

Building Strong Community Networks: A Model for Cultural & Community Collaboration

"We need to turn this model of understanding community need on its ear. Why don't we, as cultural institutions, quit telling our communities what they need and put ourselves in the audience and let them tell us what they need? Otherwise we are in danger of introducing our own institutional bias about what the need is." Kyle Burks, Denver Zoo, January 2011 BSCN Workshop

Introduction

Heart of Brooklyn, with its institutional and research partners, seeks an implementation grant of \$650,000 over two years to strengthen the collective impact of cultural institutions in meeting significant community needs. This will be accomplished primarily through the development of **two new tools: a rubric and process model** for conducting a cross-institutional public value audit; and a **curriculum** for professional development in the practice of collaborative thinking and engagement. Building on a solid foundation of cooperation, Heart of Brooklyn's six highly respected and diverse institutions in central Brooklyn have become a national model of cultural collaboration, presenting award-winning programs in education, community development, tourism, marketing, cultural and community advocacy. Members include: Brooklyn Botanic Garden, Brooklyn Children's Museum, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn Public Library, Prospect Park, and Prospect Park Zoo. Heart of Brooklyn and its community partners plan to develop a new "collaborative muscle" to strengthen the bonds that tie us more strongly to each other and to the communities we serve.

In the fall of 2010, Heart of Brooklyn (HOB) and its research partners, the Institute for Learning Innovation (ILI) and the Center for the Study of Brooklyn (CSB), initiated a collective planning effort, *Building Strong Community Networks*, to examine the issues that both promote and deter cultural institutions from meaningful and systemic community engagement. This work was generously supported by an IMLS Planning Grant, the Brooklyn Community Foundation and the HOB member institutions. After a decade of successful cultural collaboration, HOB looked to further its partnership model as an integral, evolving framework for regional planning, lifelong learning and community engagement in central Brooklyn and beyond.

This project emerged from numerous professional conferences, studies and conversations over the past decade indicating that libraries and museums must collectively support systemic community engagement to remain relevant. Indeed, the central question, **"How can museums and libraries align themselves to meet the changing needs of communities?"** was drawn directly from the IMLS publication *The Future of Museums and Libraries: A Discussion Guide*. Building on HOB's successful community partnership model, the researchers examined how cultural institutions might be more embedded in the fabric of the community—addressing 21st century audience needs and responding to the challenges facing museums and libraries in 21st century society.

The planning project demonstrated a critical need to focus on capacity building efforts within and across the staffs of each partner institution and to simultaneously establish strategic alignments of staff, resources, missions, strengths and institutional practices. These important steps are verified through current literature on change theory and building collective impact, creating an alliance between business management research and the management needs of cultural institutions. Following the leadership of such programs as Strive in Cincinnati, and the White House Council for Community Solutions, HOB and its partners seek to develop tools that will enable others to take the same essential steps in facilitating collaborative expertise. The project will continue to engage five satellite sites (**Denver, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Columbus, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia**) in reviewing and testing the results of as a step toward **building a national community of practice**.

Over an intensive four-month period, ILI conducted the core research on site in Brooklyn. The Center for the Study of Brooklyn, the only center devoted exclusively to the study of public affairs and policy issues in the

borough, provided up-to-date demographic data and collaborated with ILI to identify emerging trends in Brooklyn's informal learning community. A National Advisory Committee of leaders in the fields of both library and museum professional practice offered guidance and advice throughout the research process. In January 2011, HOB and ILI hosted a stakeholder workshop at the Brooklyn Public Library, with virtual participation from the five satellite cities mentioned above, to present the research and to elicit further input.

Ultimately, *Building Strong Community Networks* identified numerous barriers to collaboration, most of which are likely to be common across such partnerships. The cultural institutions cited funding as the primary barrier, but also noted that adequate staff capacity and expertise were key factors. Other notable barriers included: both internal and external communications, operational inflexibilities, competition among institutions, and differences in organizational goals. Working together to mitigate and reduce these obstacles would be a clear goal for implementing a successful cultural and community collaboration. **It is our intent to design and pilot a new process model that restructures institutional capacity and survives the grant period, and to develop practical resources for both professionals in the cultural sector as well as the communities they serve.**

Assessment of Need

As a result of their planning efforts, HOB and ILI have expanded their understanding of the affordances and barriers to deep collaboration between cultural networks and their communities. From September through December 2010, HOB and ILI facilitated more than 15 group discussions among member organization leadership and staff and numerous community stakeholders. Demographic profiles of Brooklyn neighborhoods were reviewed and investigations revealed how HOB members were addressing critical local issues. It became increasingly clear that **community partnerships existed at many different levels but were often unidentified as core practices**. In addition, a multiplicity of terms used to define community engagement and partnership further obscured the discovery process. Moreover, each institution used different leadership practices and models to develop community programs. A well-shared common definition is essential.

Transcriptions and audio recordings of all meetings provided a rich dataset for analysis and the framework for a full-day workshop in Brooklyn in early January 2011. Through both videoconferencing and a LiveStream connection, cultural groups in the project's five satellite cities, who are likewise considering the impact of collaboration, also participated. Teams comprised of museum and library professionals (see attached list of participating institutions) from Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Denver and Columbus held parallel conversations during the afternoon working session. Recommendations and takeaways from all participants were shared—revealing strikingly similar issues and concerns surrounding the risks and benefits of collaboration. View workshop highlights at: <http://www.heartofbrooklyn.org/communitynetworks/workshop>.

Although the findings from all the planning activities will be enumerated in a detailed issues paper in April 2011 (and presented at the American Association of Museums national conference in May 2011), participants concurred that several urgent steps are necessary to build on the momentum underway. **Two action components**, in particular, emerged as critical strategies to build a new paradigm to guide cultural and community collaboration. The first is a comprehensive, **cross-institutional public value audit** to identify all current efforts, including outcomes, staffing, sustainability, and funding sources. The second is a bold and creative approach to **capacity building across staff at HOB member institutions**. This proposal will detail not only the necessity and structure for each, but also the ongoing role of the five satellite cities, so that results can be shared and tested in many different settings.

The decision to move forward with new and comprehensive strategies emerges directly from the research study and from current change theories. Both underscore the need for capacity building in order to support systemic shifts in institutional thinking and practice. The research study has produced the following findings:

- **Effective collaboration requires realignment**, rather than reinvention.
- **HOB member institutions need to share collective data sources** for up-to-date identification of community needs. Data collection needs to be institutionalized and standardized to develop systems that can translate community needs into actionable practices.
- To be effective, **collaboration must become an embedded institutional practice**; it must emerge from broad institutional desire to be seen as responsive and socially relevant in the community.
- **Collaboration must be embraced at all levels of the institution**, from its leadership to its day-to-day practitioners. Those initiating collaborative programs need to feel fully supported in their endeavors.
- Collaboration is accompanied by significant institutional risk; **strategies to mitigate risk must be commonly shared and renewed** on a regular basis.
- **New approaches to communication, transparency, and shared values are necessary**; staff should be included in defining necessary changes, learning new skills, and evaluating the impact of changing operations. Thus cross-institutional capacity building would be a powerful strategy.
- Capacity building training will focus on enabling creative decision makers across institutions to **develop new channels for listening, programmatic responsiveness and increasing community relevance**.
- The member institutions agreed that **HOB and its consultants would facilitate cross-institutional capacity building and realignment**. They also believed that their success would model the necessary steps for other communities seeking similar outcomes.

Collective data from the research study demonstrated that the member institutions have both the intention and desire to deepen their collaborative services and programs with the community. They have a strong record of working together under the leadership of Heart of Brooklyn. Yet, the study also showed that further training, deeper operational alignment, and well articulated common goals are necessary to facilitate this goal.

National Impact & Goals

Much has been written about the need for non-profit institutions to collaborate for greater impact and public value. In *Collective Impact* (*Stanford Social Innovation Review*, www.ssireview.org), John Kania and Mark Kramer argue that large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination, **not the isolated intervention of individual organizations**. They state that “collective impact is not merely a matter of encouraging more collaboration...It requires a systemic approach to social impact that focuses on the relationships between organizations and the progress toward shared objectives.”

Further, *Collective Impact*, outlines five conditions for collective success: a common agenda; shared measurement systems; mutually reinforcing activities; continuous communication, and a backbone support organization. It is in this spirit of collective action that Heart of Brooklyn and its partners sought to study how cultural institutions could work together with a common agenda to create public value in Brooklyn. The goal of

the study was to outline the framework for a model for cross-institutional collaboration that could be widely adapted. This request for an implementation grant is to build the foundation for that model.

The need for a cross-institutional approach to staff development is also supported through current change theories—**strategies that seek to allay change anxiety and create new institutional cultures**. Many of the core barriers to working collaboratively may be reduced through a shift in thinking and practice. Both E.H. Schein and Kurt Lewin have written about the need to “unfreeze” previously learned behavior and influences through the addition of new forces and benefits of letting go of old habits. Participants engaged in new thinking need to be able to see what benefits can be gained through working differently. This project addresses the process of change through a broad approach to capacity building—engaging staff at all levels to establish new interpersonal relationships and to take part in the collective development of new concepts for institutional practice. Changes theories consistently stress the need for methodical and thorough preparation.

Project Design & Evaluation Plan

Components of a Model: The term “model” is not to suggest a prescriptive solution to all collaborative projects. This project seeks to define a model as a framework that includes key elements, concepts, processes and responsibilities necessary to support creative and meaningful collaboration. This project will develop, test, and disseminate **two new tools: a rubric and process model** for conducting a public value audit; and a **“curriculum”** for professional development in the practice of collaborative thinking and engagement.

The Public Value Audit

The idea of a Public Value Audit (PVA) builds on concepts advanced in the book “Creating Public Value” by Harvard Professor Mark H. Moore. Moore suggests that public benefit institutions should work to understand what “public value” their “authorizing agents” (i.e., policymakers, taxpayers and constituent groups) seek from them, and use this information to allocate resources and create programs and services that maximize public value. A PVA is a means of assessing a nonprofit organization’s non-financial outcomes and understanding what value the organization creates – either currently or prospectively – for its stakeholders. This is a robust, methodical and qualitative process of taking stock of one’s value proposition in the community.

Although the interviews and research into the practices of HOB members sought to identify and discuss a shared definition of community collaboration, early findings were striking. Each institution measured the success of its programs in different terms. For some, success was indicated in internal gain—e.g. increased attendance. For others, it was seen in community impact – e.g. greater engagement with new immigrant groups. As conversation continued, more examples of community-focused programs emerged. Differences in practices also emerged. The responsibility for establishing and maintaining such programs fell on different staff departments from institution to institution. **If collaboration among institutions is to be effective for community, it must begin with an alignment of values, purposes, operations and responsibilities. A Public Value Audit is the first step toward such alignment.**

Program Audit

The audit will be conducted by the Institute for Learning Innovation and will provide a multilayered picture of activities, audiences, and community goals. It will use in-depth interviews with key program staff, reviews of all program-related literature, and reviews of all current program evaluations to build a comprehensive matrix that includes: origin of project, size, type, leadership responsibility, audiences served, goals, funding sources, impacts and frequency. It will look at the factors used in developing programs and how audience input is gathered. The project matrix will be organized and collated on many levels, looking for overlaps and correspondences among and between institutions, audiences and stakeholders.

Stakeholder Definition

The matrix, focusing on audiences served, will then be mapped by the Center for the Study of Brooklyn against demographic studies to determine which audiences and regions are most frequently served and/or omitted. The audit will become a tool for both identifying starting points for collaboration, where commonalities already occur, and identifying underserved audiences and unaddressed issues that may inspire future collaborations. It will also become **a baseline tool for enabling different institutions to create common systems and points of responsibility for creating cross-institutional planning**. The process and tools for undertaking and reporting on the audit findings will be developed by ILI, utilizing evaluation tools from social science and management fields. Once refined and tested, these tools will be a key deliverable of this project.

Process Mapping

The *generative process* of planning programs lies at the heart of any cultural institution. Yet, the planning process itself is rarely discussed in public or analyzed in terms of its components. In a consortium as diverse as Heart of Brooklyn, a wide range of planning processes are used to generate, refine, finance and implement programming initiatives. **Within some of the larger institutions, an array of programming decision processes are used across different departments.** While some institutions may operate on a one or two year program planning cycle, other institutions may operate on a five or six year planning cycle, or even longer. The individuals involved in programming decisions range from senior curators and botanists who plan major exhibitions to education staff who plan community engagement programs. **Regardless of department or tenure, they are all creative decision-makers.**

The consultants will work with HOB members to articulate an accurate description of their program planning processes to: 1) discern similarities and difference between them; 2) build a shared understanding of each others' processes, including the opportunities and constraints experienced by HOB members as they go about program planning; and 3) identify structural opportunities for collaboration. It should be emphasized that this is not an evaluative effort, but rather an analysis of **process flow**.

Through a combination of interviews and review sessions with member staff, the **consultants will "map" the creative decision-making processes** using one or more process mapping tools (e.g., systems dynamics). The questions to be investigated include:

- What are the scientific or artistic inputs to program planning in terms of research?
- Where do creative programming ideas come from?
- Are there any community/stakeholder inputs into program planning? Role of visitor feedback?
- What roles are played by different staff? Board members? Outside advisors?
- How are programming ideas vetted?
- How centralized vs. decentralized is the process?
- Is there a pipeline of programming ideas in various stages of development?
- What happens to programming ideas that are not ready for implementation?
- How are new programs funded? At what point in the process are funding requirements assessed?
- What is the program development timeline?

Once the processes are mapped, the results will be synthesized, identifying similarities, dissimilarities, and opportunities for collaboration. The deliverable for this task will be a **memorandum report**, parts of which will be included in the larger deliverable to the field. This task will develop an analytical process that other

libraries, museums and consortia can replicate to examine their program planning processes. Our partner in this work will be John Shibley, a specialist in systems mapping.

Capacity Building Curriculum

“Can we do this in such a way that we are developing our staff, our most important resource, as well as our own institutions’ cultures towards collaboration, towards information sharing? How can we extrapolate that cultural shift and that practice shift to become a resource for community?” Edwin Torres, Rockefeller Foundation, January 2011 BSCN Workshop

For community-focused collaboration to become institutional practice, it must become a core value at all levels of staff and engaged stakeholders. Three of the breakout groups at the *Building Strong Community Networks* workshop **identified professional development** as the first priority in laying the groundwork for success. The work of Russell M. Linden (*Working Across Boundaries: Making collaboration work in government and nonprofit organizations*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002) stresses the need for all group members to gain deeper knowledge about the tasks of collaboration and to create working conditions that support engagement in collaborative efforts. Other literature on collaboration routinely identifies the need for mutual trust and respect among partners as essential conditions.

This phase of work will focus on the design, development, pilot testing and evaluation of a **new collaborative approach to program planning**. Essentially, this is a learning process for all parties involved in the project, including HOB staff, staff of the six institutional members, the regional partners and the consultants. Alan Brown of WolfBrown will lead this phase, with support from ILL. The goals are: 1) to assist HOB members in building a shared understanding of their respective program planning processes, their existing community ties, and their artistic, scientific and other creative assets, and thereby increase their capacity to act collectively on a strategic programming level; 2) to design and pilot test a new inter-disciplinary **Working Group process** for gathering both internal and external (community) input and considering collaborative programming opportunities, which may arise from existing activities or from external inputs, to develop a new “creative muscle”; 3) to evaluate this process using a rigorous theoretical framework and **produce a curriculum** for collaborative programming for the field, drawing on the experience of the HOB consortium and other research. The intention is to leave in place an **organic, sustainable process** for acting collectively.

Design, Constitute and Orient the Working Group

The purview of the Working Group will encompass:

- Serving as a **listening mechanism for community input**, which may come through existing ‘receptors’ (i.e., staff members at all levels, or even board members) or through external sources (e.g., demographers, experts from the social services sector, the business sector, the education sector, etc.);
- Consolidating and refracting information through the lens of mission, and **triangulating between community needs, existing assets and capacities, and knowledge of creative possibilities;**
- Generating, prioritizing, vetting and building **financial, institutional and public support** for collaborative programming initiatives that are responsive to community needs.

The deliverable from this task will be a **Working Group Plan** that will detail: 1) the number of participants; 2) the process established for appointment or nominations to the group; 3) leadership and decision-making process; 4) roles and responsibilities of the members; 5) purview and definition of terms; 6) a schedule of meetings through the end of the pilot phase, and the purpose of each major interaction; and 7) a shared definition of success. Inevitably, the plan will be modified and improved as the process unfolds, based on evidence of what works, what is reasonable to expect in terms of level of effort amongst participants, and based on feedback from participants and review by the **National Task Force**.

Case Studies on Collaborative Programming

Many communities and consortia have undertaken joint programming efforts in the past. What are examples of joint programs that address community needs/issues? How has community input been incorporated into the process? Approximately **5 to 6 case studies will be researched and written**, drawing from international practice in collaborative program planning. To generate candidates for case studies, the consultants will draw on their peer networks, including the international CultureLab consortium, as well as the regional partners and IMLS. A collection of case studies preceded by a brief synthesis of their commonalities, funding requirements, sustainability issues and lessons learned will be generated.

Seminar on Collaborative Programming Efforts

The case study research will culminate in a multi-site seminar that focuses on collaborative programming projects and especially the planning processes established to conceptualize and produce them. Working Group members will present and discuss the case studies and consider their strengths and weaknesses. Programming leaders from other communities may be invited to contribute their perspectives, in order to assure a diversity of viewpoints. The case studies and seminar proceedings, including video content, will be made available to the field as part of the larger dissemination effort.

Facilitate the Working Group Process

Alan Brown, with support from ILI, will facilitate the Working Group process, while the specifics of process design cannot be fixed at this time, we anticipate designing three basic elements:

1. Listening. A process for listening and “harvesting information” will be designed; this process may involve Working Group members interviewing other staff from within their own organization, interviews with representatives of external stakeholder groups (e.g., parents and caregivers, school officials, elected officials), or presentations at Working Group meetings by experts on topics or issues of common interest to the Group. To manage the flow of information, a blog or listserv will be created.
2. Reflection and Idea Generation. A process will be designed to allow Working Group members, most likely working in self-coalescing groups, to reflect on the information-gathering stage. Initially, the consultants will design and model this process, and then hand it over to the Working Group to further develop on their own.
3. Development and Vetting. A separate process will be designed for assessing and advancing the programming ideas generated through the small group process. For example, each collaborative programming idea may be evaluated for its potential based on established criteria. Conditions will need to be established for advancing an idea from the Working Group to senior HOB leadership.

The overall goal of this process is to accumulate a pipeline of collaborative programming ideas, however modest or ambitious, in various stages of development. An analogy can be made between this process and the product development cycle used by businesses in the corporate sector. Some ideas may advance quickly, while others may advance slowly, depending on the level of consensus and availability of resources. The desired outcome of this process is **a new “collaborative muscle” that will survive the grant period**. The consultants will design and facilitate this process, with the clear understanding that the Working Group will “own” the process and continue it after the grant period.

Throughout this phase, the Working Group experience will be evaluated by ILI and reviewed by the National Task Force, with the intention of making course corrections and structural improvements. At several times

during the work, ILI will attend Working Group meetings and debrief Working Group members on their experience. The lessons learned from this assessment work will be incorporated into the Curriculum.

The **National Task Force** will be engaged throughout the grant period to review, test and evaluate the project process and deliverables. It is anticipated that they will **shadow the process**, participate in multiple convenings and workshops, both on site in Brooklyn and in their communities. Electronic communication will be utilized (LiveStream, Skype, webinars, etc.). Members of the National Task Force that represent the five satellite cities will liaise with cultural institutions and others in their cities to ensure that the process is replicable.

Project Resources: Budget, Personnel and Management

The partners in this project represent a remarkable force for addressing the critical questions at the center of this study. They are closely connected to the key issues facing museum, library and cultural fields, through both research and practice. Heart of Brooklyn and its members have established relationships with the Institute for Learning Innovation, WolfBrown and the Center for the Study of Brooklyn. Together these partners have collaborated on multi-institutional research projects, including a longitudinal cultural consumer study and the *Building Strong Community Networks* planning project that led to this request.

Heart of Brooklyn is a nationally recognized, award-winning, not-for-profit organization founded in 2001 that champions the value of partnership in creating social cohesion and economic development. HOB strengthens and unites six beloved and adjoining treasures that occupy over 650 acres in central Brooklyn. HOB begins with the premise that a robust cultural campus in the heart of Brooklyn is essential to building and sustaining the largest borough in New York City. Over the last ten years, nostalgia for Brooklyn has evolved into building Brooklyn for the 21st century—while HOB’s surveys reveal the average cultural consumer is young (under 45) and educated, the challenges and opportunities are complex. Of the borough’s 2.6 million residents, over 37% are foreign born, 46% speak a language other than English at home, and 25% live in poverty. For the borough to be responsive to these economic and social challenges requires innovation, entrepreneurship, and **an evolving process that engages partners committed to creating a learning society.**

Ellen F. Salpeter, Director, brings to Heart of Brooklyn two decades of not-for-profit experience in arts and culture. Prior to her work at HOB, Ms. Salpeter was the Executive Director of Thread Waxing Space, where she spearheaded award-winning programs in contemporary art, performance, architecture and education.

Sarah Shannon, Deputy Director, is responsible for managing research and writing for HOB’s programs and initiatives. From 1993 to 2001, Ms. Shannon was National Program Director for Careers Through Culinary Arts Program, a school-to-career program for at-risk youth.

Elissa Edgerton Black, Project Manager, coordinated the research planning for *Building Strong Community Networks*. Elissa has worked with non-profit organizations in New York and Australia, focused on organizational development, capacity building, special projects, programming and legal advisory.

Like Heart of Brooklyn, **Institute for Learning Innovation (ILI)** is a well-established and respected organization whose work in understanding the outcomes of informal learning experiences is unparalleled. The team from ILI brings solid expertise in applying theory to practice and in working across institutional platforms to build meaningful collaboration. As ILI’s project leads, John Fraser and Beverly Sheppard will draw upon considerable professional experience in addressing the key questions of this project. ILI will conduct the cross-institutional public value audit and evaluate the capacity building components of the project.

Beverly Sheppard is President and CEO of the Institute for Learning Innovation. In her former role as Deputy Director and Acting Director at IMLS, she introduced, Museums, Libraries and the 21st Century Learner,

authoring a white paper and facilitating several symposia to launch a conversation that continues to be at the heart of her work. She is co-author of *Thriving in a Knowledge Age: New Business Models for Museums and Other Cultural Institutions*.

John Fraser, PhD AIA is director of ILI New York and adjunct Assistant Professor of Psychology at Hunter College of CUNY. Prior to joining ILI, he worked as Director of Public Research and Evaluation for the Wildlife Conservation Society, parent institution for the Prospect Park Zoo. He was also a contributing member of the IMLS panel that resulted in the publication, *The Future of Museums and Libraries, A Discussion Guide*.

Alan Brown, principal of **WolfBrown**, is a leading researcher and management consultant in the nonprofit arts industry. He has studied audiences, visitors and patterns of cultural participation in almost every major market in the U.S. As WolfBrown's project lead, he will spearhead the Working Group process and will contribute to the production of the capacity building curriculum and its dissemination. He will also play a significant role in the process mapping work in the Public Value Audit.

The Center for the Study of Brooklyn (CSB), established at Brooklyn College of City University New York, is the only center devoted exclusively to the study of public affairs and policy issues in Brooklyn. CSB will map the data from the public value audit against 2010 Census data and provide ongoing datasets about Brooklyn.

Gretchen Maneval became the first full time Director of CSB in 2007. Prior to that Maneval served as the Director of Housing Development at Fifth Avenue Committee, a community-based organization in Brooklyn.

John Shibley has more than 25 years of experience leading complex organizational improvement efforts in a variety of industries and settings. John works as a consultant for EmcArts' *Innovation Lab for the Performing Arts*, as well as The James Irvine Foundation's *Arts Innovation Fund*. Shibley will graphically illustrate the program planning processes using systems dynamic mapping.

Additional commitment to the success of this project can be seen in the letters of support from elected officials, funders, local and national leaders and cultural organizations that accompany this proposal. The Rockefeller Foundation has requested a proposal to support this work through its Cultural Innovation Fund.

National Task Force

Members of the National Task Force represent a wealth of leadership and expertise in the fields of education, culture, strategic planning and policy, at both domestic and international levels.

Kyle Burks, PhD, Executive VP/COO, Denver Zoological Foundation, Inc.*

Martín Gomez, City Librarian of the Los Angeles Public Library

Maria Rosario Jackson, Senior Researcher, Urban Institute

Patrick Losinski, Executive Director, Columbus Metropolitan Library*

Ellen McCallie, Deputy Director, Carnegie Museum of Natural History*

Catherine Nagel, Executive Director, City Parks Alliance

Paul Nagle, Exec. Director, Institute for Culture in Service of Community Sustainability

Siobhan Reardon, President and Director, The Free Library of Philadelphia*

Holly Sidford, President, Helicon Collaborative

Daniel Spock, Director of History Center Museum, Minnesota Historical Society*

Elizabeth Streb, Artistic Director, STREB Laboratory for Action Mechanics

* Denotes satellite city liaison

Communication Plan

This project will use a variety of dissemination methods to reach library, museum and cultural professionals, who may benefit from the work. In particular, public and private sector funders will be key constituents.

Professional Audiences:

This project is aimed at developing new models for institutional response to community needs. Professionals across the museum, library and cultural sectors in the satellite sites are considered co-creators of this model. Once the toolkit is developed, the partner cities will test the validity of the product. The final model will also be disseminated to the larger community through Heart of Brooklyn, ILI, WolfBrown and Center for the Study of Brooklyn websites, professional communications and public presentations. The project team also welcomes support for distribution by IMLS, and the possibility of a profile of the project on the IMLS website and active links for downloading the PDF. A project website has been created as part of the planning process

(<http://www.heartofbrooklyn.org/communitynetworks>).

Project Audiences & Media Outreach:

This project seeks to promote more active collaborative relationships between museums, libraries and other cultural institutions, and their service populations. Through its established relationships with WABC TV Community Affairs division, HOB will co-host town hall meetings each year to listen to the community. Further outreach to philanthropic media outlets including *Philanthropy Journal*, *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, *Alliance Magazine*, *GIA Reader* and *Giving USA* will be pursued. Organizations that promote responsible government, such as the United States Conference of Mayors, and other key groups that discuss the role of cultural institutions in the make-up of livable cities will also be targeted.

Sustainability

"In many ways, the Heart of Brooklyn partnership has become an incubator to test ideas." Scot Medbury, Brooklyn Botanic Garden

This project marks the next logical step toward creating more relevant institutions truly engaged with their communities. As an important stepping-stone, the project challenges the traditional operating paradigms of cultural institutions and charts a new course. We believe this new model reflects the most sustainable strategy for reformatting museums, libraries and cultural institutions to meet the needs of 21st century communities.

Implementing the process model of this project is a priority for Heart of Brooklyn and its Board. The partnership's track record over the past decade has clearly demonstrated its capacity and commitment to collective planning and action.

By developing site-specific implementation strategies, our national partners will be able to reposition themselves for success. **The process of co-creation is by definition more sustainable because communities and cultural institutions will understand that their welfare is interconnected.**

We firmly believe that the tools that emerge from this project will have influence within the philanthropic community and government funding agencies across the country. Museums and libraries have been alternatively dropped into either the education or cultural categories because there has not been a clear vision of how these institutions uniquely advance free choice learning. The team is confident that these new models for cultural and community collaboration will garner support for ongoing research into how libraries, museums, and cultural institutions can function as an integral unit, helping to shape stronger communities, better cities and a nation of lifelong learners.