

PEOPLE, LAND,  
ARTS, CULTURE,  
AND ENGAGEMENT

TAKING STOCK OF THE  
PLACE INITIATIVE





PEOPLE,  
LAND,  
ARTS,  
CULTURE,  
AND  
ENGAGEMENT

*TAKING STOCK OF THE PLACE INITIATIVE*

**TUCSON PIMA ARTS COUNCIL  
2013**

# CONTRIBUTORS

Roberto Bedoya

Leia Maahs

James Roebuck

Kimi Eisele

Sharon O'Brien

Jamie A. Lee

Maribel Alvarez

Josh Schachter

Lisa Falk

Maria Rosario Jackson

Kimi Eisele  
*Editor*

Leia Maahs  
*Co-Editor & Project Manager*

Debra Makay  
*Copy Editor*

## RESEARCH TEAM

Dr. James Roebuck  
*Co-Director of ERAD, University of Arizona*

Leia Maahs  
*Grants and Community Cultural Development Manager, Tucson Pima Arts Council*

Miranda Metcalf  
*Administrative Assistant, Tucson Pima Arts Council*

Kimi Eisele  
*Artist and Writer*

Roberto Bedoya  
*Executive Director, Tucson Pima Arts Council*

Maria Rosario Jackson  
*Research Advisor*

# CONTENTS

PEOPLE, LAND, ARTS, CULTURE, AND ENGAGEMENT  
TAKING STOCK OF THE PLACE INITIATIVE

4

**Introduction: Creative Placemaking in Tucson, Arizona**

5

**About This Report**

6

**Local Context and Historical Antecedents for PLACE**

7

**Belonging: A Cornerstone of Placemaking in the Region** - *Roberto Bedoya, Executive Director, Tucson Pima Arts Council*

8 - 9

**A Framework for Understanding PLACE and Its Impact**

*Maria Rosario Jackson, Research Advisor*

Communities: How PLACE Influences Places

Institutions: Empowering Artists and Communities

The Arts Field: Applying Creative Processes to Community Engagement

10 - 13

**Impact of PLACE on Community: Engaging Tucson through the Arts**

Individual and/or Collective Empowerment

Civic Engagement

Stewardship of Place

Cultural Self-Determination and Affirmation

Bridging Difference

Aesthetic Accomplishment

Community Health and Well-Being

14 - 15

**Impact of PLACE on Institutions: Tucson Pima Arts Council as Creative Placemaking Intermediary**

Deliberate Dialogue

Emphasis on “Belonging”

Defining Success

16 - 27

**Impact of PLACE on Artists: Creating Opportunities for New Discovery, Growth, and Affirmation**

Assessing Access: How Working with “Disability” Enabled a New Artistic Ability and Approach

*Sharon O'Brien, Director, Stories that Soar!*

When the Place Is Already Made: Lessons from a Folklife Project

*Maribel Alvarez, Executive Director, Tucson Meet Yourself*

Connecting with Community, Art as Witness, and the “Theater of Place”

*An Interview with Barclay Goldsmith, Director, Borderlands Theater*

A Living LGBTQ Archive: Storytelling in the Digital Age

*Jamie A. Lee, Filmmaker and Archivist*

It's Up to Us: The Power of Community Partnerships in Addressing Health Issues through the Arts

*Lisa Falk, Director of Education, Arizona State Museum*

Finding Voice: Developing Civic Agency among Refugee & Immigrant Youth through Literacy Development & Artmaking

*Josh Schachter, Photographer/Community Activist & Co-Director, Finding Voice*

28 - 33

**Appendix A: The Projects: PLACE Initiative Grantees, 2010–2013**

34 - 45

**Appendix B: Researching PLACE: An Exploration in Place-Based Evaluation and Assessment**

Dr. James Roebuck and Leia Maahs

46 - 47

**Appendix C: PLACE Initiative Research Participants**

48

**Bibliography**

## INTRODUCTION: PLACE: CREATIVE PLACEMAKING IN TUCSON, ARIZONA

With a “paint-by-numbers” template, a muralist invites community members to contribute to a large painting depicting immigrant women held in Arizona detention centers as the participants learn key statistics about detainees and corporate detention systems. A neighborhood holds a festival using music, dancing, and education to promote diabetes awareness and healthy lifestyles. Homeless youth learn from filmmakers how to create videos to ignite action against the systemic causes of youth living on the streets.

All based in Tucson, Arizona, these endeavors are three examples of the dynamic ways the arts can help transform and re-imagine communities, a philosophy that lies at the heart of the PLACE Initiative, a community-based arts initiative of the Tucson Pima Arts Council (TPAC). Since its inception in 2010, PLACE—an acronym for People, Land, Arts, Culture, and Engagement—has provided support for these projects and 50 others by helping individuals and organizations implement arts-based civic engagement projects that address critical community issues.

The PLACE Initiative is fueled by the belief that arts and cultural activities are essential to making meaningful places and can help transform shared spaces into vibrant and nurturing communities. Such activities might include public art, cultural celebrations and festivals, community events that include opportunities for engagement, culturally based civic dialogue, programs that engage youth, traditional arts apprenticeships, heritage practices or other manifestations of “informal” arts, or new forms of community-based arts and culture practices. A particular concern of the PLACE Initiative is advancing tolerance, cross-cultural understanding, and civil society through arts projects focused on engagement and collaboration.

TPAC secured initial funding for the PLACE Initiative from the **Kresge Foundation** of Troy, Michigan, which pledged to invest \$200,000 over two years. This initial funding was part of a pilot program supporting intermediary arts and cultural organizations in mid-sized American cities with high rates of poverty. Kresge identified communities that had long-standing histories of strong community cultural development work and demonstrated they were “shovel ready” to support projects using arts and culture to address contested social issues. The foundation also supported the pilot initiative in St. Louis, Baltimore, Birmingham, and Detroit.

Subsequent funding for PLACE in Tucson came from the **Nathan Cummings Foundation** (\$125,000 over two years) and the **Open Society Institute** (\$150,000 over two years), both New York City organizations that pledged support for projects promoting cultural understanding, diversity, tolerance, and civil society.

Through PLACE, TPAC has funded 53 projects in four rounds of funding from 2010 to 2013. Projects have been undertaken by both small and mid-sized organizations and artists dealing with a wide range of social issues. Some of these issues include statewide concerns such as racial profiling by authorities, overt racial and ethnic intolerance, and other concerns specific to low-income, new-immigrant, and Native American communities as well as to other vulnerable populations such as youth or veterans. Projects have also included place-based and site-specific works addressing themes that come from neighborhood histories, urban development, and Sonoran Desert ecology. Grants range from \$1,500 to \$10,000.

Recognizing the power of place-based work and community participation, the PLACE Initiative has enabled activities and projects that involve community partnerships and collaborative efforts, address systemic problems over an extended period of time, and innovate ways of engaging community constituents as essential project collaborators, not solely as audience members.

# ABOUT THE TUCSON PIMA ARTS COUNCIL

The Tucson Pima Arts Council (TPAC) is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization that serves as the designated arts agency for Tucson and Pima County. The mission of TPAC is to foster artistic expression, civic participation, and the economic growth of our diverse community by supporting, promoting, and advocating for arts and culture.

Among its many efforts, TPAC provides support to arts initiatives and organizations that serve to enrich our lives and communities, oversees the Percent for Art public art program, fosters the intersection of the arts and civic engagement, hosts professional development workshops, and works with government and community partners to advocate for the arts and arts education. Learn more about how TPAC serves to strengthen the arts in Southern Arizona by visiting [www.TucsonPimaArtsCouncil.org](http://www.TucsonPimaArtsCouncil.org).

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report serves as a point of entry into creative placemaking as defined and supported by the Tucson Pima Arts Council's PLACE Initiative. To assess how and to what degree the PLACE projects were helping to transform communities, TPAC was asked by the Kresge Foundation to undertake a comprehensive evaluation. This involved discussion with stakeholders about support mechanisms, professional development, investment, and impact of the PLACE Initiative in Tucson, Arizona, and the Southwest regionally and the gathering of qualitative and quantitative data to develop indicators and method for evaluating the social impact of the arts in TPAC's grantmaking.

The report documents one year of observations and research by the PLACE research team, outside researchers and reviewers, local and regional working groups, TPAC staff, and TPAC constituency. It considers data from the first four years of PLACE Initiative funding, including learning exchanges, focus groups, individual interviews, grantmaking, and all reporting. It is also informed by evaluation and assessment that occurred in the development of the PLACE Initiative, in particular, Maribel Alvarez's *Two-Way Mirror: Ethnography as a Way to Assess Civic Impact of Arts-Based Engagement in Tucson, Arizona* (2009), and Mark Stern and Susan Seifert's *Documenting Civic Engagement: A Plan for the Tucson Pima Arts Council* (2009). Both of these publications were supported by Animating Democracy, a program of Americans for the Arts, that promotes arts and culture as potent contributors to community, civic, and social change. Both publications describe how TPAC approaches evaluation strategies associated with social impact of the arts in Tucson and Pima County.

This report outlines the local context and historical antecedents of the PLACE Initiative in the region with an emphasis on the concept of "belonging" as a primary characteristic of PLACE projects and policy. It describes PLACE projects as well as the role of TPAC in creating and facilitating the Initiative. Based on the collective understanding of the research team, impacts of the PLACE Initiative are organized into three main realms— institutions, artists, and communities. These realms are further addressed in case studies from select grantees, whose narratives offer rich, detailed perspectives about PLACE projects in context, with all their successes, rewards, and challenges for artists, communities, and institutions.

Lastly, the report offers preliminary research findings on PLACE by TPAC in collaboration with Dr. James Roebuck, co-director of the University of Arizona's ERAD (Evaluation Research and Development) Program.

### Special Acknowledgements

We would like to recognize Regina Smith, Senior Program Officer with the Kresge Foundation, TPAC's Board and Staff for all their support of the PLACE Initiative.

# PLACE GRANTMAKING

PLACE funds are available to individuals and organizations that submit project proposals during available granting cycles. In addition to artists and arts and cultural organizations, historians, youth development organizations, schools, neighborhood and homeowner organizations, community development agencies, and social service organizations are also eligible and encouraged to seek support.

PLACE grants range from \$1,500 to \$10,000. Since 2010, the Initiative has awarded the following amounts:

PLACE I (June 2010-June 2011): \$82,000

PLACE II (June 2011-July 2012): \$93,940

PLACE III (December 2011-December 2012 & January 2012-June 2013): \$116,963

PLACE IV (January 2013): \$60,000

Total: \$352,903

Project proposals are reviewed and discussed through deliberative dialogue by a panel of community members and national experts in the field of civic engagement practices. The most promising and well-articulated projects are given funding priority.

## LOCAL CONTEXT AND HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS FOR PLACE

Tucson is the second-largest city in Arizona. Often called “The Old Pueblo,” Tucson’s name comes from the Tohono O’odham word Cuk Son, which means “at the base of the black hill.” Currently the population of the Tucson metropolitan area, now 1 million, is 47 percent white, 40 percent Latino, 5 percent African American, 2.9 percent Asian, and 2.7 percent Native American.

Pima County is the largest county in the state (at 9,184 square miles, bigger than the state of Connecticut) and is one of four Arizona counties that border Mexico. It is home to two Native American tribes—the Tohono O’odham and the Pascua Yaqui Nations—and to numerous small Western towns and ranches. While this diversity brings rich cultural heritage practices and artistic expressions, it also, on occasion, gives rise to tension and conflict.

Tucson and Pima County are located within the Sonoran Desert, an arid land with a remarkable biodiversity that is sometimes compromised by the rapid growth of the region. Cultural practices related to survival in the desert have evolved over hundreds of years, enriching and defining the human connection to the landscape.

The PLACE Initiative has served to bolster a dynamic and robust community-based arts movement in the region, one that has helped to shape the physical and social character of Tucson and Southern Arizona and contributed over time to a community sense of belonging.

In 2008, TPAC engaged artists, arts organizations, and civic, political, and business leaders in discussions about how to address barriers and enhance life in the region, as part of a yearlong, community-wide planning process. This process led to the publication of the Pima Cultural Plan. The plan recognized both the practice and the products of this movement as a significant cultural asset to the region. It offered three key recommendations for building upon the movement and expanding its impact even further:

1. Advance arts-based civic engagement programs in Tucson.
2. Promote economic well-being in our marginalized population.
3. Increase the social capital of our community through innovative collaborations with arts organizations and neighborhoods.

These recommendations led to the development of the PLACE Initiative.

### desert water, desert light

not the mind’s desert  
the green desert  
after rain

~~~

out here  
distinctions blur

~~~

against blue sky  
morning moon  
desert rock  
against desert rock

~~~

all the world  
here to be seen

~~~

water has its own  
time  
light has its own

~~~

i keep looking  
for the spaces  
in between

*by Eric Magrane, PLACE grantee*

**It is precisely because artists recognize the vision that precedes the creation of a work that emerges from a place we cannot locate or name, a place of mystery, that we stand before creation in awe. And this awe is not the province of those we are schooled or learned, it is democratic. It is an experience available to anyone irrespective of race, gender, nationality, class; it can be present to anyone who makes art.**

— bell hooks (from *Belonging: A Culture of Place*)

## **BELONGING: A CORNERSTONE OF PLACEMAKING IN THE REGION**

*by Roberto Bedoya, Executive Director, Tucson Pima Arts Council*

Much of the national discourse on creative placemaking is caged in an understanding of “place” as the built environment. Indeed physical places like artists’ live-work spaces and cultural districts benefit from creative placemaking. But to understand the term—and the practice—solely in terms of the built landscape is to miss the complete picture. Creative placemaking is much more than what manifests physically within the built environment. Before you have places of belonging you must feel you belong—to a community, a locale, or a place.

This idea of “belonging” is the poetic mark of how creative placemaking occurs in our Sonoran Desert context. Understanding it is paramount to understanding the 53 projects funded by TPAC’s PLACE Initiative.

The PLACE Initiative is about building the human capital of people as placemakers. Not only individuals, but also the collective “we.” And not simply the collegial “we” of “me and my friends,” but the neighborly “we,” which includes neighbors, passersby on the street, and fellow citizens of our mid-sized southwestern city in the desert. It is this democratic ideal of “We the people”—we who belong to a just and equal society—that animates the PLACE Initiative.

The PLACE Initiative privileges artists and their community partners undertaking projects as placemakers. Through art practice and activity, they engage with personal memories, cultural histories, imagination, and feeling to enliven a sense of “belonging” within the participants and audiences they reach.

To understand the civic impact of PLACE projects, we must view them through the frame of a social movement, one that weaves ethics and aesthetics into engagement projects. Through these projects, big gestures and little gestures collectively shape the identity of a place and allow us to feel a sense of belonging within it.

Let’s take the example of one PLACE Initiative grantee, the Barrio Sustainability Project, a project undertaken by local charter high school Toltecalli Academy, which focused on the issue of groundwater contamination in one predominantly Latino and Native American neighborhood. To address the issue, project leaders first identified the problem of the disposing of toxic waste in their neighborhood. Then they worked to educate school and community members about the principles of land stewardship. Then they created a community garden that reflected this principle with a focus on water harvesting. The garden included a community mural that illuminates the indigenous traditions and heritage of sustainability from a cultural and historical point of view.

This process of naming, examining, and creating artwork that addresses the problem is similar to the process undertaken by a social movement, which also names and examines problems then motivates actions. By exemplifying the active engagement of a civic “we,” the Barrio Sustainability Project offers a clear example of how PLACE projects can be seen as a social movement of belonging.

To acknowledge the importance of belonging, of course, is to also acknowledge the discomfort—and even violence—of dis-belonging. Dis-belonging occurs through acts of gentrification, racism, and speculation culture, which often occur under the name of “civic revitalization,” but in reality betray the democratic ideals of a just, civil society.

In our region, PLACE projects can also trouble the politics of dis-belonging. They do this by confronting the policies and realities that marginalize people or undervalue particular practices and places—or by offering a counter-frame, an antagonism, a perspective or action that is different than authorized norms and instead more authentically aligned with true democracy.

The way PLACE projects are linked to a sense of belonging is by developing and implementing arts experiences that shape the identity of a place, operate in the social spaces of dialogue and deliberation, present visions and manifestations of social cohesion, and activate democracy so as to build the commons.

Placemaking—and the aesthetics of belonging—happens on city blocks, in schoolyards and classrooms, and at neighborhood centers and is characterized by short- and long-term relationships among individuals. The PLACE Initiative creates opportunities for additional experiences, ones that are deliberate and grounded in arts practices designed to engage the expressive life of the civic “we.” Whether accidental or deliberate, this kind of placemaking is critical to creating a sense of belonging.

The expressive life of Southern Arizona is woven together through an interplay of people, land, arts, culture, and engagement. PLACE projects create opportunities to celebrate, explore, define, and redefine the relationships between these dynamic forces. PLACE projects illuminate a social movement of belonging that is alive and active. It is a movement that shapes the ethical and aesthetic experiences of belonging to a community where concern, care, and imagination animate and make more meaningful our lives together.

# A FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING PLACE AND ITS IMPACT

by Maria Rosario Jackson, Research Advisor

The experience of PLACE is best understood with a dual focus on TPAC as a creative placemaking intermediary and on the PLACE grantees as on-the-ground agents. The PLACE Initiative offers the opportunity to investigate the role of a public arts agency as a social change agent in the Southern Arizona context, helping to affect both material and intangible conditions as well as influence the narrative of a place. As a whole, one might think of PLACE as having potentially had influence in three realms:

1. *Community*—participants involved in PLACE projects and the places where they live
2. *Institutions*—within TPAC and in the organizations supported with PLACE grants
3. *Arts field*—among arts leaders, arts organizations collectively, and artists

## COMMUNITIES: HOW PLACE INFLUENCES PLACES

Initial exploration of the work of PLACE grantees led to the identification of several plausible effects or contributions of individual projects and in some instances plausible collective impacts of multiple projects, especially if co-located in a place or tied to other larger efforts. It is important to note that no one arts project alone can effectively be the antidote to the often long-standing and entrenched issues that marginalized communities experience. That said, arts and cultural activity certainly have much to contribute. The following are plausible interrelated contributions of PLACE to communities, the breadth of which warrants further investigation.

- **Individual and/or Collective Empowerment:** The recognition of the ability to effect change and/or the acquisition of specific skills required to effect change (e.g., communication, organizing, etc.).
- **Civic Engagement:** Active participation in efforts deliberately intended to impact public life and community. More specifically, civic engagement as it applies to the notion of belonging and acting in the interest of the public, not only in self-interest.
- **Stewardship of Place:** Sense of responsibility and active engagement to care for physical and/or intangible attributes of a place.

- **Cultural Self-Determination and Affirmation:** The act of constructing, expressing, and validating group identity (e.g., ethnic/racial, age, sexual orientation, interest-specific, place-based, etc.).
- **Bridging Difference:** Cross-group understanding, empathy, and engagement.
- **Aesthetic Accomplishment:** Creation of art itself; improvement of physical and intangible environment.
- **Community Health and Well-Being:** Art that contributes to a healthy community and/or increases the well-being of a particular group or community.

The extent to which any given project might have impact in these areas depends, of course, upon the project design, the artists involved, and various project goals. These areas offer a starting place for understanding the many ways in which PLACE projects can have both momentary and lasting impacts upon the communities in which they are carried out and in which they are experienced or viewed.

## INSTITUTIONS: EMPOWERING ARTISTS AND COMMUNITIES

Often, when people think of intermediaries the default interpretation is that of entities that simply re-grant money on behalf of others. As a creative placemaking intermediary, in addition to re-granting dollars, TPAC has played many other crucial roles:

- **Catalyzing and Strengthening Connections.** TPAC has helped to catalyze new connections as well as strengthen some existing connections among arts organizations and, in some cases between arts organizations and entities outside of the arts field.
- **Validation.** TPAC has played an important role as a public agency in validating the work it supports—work that, from a national perspective, is often at the edges of the mainstream arts world and too often dismissed. It also has begun to play an important role in validating work outside of the arts with leaders in other fields such as housing and social services.

- **Technical Assistance.** TPAC has provided technical assistance to grantees both directly and indirectly, formally and informally, in various stages of their work.
- **Thought Leadership.** Perhaps one of the most important roles TPAC has played locally and nationally involves the interrogation of the creative placemaking concept. The leadership shown in ensuring that the concept, as applied in Southern Arizona, resonates with the physical and historical reality of that place and the people in it.

Maribel Alvarez, scholar, activist, and executive director of Tucson Meet Yourself (a PLACE grantee), noted that the concept of “creative placemaking” was presented with an open definition in PLACE requests for proposals. This is due to the fact that part of TPAC’s process in PLACE has been about interrogating what the concept means in the specific Southern Arizona context. TPAC’s executive director’s role nationally and locally in introducing new ideas, testing them in context, and helping to re-interpret them for the benefit of local and national constituencies has been critical as the concept of creative placemaking continues to develop.

Intermediaries do critical work and often are challenged by politics and turf issues. Intermediaries that are also public agencies carry even more challenges often related to transparency and accountability. Roberto Bedoya, TPAC’s executive director, observed that, on one hand, having a public identity can be empowering. For example, validation from an official agency can be very meaningful, especially to small arts organizations. However, that public identity can also be a liability, given bureaucratic processes and politics.

The role of intermediaries, especially when they deliberately and often strategically do more than just re-grant dollars, is notoriously difficult to document and assess and not only in the arts field. I often talk about the functions of intermediaries as “glue” and “gas.” Intermediaries are often the glue that gives cohesion to disparate parts of a unified intention. They also provide the fuel or gas, in the form of financial and nonfinancial resources, required to help something take off. By design, what an intermediary does is often behind the scenes or even sometimes invisible.

## THE ARTS FIELD: APPLYING CREATIVE PROCESSES TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As a result of PLACE, no doubt the arts field as a whole in Southern Arizona has had to make or at least consider some adjustments. The intention of the Initiative, with its focus on long-standing social issues and the contemporary statewide context, has caused prospective applicants to assess the extent to which and how they might play a role as agents of change in support of a social justice agenda. The “majors”—larger arts organizations—have had to struggle with understanding what they can contribute and how they might need to change in order to participate. One leader from a major arts organization candidly noted in a group discussion that the Initiative has caused his

organization to ask just how much do they “have to not be what we have been” historically and how feasible is that. Organizations of all sizes have had to struggle with the question of capacity to take on the important issues of the day—not just financial capacity, but capacity that has to do with community trust and goodwill, cultural competency to deal with the diversity of Southern Arizona, and also capacity to collaborate with different kinds of organizations inside and outside of the arts field.

Through PLACE, artists from various disciplines concerned with communities and social issues have had expanded opportunities to pursue their work. In some instances, artists have been able to execute work with which they have great experience and mastery. In other instances, artists were able to take new risks and experiment with new ways of working.

- To what extent has involvement in PLACE affected artists’ practices?
- Is their practice different as a result of this experience and, if so, how?
- Did this experience cause artists to recognize ways in which they would like to strengthen their practice or areas where they would like to gain new skills?
- What kinds of training or other supports might be required to address those needs?

These questions invite arts organizations and artists to reflect on their experiences with PLACE programming. For this report, TPAC asked a number of PLACE grantees to begin addressing these questions and others related to their PLACE projects or work as practitioners in the Southwest via reflective personal essays. They begin on page 16.

# IMPACT OF PLACE ON COMMUNITY: ENGAGING TUCSON THROUGH THE ARTS

PLACE projects had a wide range of impacts on communities, the depth of which can only be understood through a comprehensive evaluation process and longitudinal study of communities. As part of its investigation and evaluation, TPAC surveyed PLACE grantees, asking them to assess the impacts of their projects (see full PLACE research findings in Appendix B). Possible areas of impact investigated were informed by the plausible interrelated contributions outlined on page 8. Specifically, grantees were asked to define for themselves potential impacts of their own project's goals and outcomes. Grantees were also asked how TPAC should define the terms informed by our collaborative research. The survey was administered post project and in some cases several years after a project had ended. When surveyed, many grantees indicated that their projects sought to impact, and succeeded in bringing, change in several areas at once. What follows is a selection of examples, compiled from PLACE grantee surveys, illustrating how some PLACE projects realized these impacts as they inform TPAC's future evaluative indices.

## INDIVIDUAL AND/OR COLLECTIVE EMPOWERMENT



### Mariachis Transform Tucson

Filmmaker Daniel Buckley's film *Mariachis Transform Tucson*, about high school mariachi bands, helped show young musicians how their participation had changed their own and others' lives. As Buckley notes, "Just in interviewing young high school graduates for this film they are beginning to see themselves both as something larger, and as even more capable young people than they imagined."

The process of telling the story through film also helped solidify a sense of pride for Tucson's involvement in the art form, Buckley said. "There is a growing awareness that mariachis and folklórico really have changed Tucson and the larger mariachi world."

### Finding Voice

The Finding Voice after-school program at Catalina Magnet High School, in which refugee students address community issues through writing, photography, and other art forms, often helps students with limited English-language skills develop a strong sense of self and the confidence they need to succeed once they graduate. As Julie Kasper, one of the program's directors, reports:

*An alum recently emailed and visited to tell me that Finding Voice made a huge difference for him during a time he was struggling to find himself as a refugee student in Tucson. ...it gave him the skills and confidence to pursue his college education and to become involved in a number of community projects. He is a youth civic leader now—participating in leadership teams and working in our local economy—and he is able to share his culture and his experience while appreciating and relating to the experiences of others.*

Kasper added that often the process of participating in the program, which requires students to interact with community members in mature and responsible ways, also helps them understand the power of civil discourse:

*During a class visit last week, [one alum] said, "Sometimes it's uncomfortable to talk with someone because you don't agree, but I can still talk to them and we can learn from each other and work together. I don't have to be comfortable always; I just have to participate with respect and an open heart."*

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



### Liberation Lyrics

In Liberation Lyrics, the Tucson Youth Poetry Slam (TYPS) used poetry as the entry point for high school students into studies and analyses of the "school-to-prison pipeline," a term that refers to a national trend wherein children are funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems. In an after-school program, students learned about the issue and created a chapbook of works, which was disseminated to the community. "The community at large is witnessing the power of youth voice to address major social justice issues that impact both local and national communities," said Sarah Gonzales, a project director at TYPS.

## Human Rights Watch Film Festival

The Loft Cinema produced a Human Rights Watch Film Festival bringing films to non-typical film venues to expose new audiences to films about human rights issues. “Audiences felt better informed and able to participate in civic discussion and debate as a result of viewing certain issue-based films,” said Debi Mabie, director of education for the Loft Cinema.

One of the festival films was Kirby Dick’s *The Invisible War* about rape in the military. Mabie reported the screening not only offered viewers ways to see the real and immediate ways rape in the military affects everyone, but also gave them strategies for protecting citizens from future abuses. She said,

*“[Viewers] commented that they had no idea how pervasive the issue was and what recourse could be taken to advocate for changes in the military, and were thankful the end of the film listed several ways to contact local and national legislators to advocate for policy change.”*

## STEWARDSHIP OF PLACE

### A Child’s Sense of Place

A Child’s Sense of Place was a collaborative project between Ironwood Tree Experience (ITE), an experiential environmental education organization under the auspices of Prescott College’s Center for Children and Nature, and Coronado Heights, a midtown urban neighborhood. The project sought to increase children’s physical activity through artmaking in and with nature. Rather than taking children “out to the desert,” as ITE’s projects often do, the project used neighborhood tours and nature-based artwork to inspire wonder in “everyday nature” within urban places that may be perceived as sterile or uninspiring.

Project director Suzanne Dhruv said the project drew an unexpected number of children “out of their homes to be actively engaged in our workshops...with even the smallest of them lending a hand.” When the project ended, many youth expressed interest in future projects, Dhruv said, and for that reason, Ironwood Tree Experience and other organizations have continued to serve the neighborhood.

The project also yielded an expanded definition of “sense of place,” as a diverse group of refugee families and immigrants, including Iranians, Mexicans, and Sudanese—all residents of the neighborhood and surrounding areas—participated. Dhruv commented:

*This positively affected our intention to cultivate a “sense of place” for these families who are new to the Sonoran Desert and who may have learned, for the first time, something more about the nature, art, and culture of this place. In a twist, we learned more about people from other areas of the world! How wonderful! Through experiences in nature and through artistic expression, we were able to come together, share with one another, communicate through real work, and enjoy each other’s company.*

## FLOW

In FLOW, a two-year project using dance to explore the local watershed, water conservation strategies, and the history of the Santa Cruz River, which once flowed through Tucson, NEW ARTiculations Dance Theatre found unique ways to engage the public in the difficult conversation about water and scarcity. After struggling to entice adults to participate in movement workshops during the project’s first year, the company hired a local naturalist and created “Walk the Watershed” tours within urban waterways and washes. The walks invited participants into a conversation about the watershed and inspired them to explore the issues using simple movement to reinforce and express what they observed and learned. One participant commented that the Watershed Walks “were a fun way to learn about local watersheds, observing nature up-close, ‘being’ a plant, a rock, and part of a choreographed-on-the-spot watershed dance. It encouraged a more personal, more connected interaction with issues of watersheds, water, nature, and their vital importance.”

## CULTURAL SELF-DETERMINATION AND AFFIRMATION



### Beyond Groceries

In Beyond Groceries, the Tucson Chinese Association (TCA) explored the relationships between historic Chinese grocers and their neighbors in Tucson’s multi-ethnic communities through oral histories and a museum of artifacts and photographs. Culminating with a “Rolling History” party bus that presented the video interviews and live youth performances to the neighborhoods, the project helped connect participants and audiences with neighborhood cultural and economic history and Chinese heritage in Tucson. As one project director commented:

*Participants and people riding the bus in many cases had not been to those neighborhoods at all. The neighbors who turned out for the event were inspired to share stories in the Storytelling Corner and told organizers of the pleasure they felt that history was coming to them in the neighborhood.*

The project also created potentially beneficial economic impact. After the project, TCA organizers began exploring with partners the possibility of “micro-tourism” endeavors in the neighborhood, including a Rolling History app, which would allow visitors to go on self-guided mini-tours and access oral history videos on their smart phones or personal computers.



### Troubling the Line

The writing center Casa Libre en la Solana hosted Troubling the Line, the first known symposium of transgender and genderqueer poets. Based on a new anthology of works published in 2013, the symposium brought participants from across the country to share and discuss poetry, poetics, and issues of gender. It also created a sense of community for people who often face discrimination on a regular basis, said Kristen Nelson, executive director of Casa Libre. Nelson said:

*The community that we created was one of acceptance, celebration, safety, and collaboration. Poets and poetry lovers who attended the program have continued to stay in touch, correspond, collaborate, and interact on a daily basis via social media. We created a new community that continues to evolve and grow.*



### Tucson's Heart and Soul: El Casino Ballroom

Sometimes projects that aimed to affirm the cultural identity of one group had the unintended consequence of inviting other groups to feel pride and affirmation as well. Daniel Buckley's project *Tucson's Heart and Soul: El Casino Ballroom*, a series of events and a documentary film of the same title about one of Tucson's original community entertainment centers, engaged both Latino and other cultural communities in celebrating the ballroom. As Buckley observed:

*I could never have known that a group of Islamic stand-up comics would choose El Casino Ballroom for their show, in part because they heard about this film and El Casino's place historically as being inviting to multicultural groups. Seeing a packed house for that, garbed in traditional Islamic wear, affirmed everything I was trying to say about the place. The fact as well that it became the place where the Mexican American Studies program launched its Tucson Freedom Summer movement was another lucky accident that showed El Casino's place of stature and history in Latino politics.*

## BRIDGING DIFFERENCE

### CAST Encore!

In CAST Encore!, Clean and Sober Theatre (CAST) gave homeless youth the opportunity to work closely with mentors and others, sharing stories and perspectives and changing perceptions. "The youth involved in the project developed more trust in others, adults included, because people seemed willing to take them seriously," said project director Susan Arnold.

Additionally, Arnold reported that public performances of the show helped audiences gain new understandings about an often-misunderstood population:

*The perception of homeless youth overall is often that they choose to be on the streets, that they are rebellious free agents. What the public audiences came to understand...was that more often than not, they are forced from their living situation due to... abuse or threat thereof, dysfunction, and poverty.*



### Painting by Numbers

Often PLACE artists found ways to expand their individual capacity to address issues by building connections with others artists. Wesley Creigh, for example, who created a public mural about women in detention centers in *Painting by Numbers*, reached out to other artists to mount a public art exhibit addressing themes of detention and incarceration. "I realized I could use [the project] as a way to build bridges within a larger artist community," Creigh said. "Having eleven artists tackling the same issue in the exhibition forged working relationships that will lead to future collaboration. Strength in numbers."

### Performance Poetry en Vivo

Performance Poetry en Vivo, a dance project by Safos Dance Theatre, connected Mexican American and Yaqui youth through storytelling. When asked what they liked best about the residency, one youth participants said, "I like how we had to get to know each other even more" and "that we got to learn more about our friends and the way they think." Yvonne Montoya, project director, said post-project surveys affirmed this. "Ninety-one percent of students reported feeling more comfortable interacting with people from different cultures and races at the end of the residency," Montoya reported.

## AESTHETIC ACCOMPLISHMENT

### Barrio Sustainability Project

The Barrio Sustainability Project helped young people at Toltecalli Academy High School share their knowledge of Mexican American history and sustainable urban agricultural practices through the creation of murals surrounding the school garden. The murals represent a lasting gift to future students, as “youth will continue to plant and harvest in the school’s organic fruit and vegetable garden for many years to come,” said project director and muralist Cristina Cardenas. “With the PLACE grant we created a sustainable space in our school and neighborhood that reflects...pride in who and what we are,” Cardenas said.

### 29th Street Green Arts: Creating PLACE Project

Through the 29th Street Green Arts: Creating PLACE Project, the Tucson Arts Brigade engaged youth, elders, and adults in a multidisciplinary community art process. Youth created posters reflecting on community issues and positive public messaging that were mounted in public SunTran buses. “Many people reported seeing the SunTran posters, and how it brightened up their day with a positive message,” said project director Michael Schwartz. “So often the ads on SunTran are depressing, and make assumptions about who is reading the posters. The posters created by youth were uplifting.”



### MAIZ

While colorful tile murals can brighten the spirits of passersby, they can also inspire entire communities to address existing challenges or hardships in their midst. In MAIZ, an arts-based community development project of the Tierra y Libertad Organization, a mosaic tile mural created by Cristina Cardenas and Alex Garza was unveiled at a community block party and sparked ideas among residents for additional projects. “The resulting conversation was a springboard to other art and barrio beautification projects in the community that successfully engaged local residents, business owners, local government, and the university,” said project director Luis Perales.



### Commit to Kindness

In Commit to Kindness, Ben’s Bells worked with community volunteers to create a tile mural about kindness on the side of a run-down building near the center of downtown Tucson. Project director Jeannette Mare said even the process of creating the mural seemed to change the mood of the corner. “During installation, a man was driving by with his windows down. He was cursing loudly about the slow-moving traffic due to construction. He turned his head and saw our mural and exclaimed loudly, ‘I really needed that message! I’m not being very kind! I really needed that reminder!’”



### Tucson’s Heart and Soul: El Casino Ballroom

Daniel Buckley’s film *Tucson’s Heart and Soul: E Casino Ballroom*, about the history of El Casino Ballroom, an iconic Tucson venue, had the unanticipated outcome of drawing “community groups of all ethnicities who are now booking at El Casino Ballroom for their main functions and celebrations,” Buckley said. “They have heard what the film was saying and are embracing it as the community center it has always been.”

# IMPACT OF PLACE ON INSTITUTIONS: TUCSON PIMA ARTS COUNCIL AS CREATIVE PLACEMAKING INTERMEDIARY

Since developing the PLACE Initiative, TPAC has served as more than simply a granting agency and has worked to bridge administrative and creative systems to facilitate and support PLACE projects. Through its role as the primary intermediary, TPAC has connected artists, audiences, participating community organizations, and various stakeholder communities working to build social capital and foster social cohesion.

TPAC has also offered professional development workshops in collaboration with the organizations Animating Democracy and Creative Capital and supported peer learning exchange workshops among the PLACE grantees. It is currently in active dialogue with colleagues in Phoenix, Santa Fe, Albuquerque, and El Paso who support arts engagement projects that illuminate the aesthetic of the border and the many forms of belonging and dis-belonging that manifest in this terrain.

## DELIBERATE DIALOGUE

TPAC's primary role as an intermediary has been to serve as a deliberative practitioner, working to facilitate policy-making that acknowledges and celebrates the utility of artistic imagination. TPAC has done this by engaging in critical dialogue with PLACE grantees, scholars, community stakeholders, the philanthropic community, and civic leaders about the Initiative and its broader impact in the community it serves.

As part of this research, TPAC convened local and regional working groups of over 50 individuals who engaged in five learning exchanges over the course of the 2012–2013 calendar year. The thought leadership of community members is directly impacting TPAC's framing language for forthcoming evaluation tools and processes. The PLACE Initiative research participants and community stakeholders have prompted TPAC to consider community aspirations and strategic plans for how it supports the arts and cultural vitality of our region through creative placemaking projects. The dialogue TPAC engages in is deliberative, democratic, and iterative, delving into real community issues and searching for solutions in an effort to impact policy locally.

## EMPHASIS ON “BELONGING”

The PLACE Initiative grew out of a series of local conversations about the role of arts and culture in Tucson and Pima County. Informed by these conversations, TPAC took care to address local factors in administering PLACE grants, supporting grantees, shaping grant policies, and evaluating the success of PLACE projects. In particular, it put special emphasis on the notion of cultural stewardship and “belonging.”

Distinctions made in the national discourse on creative placemaking prompted the arts council to consider what “good” community cultural development work looks like. Success looks very different from one community to the next, depending on local values and systems, which are influenced by the history, social capital, culture, politics, and economic conditions of a region.

The national discourse on creative placemaking often privileges economic development as a value and measurement of success, emphasizing how creative placemaking contributes to economic growth. However, this framework might overlook cultural considerations, including notions of “belonging,” which can be key to how we experience the “success” of a place.

The following hypothetical example illustrates this. A new corporate grocery store is built in an abandoned industrial complex within a marginalized ethnic community. This might be viewed as a successful outcome of creative placemaking at work. But if we consider the existence of small family-owned corner markets within the neighborhood, each of which offers something unique—including foods linked to cultural identity—then that “success” may be viewed very differently. This is why the dynamics of belonging and dis-belonging are critical to consider.

## DEFINING SUCCESS

In its work in Tucson, TPAC has made a distinct effort not to bring economic impact to the foreground in its assessment and analysis of PLACE projects and their success. It has done so not to demonize economic development, but to highlight the necessary role of community cultural development in improving economic conditions and supporting the cultural vitality of a community.

The distinction lies in the context. TPAC seeks to prompt deliberative discourse about what is intrinsic to our region, including the values associated with cultural practices, histories, and human relationships to the natural landscape.

The PLACE Initiative defines successful placemaking as practices that either celebrate and foster a sense of belonging or address and counter a sense of dis-belonging. It is through these actions that we make “good” community development and stewardship possible. In the example of the abandoned industrial complex above, a project that seeks to foster a sense of belonging might be a series of oral history tours visiting existing family-owned businesses that have existed within the marginalized ethnic community for decades. Such a project builds social capital and recognizes the value already inherent in the community.

In remaining sensitive to the local variables that influence place and culture, TPAC has helped facilitate key connections between artists, arts organizations, and community partners for the successful development of placemaking projects. In this way TPAC has functioned more as “a ‘node’ within a network of animated social relationship” rather than “a ‘hub’ that processes cultural grants...and ensures the healthy development of the arts sector” (Alvarez 2009).

The relationships TPAC has helped steward among various entities and stakeholders have helped foster deeper engagement for artists working on specific community projects and helped build essential trust necessary for successful outcomes of both ongoing and future collaborations.

Some examples of that kind of trust are illustrated in the next section, in which artists and project directors share personal accounts of the ways PLACE projects opened up new avenues of collaborating, challenged assumptions, redefined creative processes, and opened up new pathways of engaging with communities.



Beyond Groceries: Tucson Chinese Association



Beyond Groceries: Barbea Williams Performing Company



The Finding Voice Project: Catalina Magnet High School

**Southwest communities hold immense knowledge and considerable resources, necessitated and nurtured by hundreds of years of interaction and exchange—sometimes violent, sometimes compassionate, always complex. It is only in listening and cultivating listening that we begin to make space for community knowledge that is the wellspring of social change—that is, we allow communities to begin drawing their own collective maps.**

— Valerie Martínez, *Executive Director and Core Artist*, Littlelobe (Santa Fe, NM)

# IMPACT OF PLACE ON ARTISTS: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW DISCOVERY, GROWTH, AND AFFIRMATION

## ASSESSING ACCESS: HOW WORKING WITH “DISABILITY” ENABLED A NEW ARTISTIC ABILITY AND APPROACH

by Sharon O'Brien, Director, *Stories that Soar!* — PLACE III Grantee

*The deep engagement that happens in some PLACE projects can be equally as transformative for artists as for participants. In some cases, a single project can redefine an artistic practice, inviting artists to seek out new skills and resources, and forever shift methods of both producing and sharing work. In this essay, Sharon O'Brien, director of Stories that Soar!, shares her experience with Hear Me, See Me, a film project that invited O'Brien and her company to deepen their commitment to accessibility.*

Stories that Soar! is a theater company, composed of multi-talented adult performers who invite young people to write stories about whatever their imaginative minds can come up with. The troupe then selects stories to bring to the stage through live theater productions, each time witnessing the transformative power of imagination and collaboration.

As with any theatrical adaptation, bringing children's original stories to the stage requires us—as actors and directors—to respond to various details, events, emotions, and tension in our surroundings and scripts. Children's stories are wonderfully imaginative and colorful, but we often have to bring the hidden meanings behind a child's expression to light to reveal larger universal themes. Through a child's retelling of a family fight, for example, we can create a framework for presenting a young person's attempt to break the cycle of domestic violence. A descriptive account of a visit to an incarcerated father provides a starting point for a larger, multifaceted story of unconditional love. Through this process, we have learned to read between the lines and listen for what is asking to be shared.

This adaptability has served us well. In 2011–2012, we set out to create a documentary film about a live production based on stories written by students at the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind (ASDB). By creating a show accessible to people of all abilities, our intention was to increase cross-cultural awareness between people with sensory limitations and the general population. The process led to unexpected collaborations and new priorities and responsibilities for us as artists, actors, and producers.

The process of including multisensory and multicultural perspectives stretched us as artists, expanding our notions of possibility. As a character study exercise, we visited a classroom for blind students and consulted with experts about deaf ethos and etiquette. We learned to reconsider the issues of pacing on stage, shifting the focus of action to creatively incorporate American Sign Language for the deaf, while still keeping the blind engaged through sound. We augmented physical comedy with sounds, created dance moves that could be heard, and clarified movements to communicate the emotionality of music. We experimented with tactile elements and offered olfactory associations to support characters, concepts, and props. While these new strategies helped create a show that deaf and blind audiences could easily access, we soon realized they would also enhance our range as performing artists in all future productions.

As the film documented our process, we realized we also needed to make the film accessible to deaf and blind communities. Closed captions, audio description services, and Braille marketing materials would be essential, despite the fact that adding them would considerably increase the project's budget and timeline. We also needed to find a theater to screen the film that could properly accommodate our diverse audience.



To do this, we sought help from organizations and experts in the field of disability justice. We learned to shift our language in order to acknowledge particular needs without identifying people based on those needs. We became aware that standard physical spaces are unintentionally designed to magnify people's limitations, ultimately creating "disability" for people with physical and/or sensory limitations. Most importantly, we learned that creating more equitable experiences in the arts and in society requires collaboration from elected officials, academics, community activists, architects, and artists—no one can do it alone.

These lessons in disability justice helped contextualize our work. We soon realized that our project had transformed from one addressing the basic human desire to share stories to one addressing the basic civil right of having access to the stories we wish to see and hear. Our film, *Hear Me, See Me*, reveals this transformation.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 prohibits discrimination based on disability, which it defines as "a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity." Despite the ADA, we still do not live in a fully accessible America. A common form of "discrimination" recognized by the ADA, for example, is a "failure to remove architectural barriers in existing facilities."

This project invited me to reflect deeply on the idea of "barriers"—architectural, artistic, perceptual, habitual—and on the many ways we fail to remove them. As an artist making work that seeks to reflect and define our culture, I have learned to ask, "How accessible is our work to people of different abilities?" And, "What are the ways we can adapt our art, keeping in mind the multitude of ways information is taken in and processed?"

More personally, as a storyteller to whom thousands of children a year entrust stories, I have emerged transformed, with a broader view of culture, committed to making accessibility an integral part of my work. I have discovered that by considering the more obvious barriers, such as sensory and physical barriers, I can be more successful at reaching people whose limitations may not be as apparent but who are still cut off from an equitable experience. I have learned that by slowing down the pace and enriching our performances with multiple artistic messaging, our work becomes more inclusive. Through the trust we have built with our collaborators—from the children to the partnering organizations and stakeholders—we are better equipped to take on more cultural and artistic challenges, prizing a new sensitivity to the many ways people express and experience art.

## WHEN THE PLACE IS ALREADY MADE: LESSONS FROM A FOLKLIFE PROJECT

by Maribel Alvarez, Executive Director, Tucson Meet Yourself — PLACE II Grantee

*Much like economic development projects and anthropological research, community art projects sometimes become problematic when artists enter communities that are not their own, having made assumptions about the reach or limits of local knowledge. Particularly when there is a history of mistrust, such collaborations can be at best ineffective, at worst adversarial or hostile. Maribel Alvarez explores this issue through her experience with placemaking in a community where strong values and a clear sense of place already existed.*

Field Note, June 13, 2012:

This morning the students chuckle, get distracted, make faces at one another, taunt, complain, and drag their feet. Yet, somehow...to my surprise, work is getting done. I pass out index cards and ask that they answer a few questions. The idea is to generate lists of words and phrases that can be integrated into cartographic drawings later. The first question asks: "Who is a 'stranger' in your neighborhood?" One student writes: "tourists." Another scribbles: "the police." A feisty girl wearing a turned-back baseball cap hands me her card with a gesture of defiance and playfulness: she has written my name as the answer. However, she has spelled my name wrong and the letters actually sound out something like "Madball" instead of "Maribel." The class erupts in laughter. I play along.

I jotted down these reflections while teaching a three-week workshop on behalf of Tucson Meet Yourself (TMY), a folklife organization I direct that hosts an annual three-day festival showcasing folk traditions in Tucson. The workshop gathered middle and high school students in the summer of 2012 at Old Pascua, a Native American Yaqui pueblo ensconced within the Tucson city limits. It was hosted by the San Ignacio Yaqui Youth Council, an organization that shares a long, fruitful relationship with TMY. I led the workshop along with Tucson photographer Steven Meckler.

The project at Old Pascua emerged in response to TPAC's call for PLACE Initiative proposals to explore and develop a "sense of place" among neighborhood groups. I knew that the tools of folklore, cultural asset research in particular, could provide ways for youth and human service organizations to work together to learn about and build community. Cultural asset research uses interviews, conversation circles, surveys, or visits with community members to help uncover "assets" in the form of manual skills, artistic talents, storytelling, and other activities that help communities come together and improve the quality of life.

The youth leader at San Ignacio welcomed the idea of a project at Old Pascua, but warned us that recruiting participants might be difficult during summer vacation because of the heat and because recent unfortunate neighborhood events (a school

closing, a death) had dampened people's spirits. But we moved forward with the program with the joint goals of (1) helping youth acquire new skills for their enjoyment and possibly empowerment and (2) testing the potential of a partnership between San Ignacio and TMY for future programs.

As our program began, the leader's concerns proved accurate. Not many youth showed up for the classes and their mix of ages challenged us to radically modify the curriculum we had planned. Attendance was sporadic and getting students to focus was nearly impossible. While Steven created photography assignments, I had students draw maps of Old Pascua on bright pink sheets of paper.

Over the course of the workshop, we did our best to handle the dwindling participation or the sudden new arrivals or the frequent distractions. Somehow we managed to produce enough material in the form of student photography, maps, and index cards to fulfill our obligation to our project grant. When all was said and done, Steven and I felt we had touched upon something special, something raw, something meaningful, even if we didn't know how to make sense of it. The kids participated but were reluctant; they listened but were restless; they welcomed us but also sent signals that we were not that important; they expressed enthusiasm for the project but they withdrew when least expected. Though frustrating in the field, I believe these paradoxes have much to teach us about working in community.

The first humbling reality we had to face at Old Pascua, even with the approval and guidance of San Ignacio Yaqui Council, was that we were one of many outside visitors and helpers who, for better or for worse, had entered the community to lead arts projects. Before our arrival, a resident arts development project had served youth in the community for more than two decades, and a shorter-term writing and photography program had been offered by the youth arts organization VOICES, Inc. In addition, at least two recent city planning processes had engaged residents in asset-identification exercises, none of which, from what I was told, had fulfilled the community's expectations.

From the start, I knew the terrain was already saturated with gestures of goodwill. Why was Old Pascua so attractive for this kind of enterprise? I feared the answer pointed to a tacit, subconscious deficit model about who has “art” to give and who lacks it. What remnant colonial impulse compelled us, the non-Native artists and anthropologists, to perpetually see Old Pascua as an “other” who needed “assistance”?

But I also acknowledged the bonds of affection and trust the San Ignacio Yaqui Council and the TMY festival had built together over many years. As such, we were not truly “strangers” to the community. In addition, we had sat down several times with the youth program leader at the San Ignacio Council office and spelled out precisely how problematic our project, or any arts program from the outside, could be if not done with the proper planning and joint buy-in. This kind of relationship building and ethic of respect is something the founders and organizers of Tucson Meet Yourself have upheld in our work with Yaquis for more than forty years.

And yet, this awareness and connection alone couldn’t prevent the outsider status that came inherently with being the arts agency that receives the *art grant* from an *arts funder* under the mandate to utilize the arts as a *vehicle towards* some greater goal of civic engagement, which apparently had not spontaneously taken shape in the neighborhood by other means.

In our planning meetings with San Ignacio leaders, we heard about the need for sound, sustainable, effective youth arts engagement at Old Pascua. Our project, however, was much more modest than that. We simply hoped to get the youth and ourselves excited about future possibilities. Sadly, the San Ignacio leader told us at the first meeting, when the long-term resident arts project ended, it left very little institutionalized programming behind. After twenty years, the program still depended solely on the individual who had founded it. No funding, staff, or curriculum ever achieved a level of stability to survive her.

I didn’t have to search very deep inside myself to grasp the deeper lesson here. Our TMY project, like so many before it—and undoubtedly like others that will follow—had only a short shelf life. The expectations for social change we carry with us when we work in communities under the rubric of “art and social impact” grants have to be carefully calibrated against the practices that have preceded us and didn’t last. Most importantly, the objectives we write in our grant applications have to be open and flexible enough to be able to withstand the scrutiny of those whom we aim to serve. And, as the 12-year-old girl who called me “Madball” so clearly demonstrated, Native communities, even kids, will vet whoever comes into their lives to “impact” them.

Volumes are filled with examples of when educators, specialists, folklorists, anthropologists, and other “civic engagers” entered into less than coeval and collaborative relationships with Native (and other “underserved”) communities. Yet we often fail to acknowledge that in the process of wishing to “protect” communities from these kinds of practices, many projects and experts perpetuate what they allegedly wish to prevent. That is, we forget that Native communities and others in barrios, prisons,

and after-school programs can speak for themselves and often do. If the project at Old Pascua taught me anything, it was that in their own foot-dragging, indirect, and shy-smile ways, even the youngest kids in a Native community will take measure of the “helpers” from outside and negotiate in their own terms what and how much they wish to do, share, create, and celebrate.

Amidst the ongoing lessons I continue to cull from the project, one particular day stands out. It was a hot June afternoon several days into the workshop. Attendance that day was low, but a teenager I’ll call Yolanda and two 11-year-old girls showed up and agreed to walk with me through the neighborhood. Passing landmarks, they began to share memories and stories. Imprinted on the brick and mortar of the homes, in the debris left on empty lots, in the graffiti scribbled on burned and condemned houses, and on the decorations carefully laid out in front yards, their tales zigzagged between the dramatic and the trivial. They pointed out places neighbors had been married, been shot at, had died, had moved away from, or left for college. As they told it, life in Old Pascua was not very private—everybody knew everything about everyone, either through direct contact or hearsay.

Yolanda told me she kept a journal filled with the stories she heard growing up on Calle Progreso, and I envisioned a future published book—*The People of Calle Progreso*, it could be called, a Yaqui version of Sandra Cisneros’s *The House on Mango Street*.

When I sit in my office now and look at the maps the youth drew in that summer class, I recognize anew what generosity their fidgety participation entailed, after all. One map shows the location of “grandma’s bedroom” in the family home. Another notes the location of a house that caught fire. Another illustrates a nine-year-old’s memory of the playground in the school recently slated for closure. At the time, flustered by the noise and banter, I didn’t recognize these bits and pieces as gifts of knowledge. Now I see clearly the irony I missed during the time of instruction: I got a grant to teach about placemaking, but those Yaqui kids knew a lot more about land, home, community, memory, and cultural vitality than I gave them credit for. In fact, a sense of place was the one solid thing you could count among their possessions.

Amidst their understanding of place, they also shared with me something entirely different from the agenda I came with: a yearning for “their place” to connect them with something larger than what they know so well.

Yolanda, the writer, told me she wanted to go to the university someday. She was curious about the Tucson Meet Yourself folklife festival and how one gets involved in “things like that.” My sense was that she wanted a taste of the world beyond the one she called “home.”

I suppose that is the lasting lesson of this PLACE project: when art projects end at Old Pascua, what survives is what was already there. Our responsibility is not to teach kids what they already know, where they know it, but to build the bridges—in the worlds of civic engagement that we control—that make that local knowledge relevant for them and for us all.

# CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY, ART AS WITNESS, AND THE “THEATER OF PLACE”

An Interview with Barclay Goldsmith, Director, Borderlands Theater — PLACE I, II, & III Grantee  
by Kimi Eisele

Barclay Goldsmith founded Borderlands Theater in 1987 to reflect the dynamic border culture in Southern Arizona. Borderlands has become known for its productions by both established and new playwrights that address difficult political subject matter and reflect the diverse voices of the U.S.-Mexico border region as well as for its community partnerships and inclusive youth programming. In recent years the theater received PLACE Initiative funding for Arizona: No Roosters in the Desert, A Tucson Pastorela, and Welcome Refugees and Immigrants. In this interview, Goldsmith talks about the early origins of issue-based theater in Tucson, the role of theater in helping audiences understand politicized themes, and the new local landscape of arts practitioners who care about community.

## Can you tell me about the vision of Borderlands Theater?

It was a vision of landscape. I grew up in Tucson and was away [for] about 15 years and always missed it. [The vision] was to present stories, diverse voices of the border. There was a huge Latino/Chicano population here, and there was no theater to reflect that part of border culture.

## What do you call this field that you're in? Community-based theater?

I don't have a name for it. [TPAC] calls it “theater of place”. I'll call it theater of place. One term I stay away from is “social justice theater.” I find it's a little arrogant. And it tends to box you in as a company. I don't like to be boxed in as just a “social justice theater.” I kind of agree with Brecht. Theater is not a mirror to look at reality, but a hammer to shape it. I love that quote, but I'm not that heavy-handed with a hammer.

## How does place, social geography, the Southwest, influence your work?

In the last 15 years the Theater has been drawn into this landscape that has a lot of scars on it. So if you're going to be a *theater of place* right now along the border—probably anywhere along the border—you can choose or not choose to get embroiled in those issues. I've chosen to pick writers that reflect on those. But I don't want to be boxed in by just [following] a narrow concept of the border. Our mission statement says, “Border people are citizens of the world.” So I'm beginning to look at those connections of place that resonate here and elsewhere.

We did a play two years ago, *Agnes Under the Big Top*, which is about a Bulgarian circus trainer who moved here and now has run a subway, and a Nigerian woman who comes here to send money home to her son, so suddenly the whole issue of immigration became much bigger than what we [normally] deal with.

## Before you founded Borderlands Theater in 1987 you worked with a theater collective in the early 1970s in Tucson called Teatro Libertad. Tell me about that.

Teatro Libertad was a collective of working class people who really had some social issues to deal with. They weren't professional actors, but some of them were really good. It was [the seed of Borderlands Theater]. In Teatro Libertad we would take on issues that the community had already taken on. We did a play about striking garbage workers, *Los Pelados*, for example. There was a hunger for our work that probably went deeper than the hunger for the work right now. The one exception that I can think of right now was Borderlands' production of *Arizona: No Roosters in the Desert*, which deals with border crossings and deaths in the desert. So many organizations right now work on that issue. But with Libertad, when we would travel around the state, all you had to do was hand out a hundred mimeographed sheets in a neighborhood, and you'd have a full house in three days. Now you have to use Facebook, you have to use web pages, you need all this media, you have so much competition. It's entirely different.

## What happened to Teatro Libertad?

There was a movement of about 80 teatros in the West and Southwest, and in the 1980s all but a handful had closed, including Libertad. I think one reason was that most of the collectives were started by young people in their 20s and early 30s, and after you've done that for ten years and can't support a family and pay the rent, you turn it over to the next group that can do it, and the next group simply wasn't that political.

When I did Teatro in the '70s, a lot of my students at Pima Community College, both Chicano and non-Chicano, wanted to get involved in the protest theater movement. By the '80s there was much more interest in learning the craft of acting. I had to do a lot of shifting in my thinking, because the style that's used when you do activist theater in labor halls and church basements is a very broad, epic style of acting. But that's not the style that's most predominant in this country. So I had to do a lot of retraining, getting into realism.

### **Why is there a difference in how you'd train actors in a church basement versus at a community college or university?**

It's not a sharp difference. When you perform outdoors or in a labor hall or in a church basement for a crowd that's multigenerational, then gesture has to be very specific and often storylines are psychologically not as complex. If you're going into American theater, in well-equipped theaters where patrons pay to see your work, they're usually experienced theatergoers, and there is a certain expectation of a deeper kind of research into the psyche of the actor and the role. I know this sounds awfully simplistic. There is also a certain level of sophistication in being able to understand immediately what an actor is getting at in terms of a social issue that a more "educated" audience might not see so easily.

### **What role has theater played in helping artists and audiences understand highly politicized issues?**

There are tons of studies done on border deaths, on incarceration, on deportation, the number of families that have been broken up — which is one way to understand the social issues. A simple narrative story can show that in another light. I think theater reaches you on an emotional level. Reading about statistics can get to your emotions, too, but maybe narratives get to your emotions in other ways. The other thing that I think happens is when you do a play like *No Roosters* or *Visitors' Guide to Arivaca* is witness. Just the fact of witnessing historical moments is something in and of itself. You're witnessing the disappearance of something. You're witnessing someone's death.

### **What kind of research do you ask of artists?**

There are all these schools of thought. Does your experience and the development of your psyche as a person bring all the information you need in order to do the role? The actor can bring that experience to the stage, but maybe they don't know anything about the social issue, so they don't know what's at stake for the character. For example, if you're doing a play around someone bringing drugs across the border, being held at gunpoint in order to be a "mule," what's at stake there? Are they doing it to meet their kids up North or are they doing it to send money home? You need to have people come in and talk to the actors or have the actors read up on [the issue]. Sometimes we have a really good dramaturge who does the research on the world of the play. For *Arizona: No Roosters in the Desert*, one of the people in the cast was active with an organization in Bisbee that goes into Mexico and makes contact with those on the other side attempting to come across. We also had a nurse who was very aware of issues of heat stroke and dehydration and other issues that occur when you walk a long time in the heat. Blisters. The cast members had absolutely no knowledge of this issue of blisters, which actually can kill you if you don't take care of them.



### **There seems to be this groundswell in Tucson of community-based or social-issue art. What does it mean that we are becoming a community of practitioners that is concerned with how art intersects with social issues or the desire for some kind of change?**

It's really wonderful. It's true; we are all trying to be connected to place. But why now? Maybe that thread has always been there but it's becoming more self-conscious, more articulate. With music and *corridos* it's always been there: the need to tell a story, a legend.

### **Is it about bringing community back into the process?**

It should be. I think developing a play with community feedback is important, and then the general public learns more about what it is to put a play together, they become more aware of the art form and how difficult and painstaking and complicated or joyous.

## A LIVING LGBTQ ARCHIVE: STORYTELLING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

by Jamie A. Lee, Filmmaker and Archivist — PLACE I Grantee

*The process of engaging and connecting with community members often invites artists to rethink and retool their methodologies and their initial visions for outcomes. Nowhere might this be truer than in the field of the documentary arts. As a documentary filmmaker, Jamie A. Lee knows well that gathering and presenting people's lived histories is often a political act. For the Arizona LGBTQ Storytelling Project, Lee uncovered new ways to collect and share stories for an online digital archive, turning what has often been thought of as static repository into a dynamic system capable of presenting an ever-shifting and complex story.*

As a social justice documentary filmmaker, I am aware that personal stories have the power to build coalitions and enact social change. My previous work on films with and for rural lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) communities, lesbian and gay clergy within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), and the Cree Nations of northern Manitoba who have become displaced for “green” energy can attest to this power.

Increasingly, a variety of emerging forms of media can hold and preserve these stories. With today's shifting technological landscapes, these stories can be retrieved and shared in physical and virtual spaces—providing a longer reach and longer shelf life than the traditional film shared on VHS tape or DVD. In 2008, when I started the Arizona LGBTQ Storytelling Project, the first LGBTQ oral history archive in the state, I wondered what stories people from Arizona would tell and what would come of such a collection.

The timing of my project to archive stories of LGBTQ people was particularly significant given the series of statewide regressive legislation characterized by a certain hateful quality in Arizona. I have seen bumper stickers proclaiming “It's a Dry Hate!” All Arizonans are suspect, and we live, work, and love under surveillance of some sort. If you're brown, you had better have your “papers.” If you're transgender, you had better use the “proper” bathroom. If you're a high school student, you had better only study history from the dominant perspective. And if you're none of the above or even all of the above, you had better keep an eye on your neighbors to keep them in line. Against this backdrop, I set out to investigate how we might come to know one another and connect in Tucson, our state's second-largest and most progressive city.

When I received the PLACE grant in 2010, I was in the midst of changing hats from filmmaker to oral historian to archivist. With this project, I shifted my strategy for storytelling, as it seemed clear to me early on that the more linear model of a feature-length documentary—meant to be seen in its entirety—might be limiting. Instead, I used a nonlinear collection of individual oral histories to capture the many normative and non-normative perspectives within the LGBTQ community. I could present these stories (and lives) via the Internet not as one monolithic narrative of rights-based progress but of diverse lived perspectives and knowledges that often intervene in these distinct notions of “progress.” This seemed especially important given the pending same-sex marriage civil rights legislation in numerous courts across the U.S. I wanted to be able to reflect that constantly shifting narrative in the archives themselves. Storytelling is a shared experience between the narrator, the interviewer, and—in a collapsible time frame—the audience. I realized that an archive—long thought of as a static form—could offer the same experience.

Receiving the PLACE grant helped to move this one-of-a-kind oral history project from a tin of videotapes sitting on my desk to the shared experiences with select intimate audiences throughout Tucson. This kind of sharing helped me connect with communities who had previously thought of themselves as not worthy of participating in such a storytelling project because of past bigotry and ongoing discrimination. The PLACE grant helped me think more deeply about the power of archives to tell many stories in many unique ways. It helped me see how my filmmaking expertise could be shared in community to promote a participatory ethic I am committed to cultivating as I continue developing the archives.

**The PLACE grant helped me think more deeply about the power of archives to tell many stories in many unique ways. It helped me see how my filmmaking expertise could be shared in community to promote a participatory ethic...**

— Jamie A. Lee, *Filmmaker and Archivist*

While I was grateful for the funding I received, I will say that an extended funding cycle would have benefitted the project greatly. Working with and for communities on sensitive and intimate issues takes time and energies that are not easily quantified in the initial budget numbers at the start of a project. It is always during the emotional work that the deep entanglements to memory, identity, and our personal stories call me to a graceful understanding of the power of listening—slowly and intently.

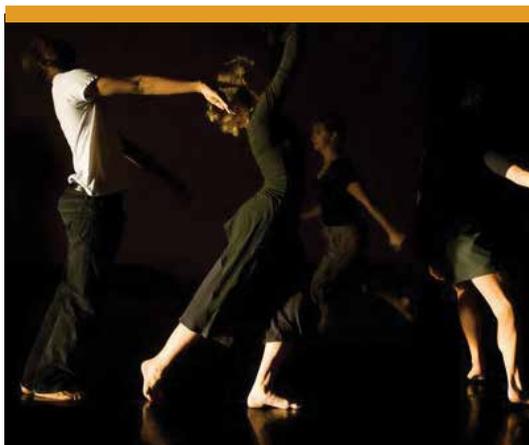
The project is ongoing and now expanding in its participatory reach. I am currently migrating the interviews into the Arizona Queer Archives, which I will be developing as part of my doctoral dissertation project and which will become the cornerstone collection of the Institute for LGBT Studies at the University of Arizona. I am also now teaching LGBTQ communities the technical and interviewing skills to collect oral histories on their own.

By bringing more participation to the project, I aim to address past notions of archives and archivists as “keepers of truth,” not only a troubling notion, but also a false one. Just as a documentary filmmaker can never be truly objective—for the ways we hold and direct our camera are clear choices embedded with subjective points of view—so the archivist and the archives are similarly held by vantage points. Allowing the “subjects” of the project to capture their own stories will help the archives better reflect the community they seek to represent.

In this way, the stories told by the Arizona Queer Archives and its collections will continue to play with notions of authenticity and truth as they collect, organize, preserve, and share our lived histories and knowledges and our individual and collective memories.



The Finding Voice Project



Esperanza Project



A Child's Sense of Place Project

## IT'S UP TO US: THE POWER OF COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS IN ADDRESSING HEALTH ISSUES THROUGH THE ARTS

by Lisa Falk, Director of Education, Arizona State Museum — PLACE I Grantee

*While they may recognize the power of the arts to incite change, inspire new forms of participation, and expand audiences, non-arts organizations and institutions sometimes resist engaging in arts projects because of limited time and resources. Often an energetic leader, however, can forge the necessary partnerships and connect with the right people to make such projects possible. In this essay, Lisa Falk of the Arizona State Museum shares her experience with a creative comic book project that not only addressed healthy living for Native American youth, but also expanded the museum's reach and deepened its community partnerships.*

Limited access to resources, knowledge, and healthy foods has led to the epidemic of diabetes across the nation. Native Americans and Latinos are particularly susceptible. In Arizona, the Tohono O'odham people, for instance, have the highest rate of diabetes in the world. At Arizona State Museum, we expanded on a national traveling exhibit called *Through the Eyes of the Eagle*, based on a children's book of the same name, to raise awareness about diabetes prevention and healthy living in Native communities. With funding from the PLACE Initiative and other funders we were able to add components to the exhibit that engaged diverse audiences, including teens, in a creative and relevant way. We also solidified meaningful community partnerships to help spread the exhibit's message.

We laid critical groundwork and community support for the project. As a museum educator who strives to make museum programs relevant and engaging, I invited everyone I could think of from our community with an interest in health, Native American culture, art, literacy, nutrition, and exercise to discuss how best to make this exhibit meaningful and provoke discussion about health and culture. Thirty people came to the first meeting, and as the word spread about the project, smaller meetings with others followed.

This resulted in the museum expanding the existing exhibit to include more local Native voices and stories, objects, and hands-on activities. Through group discussion we developed the idea of creating a comic book to reach teen audiences, and with PLACE funding I worked with educator and artist Ryan Huna Smith (Chemehuevi/Navajo) to develop it. The focused goal of the comic book was to raise awareness about diabetes among teenaged youth and make them realize they have a choice regarding their health.

The 25 Native and Latino teens we talked with from local schools, libraries, and the Tucson Indian Center didn't know much about diabetes, but had strong opinions about style and honesty in regard to the comic book. Smith's Amerimanga/Japanimation style appealed to them. For the storyline, they wanted nothing glossed over: they wanted to present reality and to see themselves in the characters. As part of our discussion, the youth created their own comic strips addressing the topic. These works led us to the book's title— *It's Up 2 You!*; the storyline— including a Scrooge-like dream sequence showing the horrors of diabetes and the joys of healthy living based in Native American traditions; and the characters— Samantha the skateboarding heroine and video gamers Brandon and Tomas.

We sought expert advice from specialists at the University of Arizona College of Public Health and the American Diabetes Association of Southern Arizona, who also assisted with the digital version. With help from the Ha:san Preparatory and Leadership School (a school for Tohono O'odham youth), we translated the book into Tohono O'odham and recorded audio in O'odham, Spanish, and English for the digital version.

Our project partners proved critical in organizing, mounting, and publicizing the exhibit and related programming. During the three years of project development, key partners emerged from both the University of Arizona and the broader Tucson community, including colleagues at the museum; the University of Arizona's College of Public Health, College of Agriculture, and Worlds of Words Library at the College of Education; Pima County Health Department; Tucson Indian Center; Native Education Alliance; Tohono O'odham Community Action; American Diabetes Association; Pima County Public Library; and Ha:san Preparatory and Leadership School.



In addition to bringing diverse expertise and resources to the project, each partner also helped the museum connect broadly with the community, reaching out to their own audiences. These partners served as collaborators, digging in deeper than they would have as mere consultants. They made things possible that were beyond my own expertise or schedule: co-curating sections of the exhibit, presenting activities, providing content expertise, making spaces available for programming, and providing resources or funds.

The comic book catalyzed additions to the overall exhibit and helped us leverage additional funding. The artwork informed the design and color scheme of the exhibit as well as some of the objects displayed, including Native-designed skateboards such as the one in the story. Funders were attracted to the unique, culturally appropriate approach to reaching teens and drawn to the expanded exhibit, which now included the comic book, objects, hands-on activities, videos, and a local story about Tohono O’odham Community Action’s efforts to “use wisdom from the past to create solutions for the future.”

Thanks to community discussion, youth involvement, and key partnerships, the comic book continues to inspire awareness, healthy living, and community involvement in discussions and activities expanding on its message. A traveling exhibit version of the comic book has been displayed on the Tohono O’odham reservation, at the main branch of the public library, and at the Tucson Job Corps site, among other places. The Pima County Health Department helped distribute 5,000 copies of a print version of the comic book and hosted a web version at [healthypima.org](http://healthypima.org). The comic book also helped attract substantial funding from the John and Sophie Ottens Foundation, which made possible an expanded exhibit, more public programming, and IT support for both an online version of *It’s Up 2 You!* and a mobile app downloadable from iTunes.

More about this project can be found at <http://futureofmuseums.blogspot.com/2012/01/its-up-2-you.html> and <http://westmuse.wordpress.com/2012/07/05/recipe-for-success-arizona-state-museum/>. The *Through the Eyes of the Eagle* book, as well as three subsequent books in the Eagle Series, and the exhibit were produced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

# FINDING VOICE: DEVELOPING CIVIC AGENCY AMONG REFUGEE & IMMIGRANT YOUTH THROUGH LITERACY DEVELOPMENT & ARTMAKING

By Josh Schachter, Photographer/Community Activist & Co-Director, Finding Voice — PLACE I, II, & IV Grantee

*English Language Development (ELD) educator Julie Kasper partnered with photographer, educator, and activist Josh Schachter to break the perceived barriers to language acquisition at Catalina Magnet High School in 2006 by developing an educational pedagogy rooted in civic engagement, youth leadership, and community-led social change. A three-time PLACE project grant recipient, the Finding Voice Project has grown from an integrated arts education project to an institutionalized course within the school district, producing books, panel discussions, coalitions, neighborhood revitalization, ephemeral placemaking, theater plays, digital stories, and most importantly a community platform for civic engagement developed with and by new and current immigrant youth annually. Here artist-in-resident and Finding Voice co-founder Josh Schachter reflects on the project's commitment to civic engagement.*

The literacy and multimedia arts program Finding Voice has worked with over 500 refugee and immigrant youth from over 35 countries, all students in ELD classes at Tucson's Catalina Magnet High School. In the program, students develop their literacy and second-language skills by researching, photographing, writing, and speaking out about critical social issues in their lives and communities. Julie Kasper, an ELD/English teacher, and I founded Finding Voice. Since the program's beginning in 2006, students have used writing and multimedia projects to explore their own lives, communities, and heritage. In this way, Finding Voice simultaneously helps students better understand Tucson and U.S. society and maintain a strong connection to their own culture and family.

Each year students select a different civic issue (mental health, discrimination, deforestation, etc.) to examine and address creatively. Specific outcomes and audiences for the work vary depending on the issue addressed and the students' particular project goals. In the program's first year, for example, students explored the theme of "Home" through photographs and essays, which were exhibited in the office gallery of a Tucson City Council member. Overwhelming support for this work by the public and media led Julie and me to explore how we could more intentionally connect our students' voices and work with broader audiences. In 2008, with support from the offices of Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and Congressman Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), we shared the students' work through an exhibition in the U.S. Senate. Six students traveled to Washington, D.C., to share their artwork and present policy recommendations regarding refugees and immigrants at a congressional briefing in the U.S. House of Representatives.

In subsequent years, our students have tackled issues of health, war, immigration, gun violence, and others through photography, poetry, personal essay, theater, and digital storytelling. Their work has been shared in a variety of formats, from issue-based community dialogues to bus stop art installations to printed publications. We have seen year after year that through the integration of the literacy development, artmaking, and community research and action projects, students become poised, confident, and able to speak with others about their lives. As Nepalese student Dawazam Magar said, "I found my voice, my feeling, my true self."

As mentors, Julie and I see a direct connection between language development and civic engagement. Immigrants or refugees who learn to use the dominant language in the place they live have greater potential to become social change agents. This is the main reason why we do this work—to support the development of a critically thinking, articulate, engaged citizenry. And it is especially why we work with student populations who are generally disenfranchised because of language barriers, immigration status, poverty, racism, and related factors.

Photography, writing, and digital storytelling offer different ways for students to access and develop their voice. For many students, taking photographs helps them prioritize what matters and then motivates them to develop their writing. Often students with limited language skills are drawn to photography and other visual arts with which they can express themselves without feeling confined by and self-conscious of their English abilities. As Somali student Hamida Abdi articulated, "I feel comfortable taking pictures so people can visualize my thoughts." Different creative processes and art forms resonate with and inspire students differently.

The process of seeing, composing, and visual storytelling requires students to "dig in" to their own experience to note specific details, but also to "step back" in order to capture how an experience fits within a larger context. Documentary photography cannot be done solely in a classroom, so the process of walking through one's neighborhood with a camera literally provides them with a new lens through which to view both the familiar and the unfamiliar. This exploratory process and the resulting images not only provide an opportunity for introspection but also a vehicle to educate others about community issues that matter most to them.

These experiences make classroom learning feel "real" and relevant, which is often absent from our educational system. Students develop a deeper understanding of their own identity and heritage as well as confidence in their own voice—all of which creates a foundation from which they can participate in other forms of civic engagement.

**Once you taste the proud feeling of showing what you feel in a very creative way, it is impossible to not get another bite.**

— Martin Macias, *Finding Voice Student*

With three years (2010–2013) of PLACE funding, Finding Voice has been able to build on its early successes to connect students with several concrete civic experiences:

- Students collaborated with the International Rescue Committee to document challenges facing refugee youth and their families. To address these challenges, the team created a citywide Refugee Youth Coalition (RYC), which is still operating three years later.
- Students collaborated with the University of Arizona’s Drachman Institute to create and implement a landscape architecture plan to make their Catalina Magnet High School’s outdoor spaces more livable and “green.”
- Students worked with a regional visioning process called Imagine Greater Tucson to ensure refugee and immigrant voices were not forgotten. As part of this effort, students shared their impressions of Tucson through photography and writing on large-scale posters that were exhibited in the main hall of the Park Place shopping mall. Displaying their work so publicly helped the students feel seen and heard. As student Lizbeth Sanchez from Mexico said, “I used to think that because I’m really young no one was going to listen to my ideas.”
- We produced the 170-page book *The Cover Is Not the Book*, featuring extensive personal essays, family photographs, and portraits of identity produced by the students. It is now being circulated through Tucson’s public library system.
- Students created digital stories about their lives and cultural heritage, which were screened at a community-wide event.
- Students produced lino-cut social justice posters based on extensive research and writing on select social and environmental issues. Their research included conversations with over 30 community experts on such topics as gun violence, immigration, the economics of drug dealing, sexual assault, pollution, and many others.

Through the process of writing, photographing, researching community issues, speaking with others, and experimenting with art forms such as theater, printmaking, and digital storytelling, students uncover the connections between their own identities and experiences and those of others. They gain confidence and learn that engaging with civic issues is not an impossible task, but one that benefits from their presence and participation. They begin to see that by lending their voices, their ideas, and their creations to important community discussions, they uplift not only themselves but also those around them. While the challenges of our work and our education system often overwhelm us, our students constantly remind us that there is light even in the shadows, and we are grateful that our projects allow that light to emerge.

## CONCLUSION

In the years prior to TPAC’s launching of the PLACE Initiative, Bill Bulick, a cultural planner from Portland, Oregon, led Tucson through a cultural planning process that helped initiate a series of community conversations about the value of arts and culture in the region. Upon his arrival Bulick characterized the city as an “island of place.” He was referring to the landscape of generic boulevards, strip malls, and Circle K gas stations that frame and bisect unique and lively neighborhoods, libraries, pocket parks, schools, community gardens, kitchens, art studios, and communities. Within these places, rich cultural practices and expressions happen every day, but they are often hidden, uncelebrated, and disconnected.

It was in part the goal of the PLACE Initiative to provide resources and opportunities to artists, organizations, and communities in order to make these vibrant “pockets” more visible, celebrated, and connected—in short, to celebrate the people, land, arts, culture, and engagement within Tucson and Pima County. That goal was made possible with the resources of committed national foundations now investing in creative placemaking endeavors in small to mid-sized American cities.

The 53 projects supported by the PLACE Initiative have collectively worked to address some of the most pressing issues in our region, including immigration, poverty, education, conservation, marginalization, and civic fragmentation. Through PLACE projects, artists, arts organizations, and many others are creating new methods of collaboration and creative problem-solving by actively engaging communities in artistic processes. Together they are recasting, reimagining, or re-contextualizing local places. In so doing, they are creating a deeper and lasting sense of belonging for the residents of Tucson and Pima County.

# APPENDIX A

## THE PROJECTS: PLACE INITIATIVE GRANTEES, 2010–2013

Fifty-three artists and organizations were awarded funds during four rounds of PLACE Initiative grantmaking from 2010 to 2013. PLACE Initiative V was offered in fall 2013 and is not represented in this report.



**ALL SOULS PROCESSION (24th Annual)**, an independently produced, hyper-inclusive, non-motorized, participant-based procession and ceremony to honor those who have passed. Presented by the nonprofit organization Many Mouths One Stomach, the series of All Souls Procession Weekend events culminates in the Procession and Grand Finale on the first Sunday in November, following two months of community arts workshops, gallery displays, and ancillary performances inspired by the All Souls Procession.

**ARIZONA STATE MUSEUM** for *It's Up 2 You!*, a trilingual (English, Spanish, Tohono O'odham) digital comic book designed to create awareness about diabetes among teenaged youth. A connection with the exhibit *Through the Eyes of the Eagle*, the comic book was created in consultation with Hispanic and Native American teens by artist/educator Ryan Huna Smith and museum staff. Project partners included the University of Arizona College of Public Health and the American Diabetes Association.

**BARRIO CENTRO NEIGHBORHOOD** for the **Baile de Salud Neighborhood Festival**, using an established neighborhood festival to promote diabetes awareness and healthy lifestyles to the neighborhood's predominantly Mexican American, working-class residents through music, dancing, exercise demonstrations, and health screenings by the University of Arizona College of Pharmacy.

**BEN'S BELLS** for **Commit to Kindness**, engaging community members of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds in the creation of a "kindness" mural of ceramic tiles in a former "eyesore" corner in downtown Tucson.



**BICAS (Bicycle Inter-Community Art & Salvage)** for **Bridging Generations: Connecting Armory Park Seniors and Youth through Art**, a photography and oral history project connecting seniors and youth in an exploration of history and memory in the Armory Park Neighborhood. The project culminated with the wheat-pasting of large-format photographs—both historic and present day—on the exterior walls of Safford Elementary School and Armory Park Senior Center.

**ELENA DIAZ BJORKQUIST** for **Voices for the Margins: Women's Stories**, a series of writing/digital storytelling workshops to empower marginalized women to tell their stories in short films to share with the public.

**BORDERLANDS THEATER** for **Welcome Refugees and Immigrants**, fostering civic dialogue through a theater production that addressed Tucson refugee and immigrant communities.

**BORDERLANDS THEATER** for the annual holiday production of **A Tucson Pastorela** and related engagement activities related to current immigration policies, including a pre-show poetry slam by high school students defending ethnic studies and a mock trial supporting the Dream Act with attorney Claudia Arevalo, member of La Fundación Mexico.

**BORDERLANDS THEATER** for the production of **Arizona: No Roosters in the Desert**, a play written by Kara Hartzler and based on interviews conducted by University of Arizona anthropology professor Anna Ochoa O'Leary of women who crossed the border from Mexico into the United States. Funding also supported workshops held in two Southside community venues addressing the issues.



**DANIEL BUCKLEY** for *Tucson's Heart and Soul: El Casino Ballroom*, for the production of a documentary film about the history of tolerance and civil society at one of Tucson's original community centers. The project helped kick-start the ballroom's campaign to rebuild the venue to its former size, engaged Latino and multicultural communities in celebrating, and re-engaged Tucson's community radio station, KXCI, in holding concerts at the hall to draw more diverse audiences.



**CASA LIBRE EN LA SOLANA** for *Troubling the Line*, a four-day symposium designed to encourage dialogue and build bridges between local and visiting trans and genderqueer poets, youth, adults, artists, and their allies. The event was a live extension of the landmark anthology *Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics* (Tolbert and Peterson, 2013), and brought together some of the most dynamic contemporary trans and genderqueer poets from across the country and Canada to meet, build community, and celebrate.



**DANIEL BUCKLEY** for *Mariachis Transform Tucson*, a film documenting the ways in which mariachi and folklórico culture both transformed and were transformed by Tucson's political, economic, cultural, and educational landscapes.

**CASA LIBRE EN LA SOLANA** for *Made for Flight*, a youth-empowerment workshop series exploring transgender history, ally development, creative writing, and kite building to commemorate the lives of transgender individuals who have recently passed.

**CATALINA MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL / FINDING VOICE** for three years of project support helping refugee and immigrant students use autobiographical writing and photography to find their personal voices while conducting opportunities for civic engagement to address community issues. *Finding Voice* is a literacy and visual arts program in Tucson dedicated to helping refugee and immigrant youth in English Language Development (ELD) classes at Catalina Magnet High School develop their literacy and second-language skills by researching, photographing, writing, and speaking out about critical social issues in their lives and communities.

**CITY HIGH SCHOOL** for *Project PS48*, using oral history, photography, writing, and theater to engage the public in conversation about downtown revitalization, the legacy of local businesswoman Cele Peterson, and the historic preservation of the school headquarters at 48 E. Pennington Street.

**CLEAN AND SOBER THEATRE (CAST) / COMPASS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CARE** for *CAST Encore!*, a project using a peer-to-peer theater arts model to empower youth by providing an outlet for expression in a safe environment. Two six-week expressive arts workshops aimed to empower homeless youth and build public awareness of the issues surrounding youth homelessness. Culminating theatrical productions were paired with a forum that engaged audiences and youth in a dialogue about the homeless experience.



**CODAC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES** for *Changing Hearts and Minds*, a collaboration between artist David Tineo, CODAC Behavioral Health Services, and the Hendrick Acres Neighborhood Association to create a mural about overcoming the stigma of mental illness and addiction.

**WESLEY FAWCETT CREIGH** for *Painting by Numbers—Women in AZ Detention Centers, Bringing Numerical Statistics to Life*, an interactive public art endeavor that engaged community participants in the creation of four larger-than-life-size, symbolic portraits. The process addressed issues of oppression and abuse occurring against women detainees in Pima County and used a “paint by numbers” template, which offered key statistics about detainees and corporate detention systems.

**THE DRAWING STUDIO** for *We’re Seeing and Observing Life in Drawing (We’re SOLID)*, providing visual arts studio learning for low-income at-risk teens and youth in downtown and South Tucson neighborhoods.

**THE DRAWING STUDIO** for *Neighborhood and Family Outreach*, bringing art education to youth at risk for gang involvement, substance abuse, and truancy in order to develop skills to create a narrative work that explores their relationship to larger family and cultural histories.

**KIMI EISELE, BILL MACKEY, AND JOSH SCHACHTER** for *Tucson to Tucson*, a user-generated website and series of public walks and exhibits that records, shares, analyzes, and celebrates the diverse landscape of daily individual travels in Tucson.



**ESPERANZA DANCE PROJECT** for a multimedia performance project aiming to raise awareness, create visibility, and educate teens and adults about childhood sexual abuse, sexual assault, and healthy sexuality/relationships. It incorporated specific age-appropriate high school educational curriculum, dance/performance/visual art assemblies, language/writing activities, teen-led pre- and post-performance discussion sessions, and ongoing teen peer advocacy by project members and high school students.

**THE HOPI FOUNDATION** for *Cultural Collaborations*, a project promoting cultural understanding by engaging Tucson Owl & Panther refugee families and the Tohono O’odham in collaborative art and cultural sharing about notions of identity and community. The project culminated with an exhibit at the Tucson Museum of Art.

**LEWIS HUMPHREYS** for *The Wonder of We*, a series of portraits of people of all ages posted throughout Tucson to engage the public in civic dialogue about place.

**ISKASHITAA REFUGEE HARVESTING NETWORK** for *Sharing Rich Refugee Cultures through the Lens of Culinary Arts*, a digital storytelling project highlighting the culinary and traditional arts of Tucson’s refugees and addressing the preservation of heritage, food waste, health and wellness, and the local food system. The project developed collaborative food sharing opportunities, meals, cooking classes, and a cross-cultural cookbook.



**KORE PRESS** for the *Coming in Hot Civil Discourse Project* and *The Listening Project*, engaging the public through performance and storytelling to help raise awareness about women in the U.S. military and bridge cultural and generational gaps. Phase 1 of the

project featured the performance of *Coming in Hot*, a one-woman play based on the stories of women in the military, in school classrooms as a tool for discourse. Phase 2 was *The Listening Project*, an ethnographic/storytelling program, which trained teenage girls in interviewing skills to collect the stories of female veterans for an online audio archive.

**Laura N. Banks Elementary PTA** for **Our School at the Center of Our Community**, a collaboration with the Terra Cotta and Cooper Crest Neighborhoods to document community assets and shared community resources on the school campus that culminated with an intergenerational tile mosaic project.

Filmmaker **Jamie A. Lee** for the design and creation of the **Arizona LGBTQ Storytelling Project**, Arizona's first and only lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender archive to gather stories and prompt conversations about the LGBTQ community in Arizona.

**Literacy Connects** for **Stories that Transform**, the creation and presentation of a multimedia community arts event by adult English language learners highlighting the relevant issues of their lives through the Stories that Soar! model of devised theater combined with elements of Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed.

**The Loft Cinema** for the **Human Rights Watch Film Festival**, a collection of films curated by the international non-governmental organization to bear witness to human rights violations and create a community forum for outcome-based cross-cultural discourse. The festival screened 10 films throughout Tucson and one in Bisbee, and engaged 13 scholars and activists in the facilitation of post-screening discussions encouraging audience members to share and examine social and personal beliefs.



**Bill Mackey** for **Worker Transit Authority**, a community engagement project that used mock planning proposals to facilitate community discussion about the issues of land use, infrastructure, transportation, and the environment. Findings related to automobile, mass-transit, bicycle, and pedestrian modes were analyzed and presented in a temporary exhibit of multimedia and print graphics and data that invited participation from the public via maps and survey forms.

**Eric Magrane** for **Poetry in Site**, a two-year collaboration with the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum and the University of Arizona Poetry Center to develop a plan for the creation of poetry installations at the museum in an effort to encourage people to re-evaluate their assumptions about conservation and their relationships with nature. The PLACE Initiative funded phase 1 of the project, supporting the creation of an installation proposal, including poems, locations, and design ideas.

**Janet K. Miller** and **Kylie Walzak** for **Cyclovia Street Life Interactive Art**, a series of site-specific installations designed by various Tucson artists to engage participants of Cyclovia, an annual Open Streets event celebrating non-motorized travel. Interactive, site specific, and fun, art installations invited participants to re-imagine Tucson's largest public, shared space—our streets—as inviting places for community interaction.



**New Articulations Dance Theatre** for **FLOW**, phases 1 and 2, a two-year project using dance and dialogue to explore the local watershed, water conservation, and the Santa Cruz River through four main tributaries: (1) watershed education for youth using movement, (2) "Walk the Watershed" nature walks, (3) a dance lecture on green infrastructure and water harvesting in collaboration with a local nonprofit organization, and (4) oral histories of elders with memories of a flowing river. The project culminated with a dance performance in the dry Santa Cruz riverbed.

**Pan Left Productions** for **Community Media Project**, involving neighborhood associations and organizations to provide media literacy and production courses for youth, homeless people, and those living in poverty.

**Pan Left Productions** for **Community Media Education Project**, creating youth-oriented courses in media literacy and production focusing on under-represented community voices.

**Pan Left Productions** for **Homeless Youth Project**, a media arts project using the voices of homeless youth and film to ignite the people of Tucson to take action on the systemic causes of children raising themselves on the streets of Tucson.



**PRESCOTT COLLEGE / IRONWOOD TREE EXPERIENCE** for **A Child's Sense of Place: Revitalizing Neighborhoods through Art and Nature**, a project using sculpture, photography, and storytelling in and with nature to increase children's physical activity, build neighborhood solidarity, and enhance urban natural environments and children's sense of place within the Coronado Heights Neighborhood.

**SAFOS DANCE THEATRE** for **Performance Poetry en Vivo: From Page to Stage and Beyond**, an arts education residency with Denver-based performance artist and poet Bobby LeFebre for 7th graders from Pistor Middle School and 10th graders from Hiaki High School of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. The weeklong residency used storytelling to address issues of stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings between the Mexican American and Native American communities with an emphasis on common experience.

**SAFOS DANCE THEATRE** for **Youth in the Barrio: Dance and the Community**, which used modern dance and theater to engage youth in activities focusing on underage drinking prevention. The project featured artist-in-residency programs at a community center (House of Neighborly Service) and Ochoa Elementary School in the City of South Tucson.

**STORIES THAT SOAR!** for **Stories Thrive in '05**, which brought a multigenerational literacy and arts project into the 85705 neighborhood and engaged elementary students in the development of stories that were transformed into performances and picture books.

**STORIES THAT SOAR!** for **Hear Me, See Me**, a documentary film aimed to increase cross-cultural awareness between the general public and people with sensory disabilities. The film follows the making of the Stories that Soar! show in which adult actors create a live production based on stories written by students who are deaf or blind. With the show as a vehicle, the film delves deeper into issues of equality, ability, creativity, and how people learn.



**TIERRA Y LIBERTAD ORGANIZATION** for **MAIZ**, a community development project using a variety of expressive art methods to build and disseminate positive social, neighborhood, and cultural messages in the Southside of Tucson.

**TOLTECALLI ACADEMY** for the **Barrio Sustainability Project**, linking youth and community members to research neighborhood environmental issues—such as the contamination of local groundwater by trichloroethylene or TCE—to culminate in a mural in the new community garden reflecting cultural heritage, community development, and cultural sustainability, painted with students and artist Cristina Cardenas.



**TUCSON ARTS BRIGADE** for **Beautify and Unify Community Mural Project**, using mural arts to inspire community engagement, teach civic responsibility, promote stewardship, and create a strong sense of place, belonging, and pride in three Tucson neighborhoods.

**TUCSON ARTS BRIGADE** for the **29th Street Green Arts: Creating PLACE Project**, promoting cultural understanding and modeling tolerance by engaging residents of the greater 29th Street area in multidisciplinary arts workshops (drawing, painting, design, research, dialogue) and cultural activities addressing neighborhood aspirations.

**TUCSON ARTS BRIGADE** for the **Amphi Action Mural at Woods Memorial Branch Library**, an after-school and summer art workshop fostering fine arts appreciation and skills and increased civic participation for children and adults and helping children employ arts-based solutions to combat community issues such as crime, drug use, health, and neighborhood revitalization.



**TUCSON CHINESE ASSOCIATION** for **Beyond Groceries**, an oral history project with youth exploring historic Chinese grocers and the associated history of tolerance in Tucson's multi-ethnic communities. The project culminated with a "Rolling History" party bus that presented the video interviews and live youth performances to the neighborhoods.

**TUCSON MEET YOURSELF** for **Old Pascua Cultural Inventory**, a series of workshops for youth on folklife, community asset mapping, and digital photographic documentation in partnership with San Ignacio Yaqui Council in the Old Pascua Neighborhood.

**TUCSON MEET YOURSELF** for **Ethnographic Field School**, bringing the tools and methods of ethnographic documentation from the University of Arizona to the community to train up to 25 community scholars in Tucson/Pima County to record and share stories of cross-cultural mixing, migrations, civic participation, and artistic practices.

**TUCSON YOUTH POETRY SLAM** for **Liberation Lyrics**, a project using spoken-word poetry in classrooms to engage high school students in dialogue and activism regarding the "school-to-prison pipeline" and its impact on the community. The project involved a week-long artist residency with Albuquerque poet Carlos Contreras, director of JustWrite, and a writing workshop with youth housed at the Pima County Juvenile Detention Center.



**UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA MUSEUM OF ART (UAMA)** for **The Border Project: Soundscapes, Landscapes, and Lifescapes**, an exhibit celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the Arizona/Sonora borderlands, with the goal of fostering understanding and appreciation during the period following the passage of SB-1070.



**DENISE UYEHARA** for **Bus Stop Dreaming**, a series of short, multidisciplinary performances in response to the ongoing deportations of thousands of undocumented immigrants in the City of Tucson. A collaboration between performance artist Denise Uyehara, documentary filmmaker Jason Aragon, and Pan Left Productions, a grassroots video collective working toward social change.

# APPENDIX B

## RESEARCHING PLACE: AN EXPLORATION IN PLACE-BASED EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Dr. James Roebuck, Co-Director of the University of Arizona's Evaluation Research and Development (ERAD) Program, and Leia Maahs, Grants and Community Cultural Development Manager, TPAC

### INTRODUCTION

Although the field of “placemaking” has been often characterized as “emerging,” it has deep roots and a long history. Researching PLACE is a localized perspective on how we frame and conduct evaluation with a constructivist lens, utilizing regional distinctions and ethics associated with supporting place-based work in Tucson, Arizona. This research has been informed by the PLACE research team, outside researchers, reviewers, local and regional working groups, TPAC staff, and TPAC constituency. Since TPAC is the designated local arts agency for the City of Tucson and Pima County, data gathering and analysis of cultural data are essential to TPAC, its policy-making, advocacy, programming, and service to the public at large. This research was initiated and supported by the Kresge Foundation.

This report shares the findings from data collection and proposes future forms of data gathering, analysis, and framework use for TPAC programming associated with the PLACE Initiative.

This is a living and dynamic framework designed to elicit feedback from beneficiaries and remain nimble enough to change as lessons are learned and new information arises.

#### RESEARCH FRAME

Three main documents frame the research and evaluation of the PLACE Initiative:

- *Two-Way Mirror: Ethnography as a Way to Assess Civic Impact of Arts-Based Engagement in Tucson, Arizona* (Alvarez, 2009)
- *Documenting Civic Engagement: A Plan for the Tucson Pima Arts Council* (Stern and Seifert, 2009)
- A framing document guided by Maria Rosario Jackson, found within this report pp. 8-9.

Stern and Seifert outline a process for collecting and analyzing civic engagement data, Alvarez highlights the importance of narrative, and Jackson outlines broad plausible contributions of the PLACE Initiative.

The evaluation research was also guided by perspectives from Fourth Generation Evaluation (Guba and Lincoln, 1989), a constructionist paradigm that relies on the consensus of the stakeholders involved in the evaluation and research. It eschews a top-down approach and informs the research questions and methodologies with sensitivity to those impacted by the research. Throughout each of the steps listed below, the research team has solicited feedback from grantees. A pilot group of stakeholders participated in meetings to discuss the impacts and offer feedback on their terminology and meanings. Using the guiding constructionist paradigm helped TPAC develop a research team that extends beyond its offices to involve artists and organizational actors.

## ON-THE-GROUND IMPACTS

Scholar and research advisor Maria Rosario Jackson proposes several plausible interrelated impacts of PLACE projects in a framing guide created for the research. These areas support the main mission of the PLACE Initiative and provide a conceptual and analytical framework for gathering data to assess possible impacts. The TPAC PLACE research team incorporated the following broad plausible impacts into our current research efforts:

- Empowerment
- Civic engagement
- Stewardship of place
- Cultural self-determination
- Bridging difference
- Aesthetic accomplishment
- Community health and well-being

In *Documenting Civic Engagement*, Stern and Seifert recommend a series of data collection strategies:

- Participant data
  - number in attendance at artistic events,
  - location-based points of engagement
- Artist/grantee surveys
  - to understand their methods of collaboration and
  - the ways they bridge civic spaces between artists and arts organizations and non-arts institutions
- Inter-organizational linkages
  - social network maps of the relationships between individual artists and organizations, allowing for a visual representation of these collaborations
- Stories of impact
  - collection of rich narrative data about the impacts artistic projects have upon audiences

## DATA ACTIVITIES

With the above framing documents and perspective in mind, the research team completed the following activities:

- Inventory of existing data sources
- Input of paper-based data (e.g., project applications, post-project reports) into database
- Administration of online grantee survey
- Learning exchanges with stakeholders
- Development of an interactive website

## SHARING DATA AND RESEARCH

An interactive website entitled PLACE Commons is currently in development to disseminate information once it is gathered, to remain transparent in all research efforts, and to privilege narratives by practitioners and participants. The site will serve to increase social capital and lessons learned by grantees, and will provide a platform for stories of impact.

PLACE Commons is fueled by an open source project called Commons in a Box (CBOX), a free software project aimed at turning the infrastructure that successfully powers the City University of New York (CUNY) Academic Commons into a free, distributable, easy-to-install package. Commons in a Box is a project of the City University of New York and the Graduate Center, CUNY, and is funded by a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

Planned features of PLACE Commons:

- Narratives and stories contributed by participants and publics
- Project profiles of PLACE projects and PLACE artists
- Interactive geo-maps that plot points of engagement and projects
- Data overlays that provide rich data on locations of events
- Research and evaluation dissemination
- Blogs written by thought leaders in the field
- Surveys for participants and grantees

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions—by no means exhaustive or exclusionary—guided data collection. The research team fully expects that current research questions will be modified and new questions will arise as data collection proceeds.

- What is the reach of the PLACE Initiative?
  - How many participants engaged in PLACE projects?
  - Where are PLACE projects geographically located?
  - Where are the points of engagement within the Tucson region?
  
- How do PLACE projects contribute to community cultural development in Tucson and Pima County?
  - What is the nature, or depth, of the relationship between projects and partners and supporters?
  - To what extent do the relationships change?
  - How are organizations linked to one another?
  
- Can we identify common long-range social impacts as a result of PLACE projects?
  - To what extent can indicators be supported by the narrative accounts of impacts?
  
- What types of evaluative methods and tools can TPAC institutionalize for PLACE?
  - How can TPAC provide a platform for evaluation that validates an iterative artistic process necessary when working with social and/or community issues?
  - How does TPAC best support, discuss, or evaluate the tensions embedded in community work?
  - How can TPAC produce tools for evaluation that can be utilized, shared, and animated broadly by multiple stakeholders?
  
- How has TPAC, through the PLACE Initiative, affected projects?
  - What were the most useful aspects of TPAC efforts to grantees?
  - What were the main obstacles or barriers to projects?

### *What Is the Reach of the PLACE Initiative?*

#### **How many participants engaged in PLACE projects?**

PLACE projects have touched the lives of many people. Over the past three years, 2010-2013 PLACE I,II,III grants have engaged, 13,857 participants, 28,229 attendees, and 452 artists.. Because many projects did not report data, the actual numbers are likely much higher than those reported below. Moreover, given the absence of this type of data, efforts to collect complete and accurate information through other data collection systems are paramount.

#### **PLACE Participants**

| YEAR           | TOTAL PARTICIPANTS | ESTIMATED # OF ATTENDEES | TOTAL ARTISTS PARTICIPATION |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| PLACE I        | 2,011              | 3,193                    | 149                         |
| PLACE II       | 3,393              | 3,196                    | 146                         |
| PLACE III      | 8,453              | 21,839                   | 157                         |
| <b>OVERALL</b> | <b>13,857</b>      | <b>28,228</b>            | <b>452</b>                  |

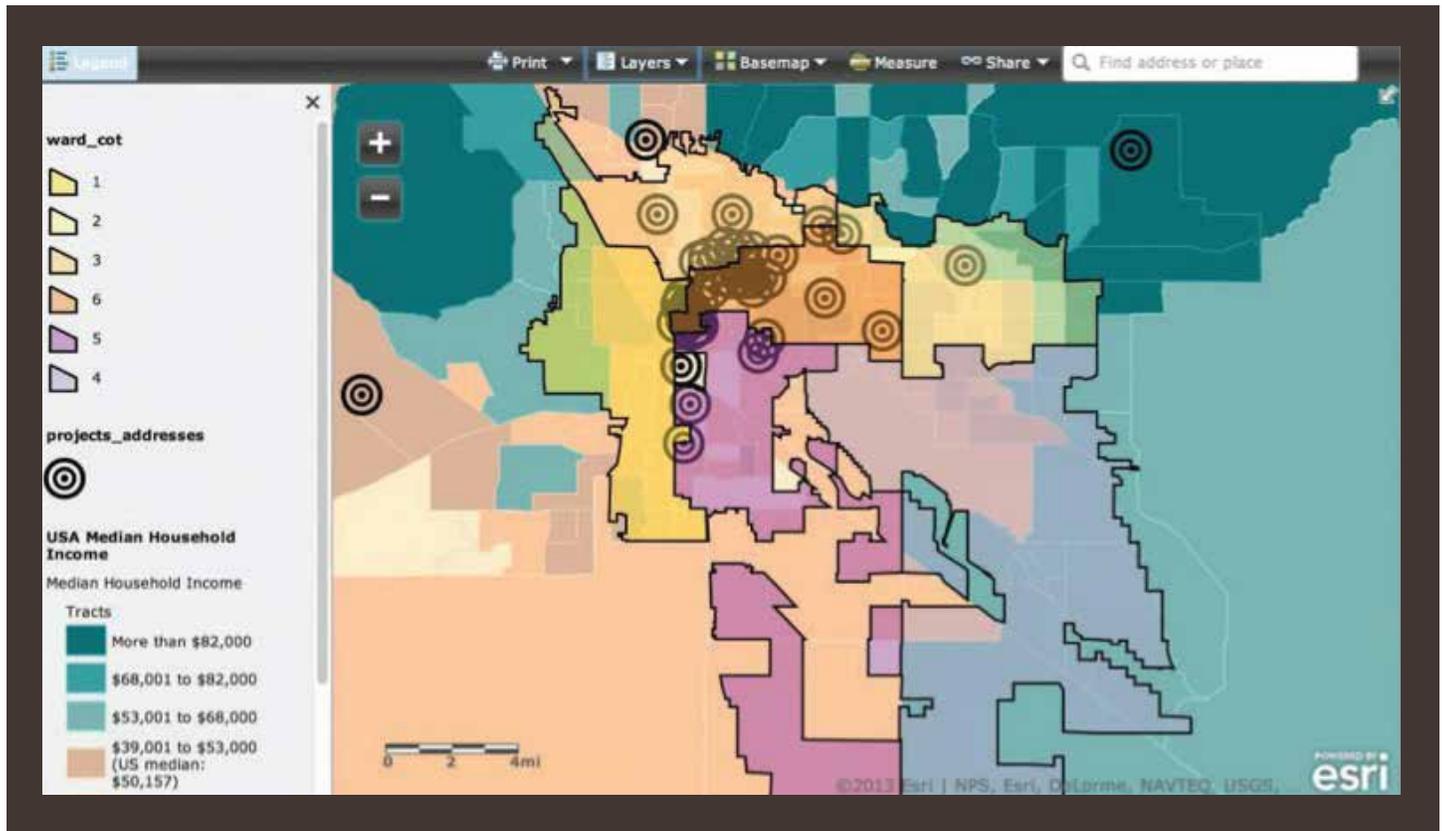
Data collection is difficult because most artists and organizations are working with limited financial and human resources. Data collection should begin at the beginning of the project and TPAC should be more up front about what it wants from evaluation.

— Artist Working Group Member

### Where are PLACE projects geographically located?

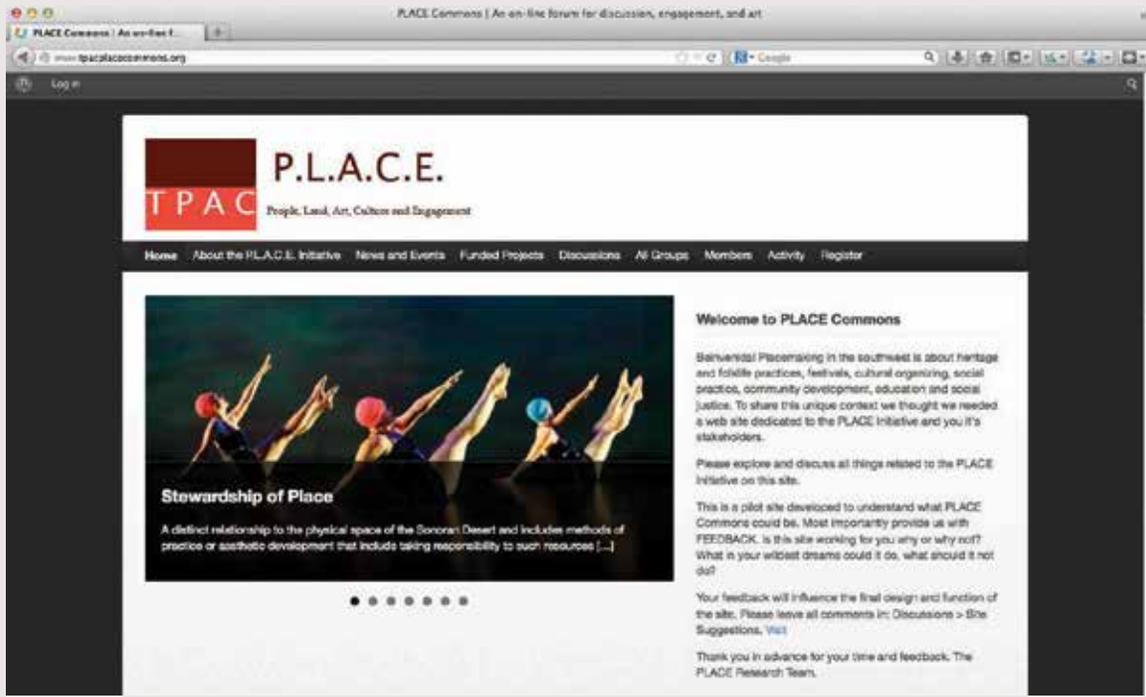
Below is a geographical map of projects with data overlays of ward and median household income, created with ArcGIS Online. The data was collected as part of the initial process to input the grantee reports into electronic form. Address information was then uploaded and geo-coded to ArcGIS Online for further analysis. Using available data from the U.S. Census, other data overlays are possible, such as percentage of ethnic population, age, and diversity.

An interactive map will allow users of PLACE Commons to interact with and view data by selecting various layers of data, as the screenshot illustrates. Layers from the U.S. Census, such as median household income, or from other data points collected by TPAC may be included and selected. The map can be printed by users for later reference or shared. The map will be searchable by users interested in locating a particular artistic project or event that may have occurred.



### Where are the points of engagement within the Tucson region?

A key component for measuring the reach of PLACE is mapping points of engagement using ArcGIS. The mapping component of PLACE events is in development and will be completed once addresses of events are collected in a reliable manner. The data collected by TPAC in post-project reports are inconsistent, as some grantees had the capacity to detail each event, point of engagement, and performance while others did not. Artist practitioners expressed frustration with data gathering in the learning exchanges.



### PLACE COMMONS PLANS TO IMPLEMENT:

- Kiosks at artistic events to capture participant information, including location with the potential to share a personal narrative story describing the projects impact on participants and publics.
- Grantee event logs collected biannually through online forms hosted on the P.L.A.C.E. Commons website.

### *How Do PLACE Projects Contribute to Community Cultural Development in Tucson and Pima County?*

#### **What is the nature, or depth, of the relationship between projects and partners and supporters?**

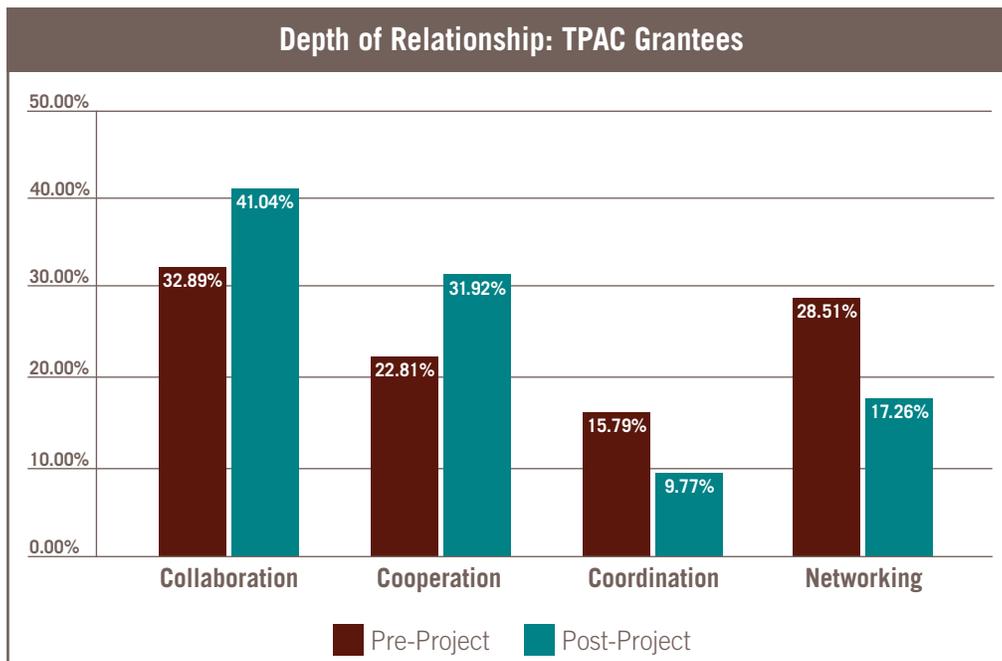
As part of the evaluation, an online survey was distributed to project grantees. A set of survey items asked about the project's partners and supporters. Partners were defined as individuals or organizations who planned to work closely with the projects, while supporters were defined as individuals or organizations who provided the project with letters of support but did not plan to work closely with the project. By definition, partners are a stronger form of relationship to the project compared with supporters.

To gain analytical leverage on the nature of these relationships, a series of questions aimed at defining the depth of the relationship between a project and its partners or supporters was administered to grantees. Himmelman's (2001) rubric for the depth of the relationship provided guidance in the survey. Himmelman defines four levels of relationship:

- *Networking*: exchanging information for mutual benefit
- *Coordinating*: exchanging information for mutual benefit and altering activities for a common purpose
- *Cooperating*: exchanging information, altering activities, and sharing resources for mutual benefit and a common purpose
- *Collaborating*: exchanging information, altering activities, sharing resources, and a willingness to enhance the capacity of another for mutual benefit and a common purpose

Grantees were first asked to list the top three partners and supporters for their project, then asked to rank them according to the depth of the relationship.

The following graph illustrates the changes in relationships from project start (provided in PLACE project grant applications) to project end (provided in the post-project grantee survey). As shown, relationships deepened over the course of the grant cycle for many projects. There were increases in collaborations and cooperation with concurrent decreases in shallower relations, such as coordination and networking. The results suggest that participation in PLACE had a measurable impact on increasing social capital and building community.



To better understand how the relationships changed over the course of the project, open-ended questions allowed grantees to provide narrative accounts about the details of their projects. Several themes emerged from the analysis of the qualitative responses. Many projects reported that the relationships with partners had become closer over the course of the project:

The relationships deepened through the shared work. We planned, executed, and will reflect to strengthen the next pieces of this collaboration.

Another theme that emerged was the clarification of the relationship as the needs of the project expanded:

Relationships became more clear and distinctive as to power flows to and from the proposed project and how, more importantly, the proposed project relies upon community engagement beyond just the oral history interview. I have come to see that institutional relationships are truly the structural dynamics that regulate (in good and bad ways) our more personal and generative entanglements.

Other project relationships evidenced unexpected changes as some partners became deeper and others became less so:

Some relationships deepened, certainly, and became key partners. One was not effective as an individual, but was still a good connection to exchange resources.

With regard to supporters, a few themes emerged. Many relationships that started weak grew into full collaborations, which helped sustainability and built capacity of the project:

TCCC [Tucson Chinese Cultural Center] had no real working relationship with original supporters 1 and 2 before the project. Now Sonia Molina is an ongoing sponsor for TCCC in her neighborhood and has continued to support the Beyond Groceries program as it has moved to other neighborhoods, by making her children available as youth interviewers. Beyond Groceries organizers now view Sonia Molina as a collaborator for the future. Additionally supporter No. 5, the Dunbar Project, has become a supporter during the current phase of the project, which is exploring Dunbar neighborhood. Dunbar Project has been very welcoming and is viewed as a collaborator for the future.

In fact, building capacity through deeper relations with supporters was a theme throughout many projects:

We deepened our access to artists in other fields and helped nurture capacity for working with others in media projects.

For projects that continued beyond the grant cycle, there was evidence that relationships continued and extended their impact beyond the projects themselves:

Again the relations always grow each year as the event grows and entrenches itself in the cultural makeup of Tucson.

Overall, the results suggest the PLACE Initiative affords projects the opportunity to forge new relationships, deepen existing relationships in ways that build capacity, foster sustainability, and create networks of collaboration across sectors inside and outside of the arts field. This kind of relationship building ultimately contributes to strong community development work in Tucson and the region.

### To what extent do the relationships change?

Grantees were then asked to describe how the relationships with partners changed over time. Qualitative answers were coded according to several dimensions that flowed from their responses. The following table provides information on how the relationships changed.

#### How Partner Relationships Changed

|                           |        |
|---------------------------|--------|
| Increased collaboration   | 67.86% |
| New collaboration         | 67.86% |
| Increased capacity        | 32.14% |
| Change in partnership     | 21.43% |
| Community presence        | 14.29% |
| Decrease in collaboration | 7.14%  |
| Expanded networks         | 7.14%  |
| Relations clarified       | 3.57%  |

Increased collaboration and the development of new collaborations were key components of the change in relationships. Moreover, nearly a third of grantees said their new collaborations helped increase the capacity of the project through increased revenue and greater community presence. The following response offers examples of relationships that deepened and helped the project increase capacity and community presence:

With the University of Arizona, it allowed us to explore other programming and working relationships, allowing them to increase their presences in the community, and allowing the Loft to reach a wider audience. We now have a continuing working relationship with several of their departments. Several of our partners and venues, such as Grace St. Paul Church, Santa Cruz Community Foundation, Pima County Library, and Museum of Contemporary Art, have requested that we continue to schedule more issue-based/social justice movie screenings and programs with them. It engages their audiences more deeply, exposing them to programming they might not otherwise seek outside of that venue, and it raises the profile of the organization in the community, allowing them to engage more people around their particular mission.

Moreover, as projects took on a life of their own, relationships and the roles between projects and organizations became clarified and detailed, as the following response shows:

A clearer picture of the relationship with community partners who are non-profits or organizations, as well as individual community partners, became more defined and detailed over the course of the granting period from TPAC. Relationships defined by yearly activities continued (Take Back the Night/UA) and specific collaboration over assemblies in spaces used for both rehearsal and assembly (TUSD, for example) was enhanced and extended during the period of rewriting and public analysis of assemblies and curriculum.

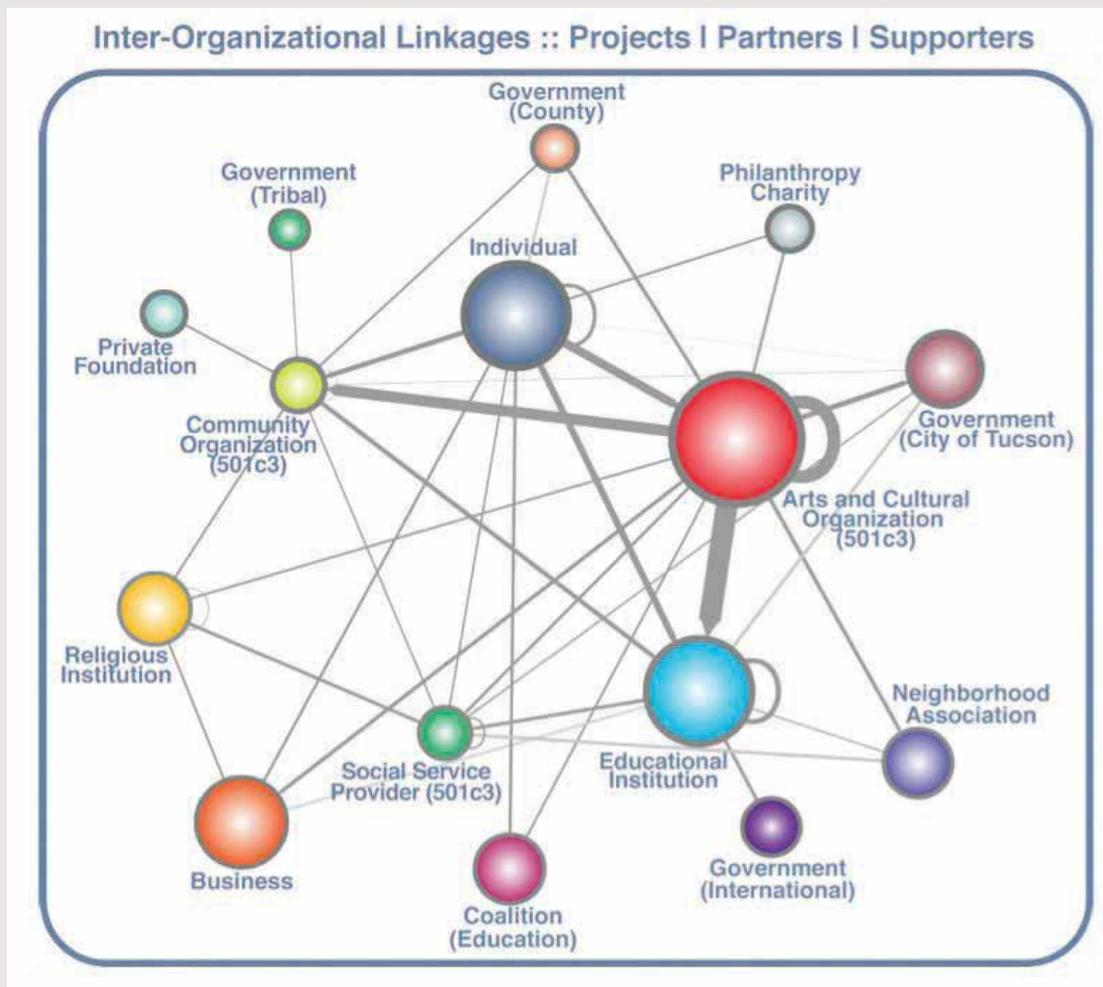
### How are organizations linked to one another?

Projects, partners, and supporters were coded according to their organizational type. The research team used the following types:

- Arts and culture organizations (501[c]3)
- Business
- Coalition (education)
- Community organization
- Educational institution
- Government (City of Tucson)
- Government (Pima County)
- Government (international)
- Government (tribal)
- Individual
- Neighborhood association
- Philanthropy/charity
- Private foundation
- Religious institution
- Social service provider (501[c]3)

Social network analysis was used to map the social ties among organizational types. The figure in the sidebar below shows how place-based projects connect and collaborate among organizations through inter-organizational linkages. Larger nodes represent greater frequencies of representatives from the organizations, while thicker lines illustrate greater frequencies of social ties among organizations. As might be expected, the greatest frequency of ties emanates from arts and culture organizations. This node is central in the social map. The greatest relations were between this node and educational institutions, community organizations, and individuals. The network graph also highlights relations present and non-present. Examples of present ties include those between religious institutions and social service providers, while non-present examples include that between private foundations and philanthropic organizations. Overall, the map details how artistic projects stretch beyond the arts sector. It also provides a picture of which organizations may have weak linkages with the art world in Tucson, and thus provides suggestions on where action may be warranted to increase collaborative linkages.

All social networks map will be embedded on PLACE Commons and will be interactive.



### ***Can We Identify Common Long-Range Social Impacts as a Result of PLACE Projects?***

Guided by a framework provided by Maria Rosario Jackson, the research team asked grantees to place their project within a set of plausible long-term impacts they identified within the scope of their PLACE project work. At the time of survey administration there were a total of seven plausible impacts:

- Empowerment
- Civic engagement
- Stewardship of place
- Cultural self-determination
- Bridging difference
- Aesthetic accomplishment
- Community health and well-being

The results of the survey suggested that the plausible impacts were intertwined and not conducive to examination in isolation from one another. Moreover, most, if not all, projects indicated their work included all aspects of the plausible impacts. Given the nature of the work inherent in projects, the result is not surprising.

### ***What Types of Evaluative Methods and Tools can TPAC Institutionalize for PLACE?***

Throughout the research, TPAC has sought to develop methods of assessment that are reflective of community engagement processes. This becomes particularly challenging when establishing impacts and project outcomes from an institutional perspective. It was clear when listening to grantees that the goals and outcomes identified in any given project may drastically change within one year. By some standards, these changes are a necessary part of the process in place-based art and community engagement work informed by community and/or social issues. Challenges arise, and project goals can and should change as a result. Therefore the potential outcomes and indicators for outcomes will also change.

In light of this fluidity, the research team focused on three general areas of impact, those that were most measurable, practical, and meaningful in terms of the overall goal of PLACE—to create a sense of belonging:

Empowerment:

- Creating opportunity for participants to (1) acquire a new skill set, (2) have voice where he or she did not before, and (3) have a sense of confidence in their opinions and actions. May be individual or collective in nature.

Civic Engagement:

- Providing a platform for the public to engage in civic dialogue about social issues, community issues, and/or cultural resources. Increasing knowledge of a social or community issue through the arts. Influencing policy change by changing existing policy or enacting new policies.

Community Development:

- Fostering new relationships within and outside of the arts community. Building social capital and trust among multiple stakeholders with the intention of having an influence on current conditions of a group or community.
- Enumerating linkages between projects and project partners and the depth of those relationships, in addition to individual impacts with the project articulated in stories and surveys conducted.

These definitions are informed by the PLACE projects and their relationships to the public at large. Each project's capacity to reach the public is variable based on goals within a one-year time period that grantees identified within their PLACE proposals.

It is important for institutions to clearly define who the “actors” are within these definitions to accurately contextualize how they impact the overall outcomes and expectations of participants, institutions, and stakeholders.

**How Has TPAC, through the PLACE Initiative, Affected Projects?**

**What were the most useful aspects of TPAC efforts to grantees?**

As part of the grantee survey, respondents were asked to indicate the usefulness of TPAC’s services to grantees. Funding was listed as the most useful of TPAC efforts, with all of the projects indicating this item. However, many artists contributing to the working group learning exchanges or focus groups raised the issue of sustained funding and asked TPAC to consider changing their funding model. Recommendations were made to develop funding mechanisms that are more reflective of such process-oriented work, including:

- Develop investments in an organization’s human resources so that rigorous evaluation can be done effectively and there are more administrative resources so as to not compromise the artistic work in small to mid-sized undercapitalized organizations.
- Design professional development opportunities such as artistic apprenticeship and/or mentorship and opportunities that foster regional collaboration.
- Support multi-year funding and deeper investments for projects, particularly when funding artistic projects that seek to impact systematic change in a community.

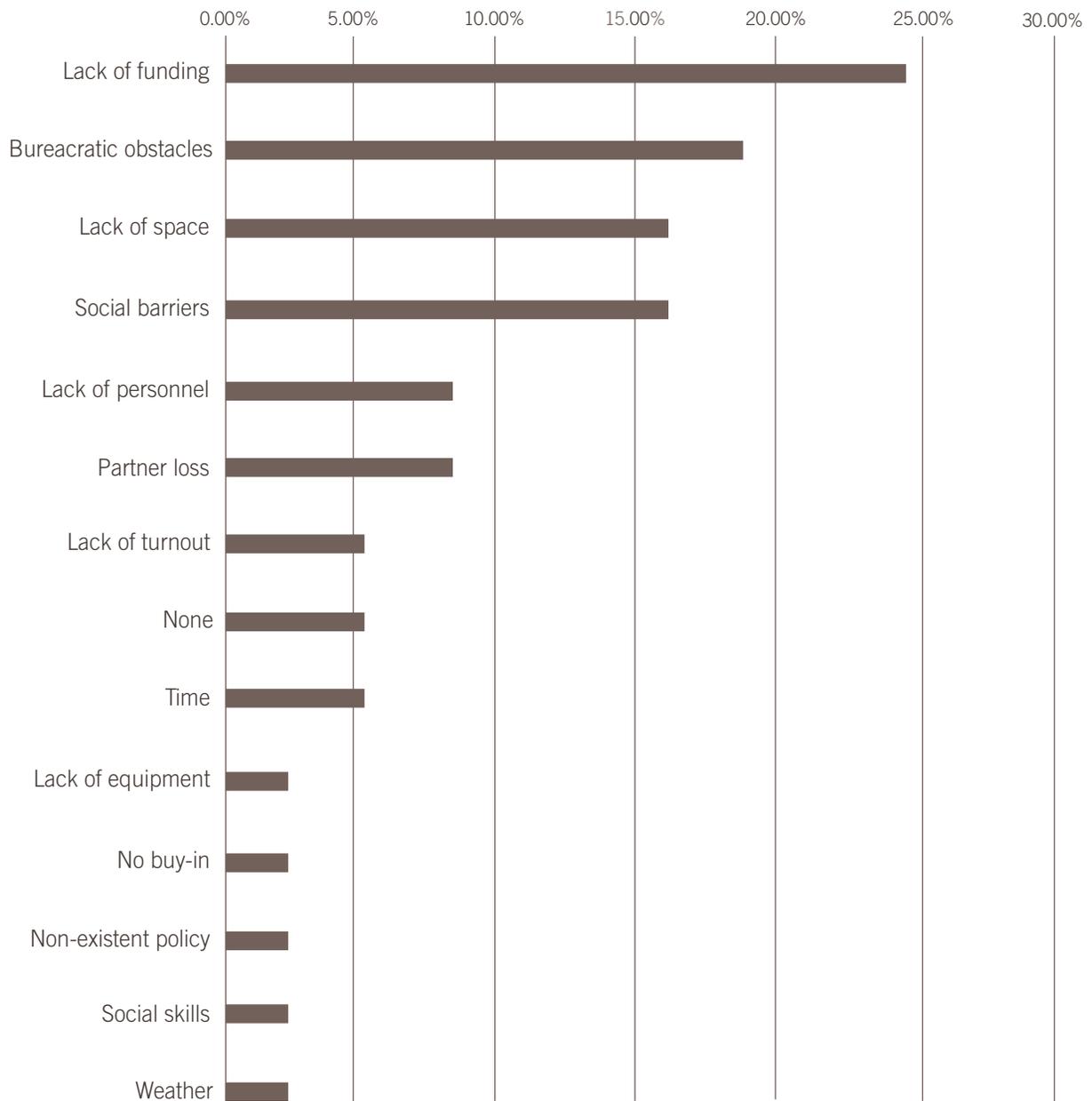
A majority said that social/emotional support, places/opportunities for discussion, TPAC website, professional development opportunities, and grant orientations were “very useful.” The results suggest the importance of developing an online platform to provide grantees a place for exchange and support.

|                                               | NOT AT ALL USEFUL | SOMEWHAT USEFUL | VERY USEFUL |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| <b>Funding</b>                                | 0.00%             | 0.00%           | 100.00%     |
| <b>Technical/grant-writing support</b>        | 10.7%             | 46.4%           | 42.9%       |
| <b>Social/emotional support</b>               | 7.1%              | 39.3%           | 53.6%       |
| <b>Places/opportunities for discussion</b>    | 3.7%              | 40.7%           | 55.6%       |
| <b>Sources for collaborating/networking</b>   | 3.4%              | 55.2%           | 41.4%       |
| <b>TPAC website</b>                           | 15.4%             | 34.6%           | 50.0%       |
| <b>Professional development opportunities</b> | 16.0%             | 32.0%           | 52.0%       |
| <b>Grant orientations</b>                     | 3.3%              | 40.0%           | 56.7%       |

### What were the main obstacles or barriers to projects?

Grantees were asked to provide perspectives on the barriers or obstacles present in the production of their work. The most-cited barrier was lack of funding, followed by Bureaucratic obstacles. Grantees also cited lack of adequate space and rigid social barriers, such as closed social circles distrustful of the project, as well as lack of personnel or the sudden absence of a key partner.

## LIST ANY SIGNIFICANT BARRIERS OR OBSTACLES IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND/OR PRODUCTION OF YOUR PROJECT



## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

To date, evaluation activities have been developmental in nature. The research team has worked within the guidelines established in TPAC's previous collaborative research efforts while remaining sensitive to subjective dimensions of PLACE projects. Additionally, the team has sought input from stakeholders about the terminology and tools that would be most valuable and user friendly.

The main research results suggest that PLACE has a measurable impact on developing social relationships and thereby increasing social capital. It also has the potential to foster relationships outside of the arts sector to include organizations such as government and social service providers. The results also suggest the importance of an intermediary that acts as more than a mere "funding" agency, but as one that also provides support and opportunities to increase a sense of belonging among artists and Tucson and Pima County residents.

To further explore the issues highlighted above, the research team has created several tools to evaluate the processes and outcomes of the PLACE Initiative. Among these are:

- *A strategic plan-of-action form for grantees:*
  - To be completed before project start and revisited through the project
  - To assist grantees to formalize their goals and potential outcomes
  - To provide a discussion point to assess and assist projects in achieving their stated aims
- *A grantee survey administered before and after the grant cycle:*
  - To gauge changes in social capital over the grant cycle
  - To provide another avenue for grantees to reflect on the barriers and opportunities they encountered in their work
  - To provide TPAC with valuable feedback on their efforts
- *A participant survey administered at events through kiosks:*
  - To gauge participant impact and sense of belonging
  - To gauge participant likelihood of engaging civically and being supportive of the arts
- *A PLACE Commons website:*
  - To foster lively discussion among thought leaders, grantees, and participants
  - To provide rich narratives of impact
  - To disseminate results of evaluation/research that are transparent and available to the public in the form of interactive geographical maps, social network graphs, and quantitative charts

Future evaluative endeavors in the context of PLACE should remain sensitive to the voices of stakeholders, develop tools that are user friendly and budget conscious, and remain nimble to changes as a result of the knowledge gained during the efforts.

One of the key characteristics of the arts field is its creativity and openness to new opportunities and new modes of inquiry and analysis. Our evaluation thus far has highlighted the process of experimentation and exploration and has sought to remain transparent and sensitive to this orientation. The research team does not believe that evaluation efforts should attempt to determine the worth or merit of art, in and of itself. Rather, evaluation should seek to illustrate how social relationships and community are developed through place-based arts and cultural work, ultimately contributing to our notion of belonging and cultural vitality.

# APPENDIX C

## PLACE INITIATIVE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

This list includes working group members, grantees, community partners and stakeholders, civic leaders, arts and cultural leaders, and regional stakeholders who have contributed to this research effort through participation in meetings and learning exchanges.

**Maribel Alvarez**, *Tucson Meet Yourself*

**Jason Aragon**, *Pan Left Productions*

**Susan Arnold**, *CAST, Compass Behavioral Health Care*

**Ron Austin**, *Pan Left Productions*

**Robin Blackwood**, *Tucson Chinese Cultural Center*

**Carrie Brennen**, *City High School*

**Gail Browne**, *University of Arizona Poetry Center*

**Dan Buckley**, *Artist*

**Elizabeth Burden**, *Warehouse Arts Management Organization (WAMO) / Tucson Pima Arts Council Board Member*

**Imelda Cortez**, *Tierra y Libertad*

**Kira Dixon-Weinstein**, *Mercado San Agustín, The Gadsden Company*

**Suzanne Druhv**, *Ironwood Tree Experience*

**Kimi Eisele**, *Artist / Tucson Pima Arts Council Grants Committee*

**Tim Escobedo**, *Festival Event Association of Tucson and Southern Arizona (FEATsAZ)*

**Lisa Falk**, *Arizona State Museum*

**Michael Fenlason**, *Tucson Museum of Art*

**Lynn Fleishman**, *The Drawing Studio*

**Jim Glock**, *Tucson Pima Arts Council Grants Committee*

**Barclay Goldsmith**, *Borderlands Theater*

**Heather Gray**, *Artist*

**Jeff Grubic**, *Tucson Pima Arts Council Grants Committee*

**Nadia Hagen**, *Many Mouths One Stomach*

**Mia Hanson**, *Tucson Pima Arts Council Grants Committee*

**Eric Holtan**, *Tucson Pima Arts Council Grants Committee*

**April Jackson**, *Arizona Theatre Company*

**Elizabeth Johnson**, *Arizona State University Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts*

**Diane Karp**, *Santa Fe Art Institute*

**Robert Knight**, *Tucson Museum of Art*

**Debi Chess Mabie**, *The Loft Cinema*

**Bill Mackey**, *Artist*

**Eric Magrane**, *Poet*

**Jeannette Maré**, *Ben's Bells*

**Sean McGlynn**, *City of El Paso, Museums and Cultural Affairs Department*

**Evan Mendelson**, *David and Laura Lovell Foundation*

**Sharon O'Brien**, *Stories that Soar!*

**Michelle Orduna**, *Tucson Pima Arts Council Grants Committee*

**Luis Perales**, *Western Institute for Leadership Development*

**Login Phillips**, *Artist*

**Lauren Rabb**, *University of Arizona Museum of Art*

**Autumn Rentmeester**, *Children's Museum Tucson*

**Amalia Reyes**, *Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Dr. Fernando Escalante Community Library and Resource Center*

**Nelda Ruiz**, *Tierra y Libertad*

**Gregory Sale**, *Arizona State University Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts*

**Noah Saterstrom**, *Tucson Pima Arts Council Grants Committee*

**Dina Scalone Romero**, *Cox Communications*

**Josh Schachter**, *Finding Voice Project*

**Michael B Schwartz**, *Tucson Arts Brigade*

**Amanda Shauger**, *KXCI Community Radio*

**Molly Sturges**, *Littlelobe*

**Mary Charlotte Thurtle**, *Pan Left Productions*

**Karen Uhlich**, *City Council Member*

**Denise Uyehara**, *Artist / Tucson Pima Arts Council Grants Committee Member*

**Mark Valdez**, *Network of Ensemble Theaters*

**Betty Villegas**, *Pima County Housing Center / Tucson Pima Arts Council Board Member*

**Kylie Walzak**, *Living Streets Alliance*

**Paul Weir**, *Many Mouths One Stomach*

**Kristine Welter**, *City High School*

**Joy Wilcox**, *Primavera Foundation*

**Alida Willson-Gunn**, *Borderlands Theater*

**Casey Wollschlaeger**, *Bicycle Inter-Community Art & Salvage (BICAS)*

# BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alvarez, Maribel. *Two-Way Mirror: Ethnography as a Way to Assess Civic Impact of Arts-Based Engagement in Tucson, Arizona*. Washington, D.C.: Americans for the Arts/Animating Democracy, June 2009.

Guba, Egon G., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. *Fourth Generation Evaluation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1989.

Himmelman, A. T. "On Coalitions and the Transformation of Power Relations: Collaborative Betterment and Collaborative Empowerment." *American Journal of Community Psychology* 29(2), 277–284 (2001).

hooks, bell. *Belonging: A Culture of Place*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Martínez, Valerie. Littlelobe Introduction: Maps to the Next World—Creative Community Development in the Southwest. MICA (Maryland Institute College of Art), *Community Arts Journal*, 2012.  
[https://www.mica.edu/About\\_MICA/Research\\_at\\_MICA/Community\\_Arts\\_Journal/Littlelobe.html](https://www.mica.edu/About_MICA/Research_at_MICA/Community_Arts_Journal/Littlelobe.html)

Stern, Mark, and Susan Seifert. *Documenting Civic Engagement: A Plan for the Tucson Pima Arts Council*. Washington, D.C.: Americans for the Arts/Animating Democracy, June 2009.

Tolbert, T.C., and Tim Trace Peterson (eds.). *Troubling the Line: Trans and Genderqueer Poetry and Poetics*. Callicoon, NY: Nightboat Books, 2013.





## THE KRESGE FOUNDATION

