobilizes their indigenous cultural expressions to aid in individual leadership development and collective movement building.

In all three cases, the initiatives' target communities are rich resources of existing cultural expression and heritage. Singing, rapping, dancing, playing music, storytelling, or preparing and sharing meals – such activities are prevalent and vibrant in North Philadelphia, Appalachia, and the South. As many such expressions are grounded in ethnic or cultural history and passed from generation to generation, indigenous expression provides a means for building intergenerational ties. These expressions can become powerful tools for developing collective action when incorporated into capacity-building initiatives, as was the case during the civil rights movement. "The civil rights movement was a singing movement," says Dudley Cocke of Appalshop's Roadside Theater (personal communication). Songs taken from African-American heritage were sung together at church, at organizing meetings, and on the picket lines. Such expressions fortified individuals to carry on in their difficult pursuits and built a solid community for mutual reinforcement.

Many individuals who participate in the initiatives studied come without a preexisting base of support to grow from. At the Village of Arts and Humanities, many of the students have parents working

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3   As Highlander does not provide its own definition of "culture," I have crafted the following, based on my working knowledge of its programs: "Culture is the personal or collective expressions - singing, dancing, writing, making, creating artwork, cooking and eating, celebrations – that draw from the history and heritage of a demographic, a community, family, or an individual."

multiple jobs or are absent from the home entirely. There is frequent drug activity on the street, and often their schools are not supportive of their personal interests (Saunders, personal communication). For leadership to develop at the Village, a base that supports and believes in the youth is essential for their individual transformation. Within arts courses, leadership is built in part through "artistic stagings of leadership," wherein amidst collective musical, theatrical, or physical expression, individuals take turns stepping forward momentarily, supported by the group (Hufford and Miller 2005, 83). Community is also fortified at the Village through the collective expressions of theater, singing, and dance, at a multitude of community celebrations and events, such as the Kujenga Pamoja Festival, that occur annually.

Cultural expression that reflects indigenous expression, or artistic production that is informed topically from one's heritage, can become a link to one's ancestry and current identity. Creating this link through art can build appreciation and pride in one's people or place. Such is the reason for including classes like hip-hop dance and spoken word poetry at the Village, which draw from forms of expression particular to the African-American community. Highlander incorporates songs from the labor movement, the civil rights movement, and the Appalachian environmental movement today in its work, making a connection to the "community" of struggling peoples of the past. Appalshop radio, theater, and music programs have featured the music and stories of the region, and the organization's early films, as well as some of those produced today, look for meaningful alternatives to modern Appalachian identity by documenting the rich cultural heritage of the region.

THE ADDED VALUE OF ARTISTIC PRODUCTION

The critical difference between Highlander and Appalshop and the Village of Arts and Humanities is that the latter two have a dual output of leadership and artistic product. Highlander incorporates artistic expression throughout its methods, but its stated goal is not to create art. Therefore, a revised question that I can begin to answer through this research is, "What is the valued added for building capacity, if any, of producing art?" Because Appalshop and the Village of Arts and Humanities have different artistic product types, they each provide distinct insight into the potential benefits of arts and design.

The variety of tools for artistic production can enable critical sensing, the first step of the creative process, when used for investigation. When Appalshop opened in the late 1960s, filmmaking provided a novel platform for exploration and discovery of the region. Elizabeth Barret, a filmmaker with Appalshop, and other early participants recall how different eastern Kentucky looked once they were behind the cameras (personal communication). Filmmaking helped them sense their context to understand the complexities of their people and place, to see both the good and the bad, and to recognize the viability of the region to support meaningful work.

Barret states that the products made by Appalshop members serve as evidence of knowledge creation, of increased civic engagement, and of leadership development. These products are powerful for their creators, serving as evidence of energy expended and knowledge acquired (personal communication). As many of Appalshop's products are distributable, they can also affect those who view, hear, or interact with them. This expanded audience, consisting of both those within the target community as well as beyond, can provide further visibility to the challenges faced in Appalachia, as well as the responses that Appalachians are taking. The representation and dissemination of both challenges and responses can build empathy between communities and dissolve existing barriers between them. In *Aesthetic Politics*, F. R. Ankersmit states that in "an irrevocably broken world, a world whose components are as irreducible to each other as a painting and what it depicts," the aesthetic representation of disparate groups, if shared, can bind communities together. Quoting philosopher Josef Chytry, Ankersmit posits that "by promoting an awareness of others, aesthetic sensibility gives rise to the development of a society in which the individual becomes, as it were, the state itself" (1996, 53).

The physical space of the Village of Arts and Humanities is visual reminder of the renaissance of spirit and community that has occurred there over the past twenty-five years. Because of this, Saunders believes that, "the history becomes important to you even though you were not there" (personal communication). Visibility serves as a reminder to those who use the Village daily and to those who come explicitly to see what takes place at the Village. Its visible transformation and continued active usage also serve as proof of a viable alternative to sustainable redevelopment that is not externally-driven. Given the physical growth of

Temple University in recent years and the prospect of gentrifying forces on the neighborhoods around it, the Village Heart provides a clear signal that the community is not sitting back to let such external forces overtake it (Hufford and Miller 2005, 20). The transformed physical space of the Village also provides a backdrop conducive for current leadership development. Hufford and Miller suggest that certain spaces within the Village, such as Guardian Angel Park, "help children feel safe enough to express themselves" (2005, 80). Indeed, my discussions with current students support this position. The "therapeutic" place provides "a escape" from the ills present in their neighborhoods and a supportive stage for taking creative risks.

WHERE (AND WHY) ARTS INITIATIVES FALL SHORT

This research found that the community-based arts initiatives studied fail to achieve the same scale of leadership development, and thus social change, as their non-arts counterpart. The Highlander Research and Education Center, an initiative that does not produce art, overshadows both Appalshop and the Village of Arts and Humanities in its success at developing leaders who produce positive social change. From this research, I was able to identify several explanations that inform this disparity. They are specific to the cases, and are not reflective of every arts initiative. Nor do they comprise the entire pool of possible reasons for their lesser effectiveness. However, the points that follow can serve more generally as caveats or points of consideration for artists who strive to build community capacity and provoke social change.

INITIAL MOTIVATION AND BACKGROUND

The underlying motivation for initiating a community-based endeavor can vary between artists and non-artists. This point is illustrated in the striking difference between Lily Yeh's reasons for starting work in North Philadelphia and those of Myles Horton at Highlander. Yeh was trained as an artist and had little professional or non-professional experience working long-term in the trenches of a disenfranchised community. She responded affirmatively to Arthur Hall's invitation to North Philadelphia, in part because she feared that "somehow life was passing [her] by and [she] was not living it" (Jackson and Moskin 2004, 5). She credits her initial experiences, ones she describes as personally fulfilling, for her decision to stay at the

Village. Her tenure there was a personal journey, enriched by interactions and relationships with community members (4).

Horton's experiences prior to beginning the Highlander Folk School can be seen as a string of preparations for developing a program of popular education for leadership development and social change. He grew up in a poor Appalachian town, had experience organizing and teaching in disenfranchised communities during college, and sought several years of higher education to expand his understanding of the contemporary theories and practices of popular education domestically and abroad (Peters and Bell 1989, 35-42). Horton did not have all the answers when he founded Highlander, but he had a deep theoretical and practical background to draw from. Just as important, he had a vision for building leadership and a methodology, albeit a conceptual one initially, to do so.

COMPETING PRODUCTS

While Highlander's sole objective is to "produce" or enhance leaders, arts organizations like Appalshop and the Village are weighted by the twofold task of building community capacity and producing artistic products of merit. In my discussion of authorship in Chapter VI, balancing authorship is a critical to a successful art-based capacity building project. If artists retain too much authorship, the opportunity for community members to develop as leaders is lessened (the quality of this "product" is lessened). Alternatively, artists often fear that if too much authorship is surrendered to the community, the quality of the final artistic product will suffer.

This fear, while valid, prevents artists from discovering opportunities wherein the merit of artistic work can actually increase by allowing others to take on authorship. The work of photographer Wendy Ewald at Appalshop's Mountain Photography Workshop exemplifies the potential of distributing authorship. Prior to her work in Appalachia she had developed a process of working with youth wherein she shared cameras with her "subjects." She originally used this method because she worried about being perceived as an intruder or and outsider; however, she soon realized that the images being produced by youth were telling stories of places – their hardships, and their poignancies – that she never would have discovered. Ewald later said that "what was coming out of [this process] was something much more complex and much closer

to what it seemed the reality was" than she ever would have been able to capture (University of California 2002).

MISIDENTIFICATION

Community-based arts initiatives do not typically consider themselves to be programs for leadership development or community capacity building. Thus, they do not explicitly advertise themselves as such, and they acquire reputations as initiatives that make art with their communities as opposed to being initiatives that make leaders. Thus, there may be confusion as to the intention of an initiative, why one would become involved, and what one would gain from participating. Also, the audience of interest may be smaller with the reputation as an arts initiative, as those who do not already identify or show interest in art may not consider it.

CONTEXTUAL CONSTRAINTS TO CAPACITY-BUILDING EFFORTS

Among the three cases studied, there is a discrepancy between how capacity-building initiatives measure their success and how their funders require them to measure success. Constraints and expectations placed on such initiatives by the funding sources to which they are indebted can impede overall success. Leadership development can be energy intensive, as illustrated by the leadership development programs at the Village of Arts and Humanities, Highlander, and Appalshop. The groups in these programs are intentionally small so that ample attention is given to each person. Regardless of how much attention and energy a participant is given during a Highlander workshop, a summer internship at the Appalachian Media Institute, or an art course at the Village, there is no way for the initiative to know if, when, and how that participant will manifest the attributes of leadership. These uncertainties are an inherent part of the capacity-building process, and provide great potential for knowledge creation, individual development, and community change if addressed constructively. The measurements by funders, however, do not account for or capture the profound potential of this work, and as such may require initiatives to alter their visions or processes in order to obtain funding.

Additionally, successful leadership development requires that a program fulfill the specific interests

of its participants. The agenda of a Highlander workshop is drawn from the agenda of its participants in much the same way that the projects of the Village's Teen Leadership Corps are drawn from the youth involved or the videos of the Appalachian Media Institute are inspired by the individual interests of its media interns. It can prove difficult, if not impossible, to forecast how funding will be used, knowing that new participants will bring new interests and needs.

The need for programs specific to the interests of participants means that initiatives have to skillfully pair their projects to funding sources, as foundations typically have their own agendas to advance. WMMT Mountain Radio programmer Rich Kirby believes that the mission of an initiative can be at risk when it relies heavily on private foundation funding, as Appalshop does. He states that "that kind of funding really puts you in danger that your constituency is the granting program officers and not the community" (personal communication). There is a risk of developing projects that suit the guidelines of the grantor as opposed to suiting the community constituency. For this reason, Highlander staff have made a conscious effort to diversify its funding sources to include substantial proportions from private donations, workshop fees, as well as funding sources that come with "no strings attached" (Williams, personal communication Mar 13, 2011). The ability to do may be a unique benefit that Highlander experiences because of its long legacy of movement building for positive social change at a national scale.

In the past, Appalshop and the Village have tried to find alternative funding sources as well. Appalshop strove to generate one-third of it annual income at one point from sales, but this goal proved to be infeasible (Cocke, personal communication). The Village too looked to generate income from sales for a short period, and it also received substantial funding from the City of Philadelphia to maintain government-owned vacant land in their neighborhood as well as their own land. This funding source, while stable for a number of years, was cut in 2010, and forced the Village to shrink back its greening and maintenance programs (Grimaldi, 2010).

CONSTRAINTS TO ARTISTIC PRACTICE

Constraints to the work of arts-based capacity-building initiatives, and more broadly, all community-based arts initiatives, also arise from a declining source of public financial support and a subsequently

declining body of sister initiatives nationally. Dudley Cocke of Roadside Theater has written on the changing national landscape of the democratic arts field, its causes, and the consequences for initiatives like Appalshop. Cocke believes that, since a major overhaul in 1997 of the National Endowment for the Arts, the largest public funder of the arts in the country, the field has suffered in numerous ways. The amount of funding was cut severely, and twelve discipline-based applications were replaced with a several "thematic" applications. "Competition for funds had superseded cooperation, and the shared critical discourse, which the field had relied on to build and sharpen itself, had broken down," writes Cocke. "In turn, ethical and artistic standards had been compromised in the field as a whole" (Cocke 2011, 94). As a result of the reduced budget of the National Endowment for the Arts, "veteran community artists and cultural activists had retreated from the front lines to safer, better paying jobs" (95). The field lost seminal members, the discourse to drive innovation, healthy competition and a spirit of collaboration, as well as the ability to network towards movement-scaled efforts. These conditions have affected the work of Appalshop, as not only is a major source of funding no longer sufficient, but a network that one provided accountability, a collaborative network, and encouraged them to maintain an artistic edge is gone.

SIGNIFICANCE

LESSONS FOR THE ART COMMUNITY

Community-based arts initiatives that seek to build capacity for leadership can be, in relation to other approaches in the community-based arts field, engaged more meaningfully with their target population, thus creating deeper, more enduring impacts on individuals and enabling long-term social development. However, when compared to the exemplars of non-arts-based capacity-building initiatives, gaps and weaknesses in their approach can be identified.

This research identifies three reasons why Appalshop and the Village of Arts and Humanities, two arts-based community endeavors, have not achieved the scale of change that the Highlander Research and Education Center has. The arts initiatives were undertaken for motives different than those of the non-arts initiative, and their founders had different backgrounds and areas of expertise. The challenge of producing

two products – an artistic product and a leader – can be difficult to balance. Quite often, these two products are seen as a "one-or-the-other" relationship, wherein improving the quality of one lessens the quality of the other. Lastly, community-based arts initiatives often do not identify themselves as "capacity-building initiatives," or as initiatives that develop leadership. Because of this, they do not focus the creative process on building leadership capacity, nor do they advertize themselves as doing such. However, the growing knowledge base of capacity building, to which this thesis contributes, can provide substantial conceptual and logistical support to arts initiatives working to build community leadership and spur community development.

LESSONS FOR ALL PRACTITIONERS

This thesis contributes to the practice of capacity building in disenfranchised communities. The identification of a set of ingredients for successful capacity building is not a checklist or "how-to" manual for creating a successful initiative. Rather, these findings provide a model for ethos and action for those who aspire to initiate a community-based endeavor with the hope of making a deep, enduring impact. The capacity-building approach is fundamentally different from other approaches to community engagement, and thus deserves to be critically considered before embarking on a long-term project. For those currently involved in community-based efforts, this thesis can be used as a tool for evaluating current methods against a comprehensive set of essential and non-essential ingredients of success. Through reflection, these initiatives have the opportunity to strategically expand or restructure their operations.

LESSONS FOR FUNDERS

Embedded in this research is the argument that foundations that support community work should reconsider both the applicant pool and measures by which they determine the success of potential recipients. Because of the discrepancy between how capacity building can be measured and how initiatives are required to measure it by funders, reported results do not justifiably reflect the profundity of change occurring. Meaningful results – the future actions of new leaders - are often not achieved in the short course of time dictated by grant requirements. Additionally, such initiatives need to be relevant to the specific challenges

or interests of an often-changing body of participants. Because it can be difficult for capacity-building initiatives to predict how exactly their funding will be spent – not to mention what the actual outcomes of their work will be – they run the risk of devising projects that respond to the agendas of funders, not to those of their actual stakeholders. Guidelines and restrictions from foundations can disable the dynamism possible in capacity building. Dudley Cocke of Roadside Theater, writes:

> The majority of foundations strike me as management organizations rather than "learning organizations." Management organizations are more fixed in their culture, almost as if the solutions to increasingly complex, global problems are known and the instruments for their implementation are the objects of support. Learning organizations are more flexible, assuming that solutions are not necessarily known and the process of discovery should be supported. (Atlas 2006)

Understandably, foundations fear funding programs that might fail to meet their intentions. However, by asking initiatives to compose projects that will fulfill a set of measurements, they restrict initiatives to a set of "tried and true" projects rather than searching for a new and innovative alternative.

Arts initiatives are often not considered to be prime candidates for grant funding in the community development foundation world, except for those specific foundations that explicitly fund arts and cultural work. The funding compositions of Appalshop and the Village of Arts and Humanities are weighted heavily towards arts foundations, which is dangerous, given the rapidly declining public funding pool for the arts in the United States discussed previously. To provide capacity-building arts initiatives with critical support to enable or enhance their efforts, foundations should reconsider their potential pool of applicants and revise grant applications to reflect their acknowledgement of similar goals and processes between some arts-based initiatives and non-arts-based initiatives.

The efforts and enduring results of the Highlander Research and Education Center, Appalshop, and the Village of Arts and Humanities, serve as evidence that an approach to building community capacity through the creative process occurs in actual practice and is not at all new. This thesis provides a long overdue acknowledgement of the successful building of community capacity by these organizations by identifying and defining their approach as a *model* of community engagement. This model adds to the accumulated knowledge and literature in the fields of capacity building *and* community-based artistic practice. By applying the idea and practice of the creative process to real community challenges, these initiatives, and consequently this research, serve to bring the two often disparate fields together.

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Hernandez, Monica (Education Team member and Immigrant Leadership Development Program coordinator), interview by the author, March 12, 2011, New Market, Tennessee.

Williams, Susan (Education Team member and Library/Resource Center coordinator), phone interview by the author, February 23, 2011.

Williams, Susan (Education Team member and Library/Resource Center coordinator), interview by the author, March 13, 2011, New Market, Tennessee.

Waller Muhammad, Tufara (Cultural Program coordinator), interview by author, March 12, 2011, New Market, Tennessee.

APPALSHOP

Adams, Patsy (financial administrator), interview by the author, March 15, 2011, Whitesburg, Kentucky.

Barret, Elizabeth (Film Union filmmaker), phone interview by the author, March 17, 2011.

Cocke, Dudley (Roadside Theater director), interview by the author, March 16, 2011, Norton, Virginia.

Kirby, Amelia (Summit City Cafe owner), interview by the author, March 15, 2011, Whitesburg, Kentucky.

Kirby, Rich (WMMT programmer and musician), interview by the author, March 15, 2011, Whitesburg, Kentucky.

Pickering, Mimi (Film Union filmmaker and Community Media Initiative director), phone interview by the author, February 16, 2011.

Ratliff, Brett (WMMT programmer and musician), interview by the author, March 15, 2011, Whitesburg, Kentucky.

Smith, Herb E. (Film Union filmmaker), interview by the author March 14, 2011, Whitesburg, Kentucky.

Watts, Natasha (Appalachian Media Institute interim director), interview by the author, March 15, 201, Whitesburg, Kentucky.

THE VILLAGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

Grimaldi, Elizabeth (executive director), phone interview by the author, March 24, 2011.

Saunders, Serena (program manager and teaching artist), phone interview by the author, March 25, 2011.

Sawyer, El (program director), interview by the author, March 3, 2011, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

"Almost always, the creative dedicated minority has made the world better."

- Martin Luther King, Jr.