

NEW FRAMEWORKS FOR REVEALING THE PUBLIC VALUE OF THE ARTS

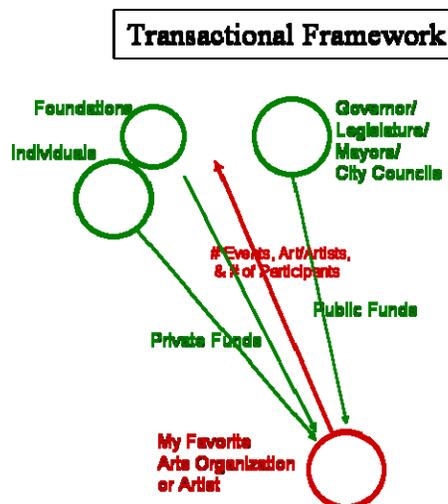
From Transactions to Transformations

Introduction:

- Ohio organizations and artists provide significant, personally meaningful and transformative arts experiences for Ohioans throughout the state.
- Yet we have not been successful in fully revealing the personal and public value of those experiences.¹
- Recently released research provides new frameworks for developing strategies to build participation, enhance experiences, and to gather and communicate the effect on Ohioans, their lives and their communities.
- We share these frameworks for examining ways to better understand and reveal the public value of the arts and provide tools for you to apply these ideas for your own organization or work.

A Transactional Framework

The conceptual framework for the role of and support for the arts in the United States is based on a construct established more than three decades ago with the advent of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and public arts agencies in each of the states. Both the NEA and the Ohio Arts Council were established in 1965. In the ensuing 30-plus years, there have been significant changes in consumer behavior, learning in the behavioral sciences, and dramatic improvements to a number of public policy frameworks in other fields. Although we've seen some evolution in methods and practices over the years, the basic structure of the conceptual framework for the arts has not changed.



The current framework is transactional in shaping the ways in which we motivate, advocate and operate the arts.² Individuals buy tickets and make donations. Private

foundations (with specific funding priorities), and public agencies (with fair, equitable distribution methods), provide funding, and that support has grown dramatically in the past thirty years. With these private and public funds, arts organizations produce and present arts events, projects and seasons. In exchange, they are asked (at ever increasing levels of detail) to report, for both documentation and advocacy purposes, on activities, the art itself, the artists involved, the numbers of people who participated and financial operations. In addition to receiving this documentation, donors/grantors receive public recognition, tax deductions for their donations and access to selected perquisites. We describe this as a *Transactional Framework for the Arts*. While it's necessary to operate transactionally, this framework is not sufficiently dynamic to describe the effects of arts participation.

It is commonly accepted in the nonprofit arts sector that arts organizations and artists are under-resourced and, in most cases, not reaching their goals and capacity in attracting viewers/audiences. Though value is being created through arts experiences, it is not fully recognized or articulated by the participant, the artist/arts organization, or the public/private funder.

Does your favorite arts organization or artist:

- ***Have all of the financial support it needs to achieve its mission?***
- ***Attract the full breadth of participation it seeks***
 - ***in audiences/readers/visitors, volunteers, donors?***
 - ***in attendance, community support or contributions?***
- ***Consistently achieve excellence, and connect to artists and work that build its quality and range of expression?***

If not, the new frameworks we present can be helpful in understanding why not, and in effecting positive change.

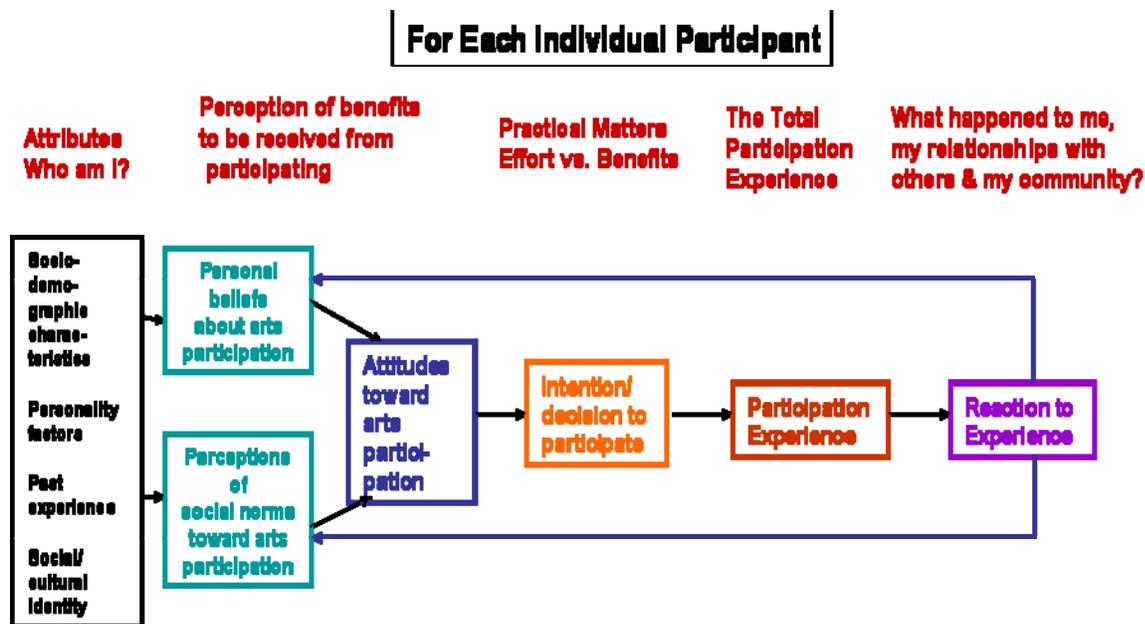
The First Key Framework: *The Behavioral Model of Participation*

Recognizing the importance of developing new frameworks, the Wallace Foundation initiated significant research on participation. Further recognizing the extensive funding and public policy role of state arts agencies, in 2001 the Wallace Foundation began the START (State Arts Partnership for Cultural Participation) Initiative, encouraging research and learning, innovation and change through a *community of practice* of thirteen leadership state arts agencies. The cumulative effect introduces new frameworks for building participation in the arts and increasing the public value and support for the arts.

Definitions:

- Participation in the arts includes
 - Doing (singing, acting, dancing, painting, writing),
 - Spectating (seeing, reading, listening), and
 - Stewardship (personal donations, volunteering, allocation of public funds), etc.
- Building/increasing participation can be to broaden, deepen or diversify
 - Broaden: More of the same kinds of people who are now attending
 - Deepen: More engaged participation by those who presently participate
 - Diversify: Participation by those who don't currently participate

The McCarthy/Jinnett Behavioral Model of Participation (BMP)³ draws directly from well-tested psychological and sociological research. Previously, arts practitioners knew about participants' attributes, but not how those attributes impact the inclination to participate. Though strategies for each person must be individually considered, the BMP increases our understanding of how to increase motivation, decrease barriers and create transformative experiences that encourage participants to return and bring their peers and families. Putting new methods into practice enable us to effectively build participation. Building participation helps us to both understand and increase value.



- People must first **perceive that there are benefits** from participating for themselves, their relationships with others or something else they value.
 - Will I understand and enjoy it? Do my peers attend and enjoy it? Will my understanding of myself or others increase? Will I be closer to my family?
- Once someone has this positive inclination toward participation, then **practical barriers** become important. To make the decision to participate, one's perception of benefits must outweigh one's financial, time and opportunity costs.
 - Practical barriers include time of day, amount of time required, travel time, opportunity cost of missing another event or staying home. Barriers can be lowered by placing events in locations closer to participants, flexible event schedules, shorter events, etc.
- When people do participate, if the **full range of their experience** provides sufficient **benefits that meet or exceed their expectation (previous perceptions)** they're more likely to return and encourage others to participate.
- **Reaction to the Experience** includes how one remembers an experience. It's the place of lasting value. In an increasingly complex world, methods to enhance participants' **Reaction to the Experience** become even more important reinforcing the perception of benefits by participants and their peers
 - Sharing opinions after the event, memory elicitation devices, forwarding digital photos, postcards to tell others

Putting this knowledge into practice

In Arizona, arts organizations are using the BMP, and the definitions above, to explore and build a specific area of participation. Working with consultants, each is asking a specific question such as:

- What is the convergence point between the expectations and desires of the audience, and what our Ballet company offers?
- Why are we experiencing large attrition in first-time family subscribers?
- How can we diversify the participation by Navajo fiber artists and tradition bearers in our annual festival?
- What is the meaning for participants in our annual dance festival, and how can we deepen their experience?

In order to increase participation – attendance, contributions, membership, etc. – artists and arts organizations must develop perceptual, practical and experiential strategies. And we must begin with specific initiatives targeted for specific groups. Participation practices will not be changed overnight.⁴

Personally Meaningful Experiences – Transformations, Not Transactions

In workshops on the BMP, people describe personally meaningful experiences in Ohio and other locations. We hear about times of joy and relaxation, about affirmation and euphoria - about life changing moments – seeing a young person achieve something they previously thought was impossible, about being transported to another place and time, about time standing still, about feeling that a warm blanket had been placed over their shoulders, about stopping addictions and never going back, about understanding a culture and race one had previously attacked. These experiences were transformations, not transactions, but in many standard

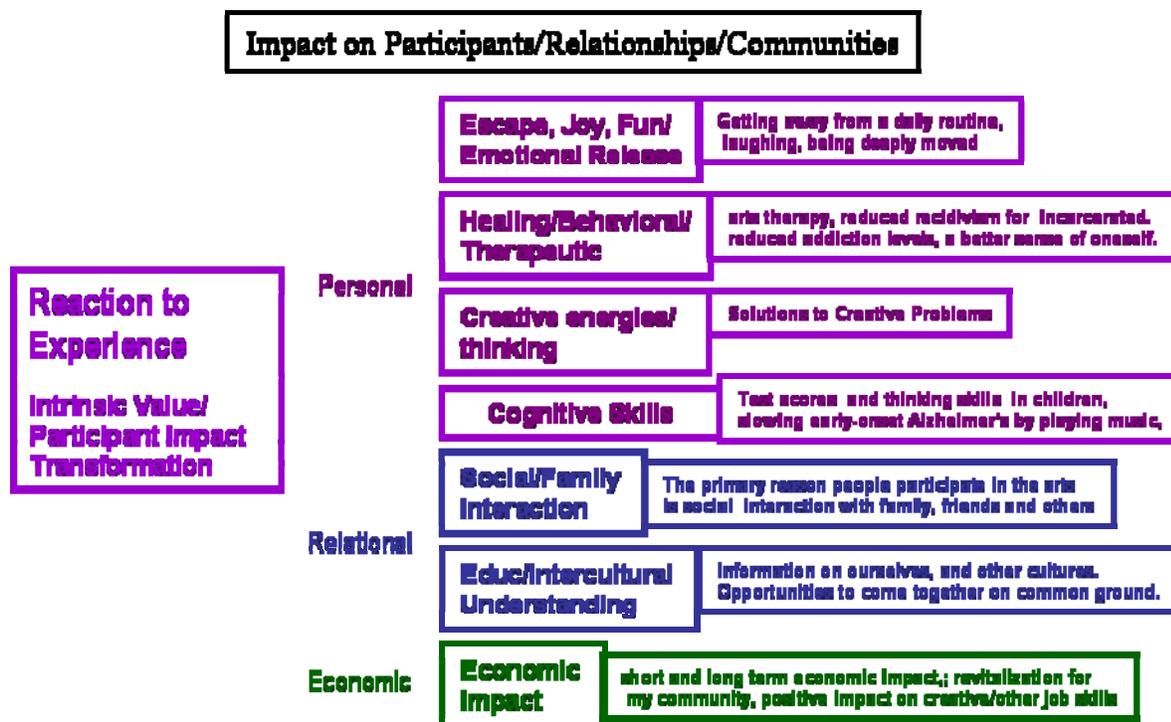
"Building public value begins with speaking to where your audience is listening from."

Ben Cameron, Theatre Communications Group

Southwest Arts Conference, Arizona, January 2004

reporting formats, only participation *numbers* come through and not participation *experiences*. The transactional framework does not describe what we hear. With that realization, we turn to other research about how participation can be instrumental in changing people’s lives.

Participation Strategies and Research⁵ help us to understand that during and following the participation experience, a series of different, but inter-related impacts can also occur:



Revealing personal value might begin with the participants themselves. Artists and arts organizations might begin to ask participants questions to elicit and help them remember the breadth of value they received from recent arts experiences, to see if participants will provide a sense of how they, their relationships with others, and their communities have changed. Responses may encourage increased word-of-mouth endorsements as well as potential increases in attendance and contributions.

Knowing arts participation experiences transform people, their relationships with others and their communities’ economic and social lives, it’s time to move from just a Transactional Framework to the **Transformational Framework**.

The Krannert Center for the Performing Arts uses the phrase, “Come As You Are, Leave Different,” providing journals to frequent participants, encouraging them to jot down some ways that they and their relationships with others were different.

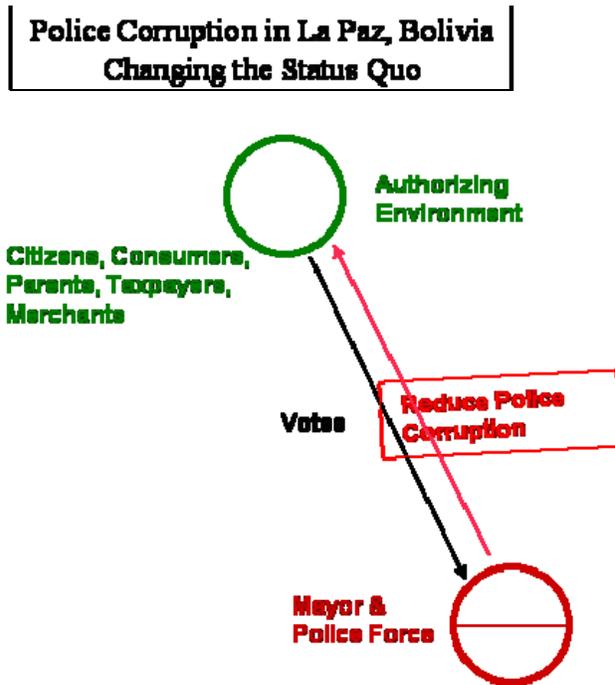
How might you elicit stories of personal value?

What methods are you providing to Encourage increased social interaction and thereby repeated participation?

The Second Key Framework – Moore’s Public Value Strategic Triangle

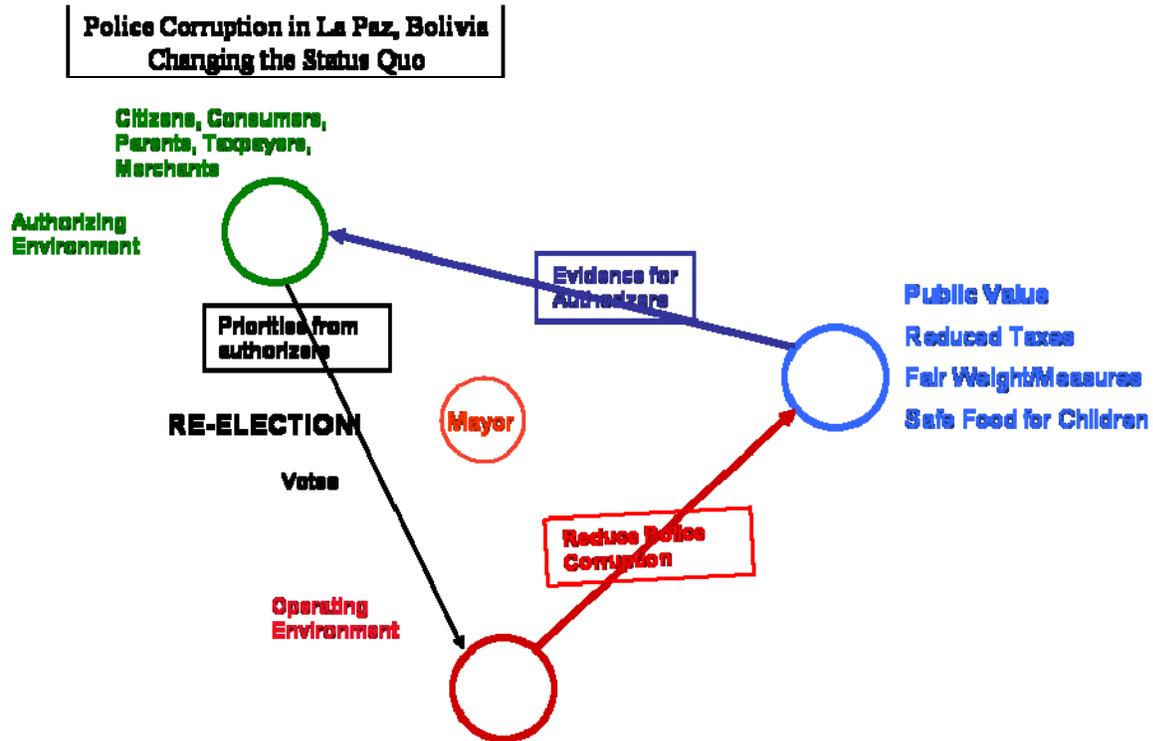
Moore’s Public Value Strategic Triangle: Harvard Professor Mark Moore⁶ introduced, to the Wallace START Initiative participants, a Case Study about newly elected Mayor MacLean of La Paz, Bolivia. Mayor MacLean came to office with reform in mind, particularly ending long-standing corruption in the police force. One of the primary responsibilities of the La Paz police force was patrolling the public market: collecting rents, maintaining health standards, and monitoring accurate weights and measures. Corruption was resulting in lower city revenues, health violations and cheating consumers through false weights/measures. Mayor MacLean worked diligently to reform the system and communicate to the public that he was making progress toward reducing corruption. However, at the time of the next election, Mayor MacLean was voted out of office.

What could he have done differently? Some START Initiative participants responded with comments about marketing and media strategies, others suggested “get out the vote” strategies, some talked about the need to campaign with various ethnic groups, but in the end we were stumped. The mayor had effectively communicated his good work to end police corruption – what could or should he have done differently?



Upon examination, we saw that La Paz residents didn’t see the corruption having a direct impact in their daily lives, but would have been more supportive if the mayor had communicated the impact of ending corruption in terms more closely aligned with what they were concerned about and valued: reducing taxes, fair weights and measures for consumers and safe food for families and children. In other words, if Mayor McLean had more clearly understood which facets of the public market situation were important to the

citizens, and had gathered evidence of improving those facets, then communicated the *public value* of his anti-corruption work as a *means* to reach the *end* -- transforming a corrupt, dirty market to a fair, safe, clean market -- he likely would have been able to align his work with pro-health, pro-children, pro-consumer and lower tax advocates in La Paz. And, he likely would have been re-elected.



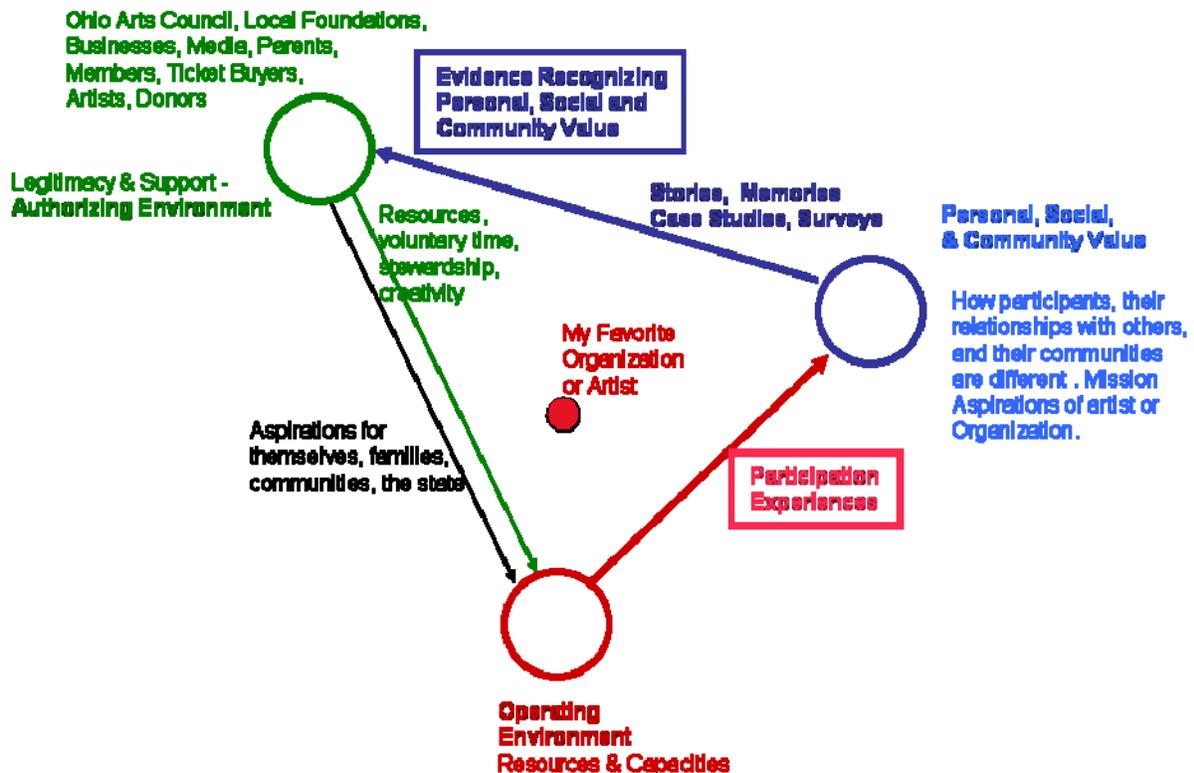
Can we apply this *Public Value Strategic Triangle* to a New Framework for the Arts?

The *public value strategic triangle* has three elements:

- The Authorizing Environment comprises those (formal and informal) who provide legitimacy and support, including not only elected officials, foundations and arts participants, but also the media, arts council members, special interest groups, unions, business groups and industries, and even arts advocacy groups.
- The Operating Environment for artists and arts organizations comprises resources, partners and capacities that produce arts events, present exhibitions, publish literature, etc.
- Public Value (Personal, Social and Community) reflects the effect (transformation, as we've learned above) we have on people, their relationships with others and their communities. The organization's mission is encompassed in this area, and in fact may be positively shaped and understood as reflecting the value created by the organization/artist.

This suggests that rather than just making the case for value of the transactions in the arts, we might gain greater support if we add a Transformational Framework.

Personal, Social, Relational and Community Value Triangle for Organization or Artist



Moore suggests that the authorizing environment should be asked to provide not only resources, but also information on what they value for themselves, their families, their communities, the state, etc. Listening to what the authorizing environment values will indicate ways in which the arts can address the expressed public value desired by the authorizing environment. Balancing what is heard with the organization's operating capacity, and public value aspirations, can guide strategic decision-making, and also help clearly connect our existing value with the aspirations of others.

It's vital that artists and arts organizations gather evidence of their value, asking participants how they've changed, whether they're different as a result of engagement with your art and your organization.

How can we now move from the value provided by a single arts organization or artists and look to the value provided by arts sector in a community or across the entire state?

Some Local Cultural Councils in Massachusetts, instead of asking their selectmen (sic) for funding, will now begin the conversation with: What can the arts do for our town?

What questions would you want to ask a person in your authorizing environment?

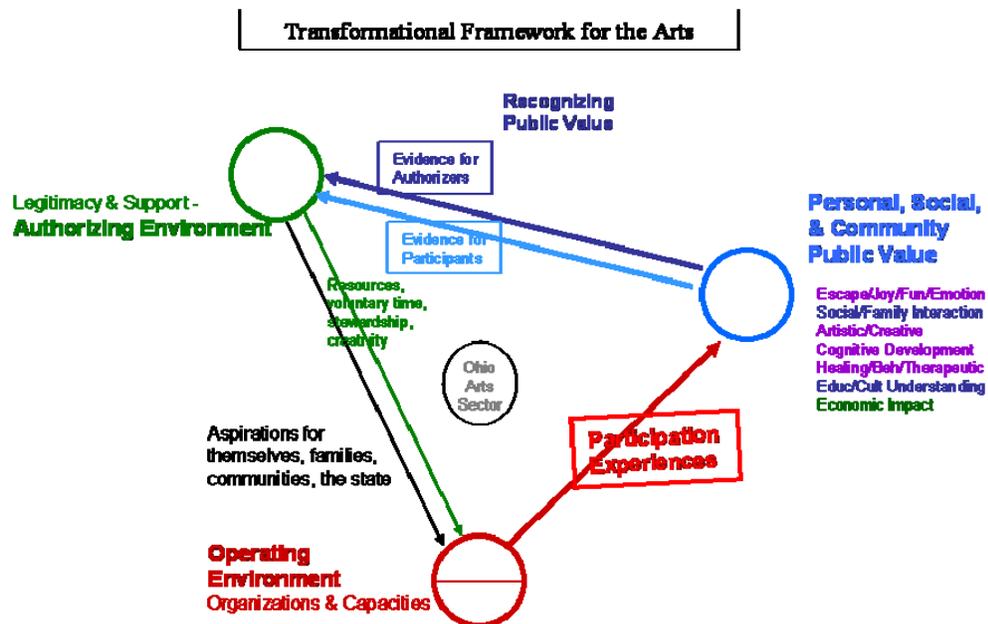
The Transformational Framework does not propose that arts organizations and artists need to succumb to the requests of funders, audiences or any discrete group requesting to see a particular artist or genre. What it does propose is asking and responding to these questions:

- What do people in our community need or aspire to?
- What are the attributes of the experience they're seeking for themselves and others?
- How can the arts and my organization/me best provide that?

How might you gather the evidence?

Moving from an Organization/Artist to the Collective Impact on Ohio

If we could aggregate the collective value of each of the transformative arts experiences in Ohio, the framework for revealing the public value of the arts in Ohio would be:



It's important to ask the authorizing environment about its aspirations for the state as a whole.⁷ Moore cautions, however, that each aspect of public value may vary in importance to different parts of the authorizing environment/groups. Also, each group of authorizers may change the relative priority of various impacts depending on other public events, public attention, and circumstances specific to the moment or the context in which decisions are being made.

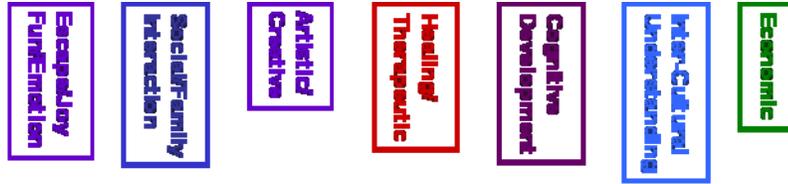
It's crucial not to assume that specific values are by definition important to specific groups; asking and listening are valuable capacities for ascertaining the aspirations of the authorizing environment. Furthermore, just as we know that all participation can't be addressed simultaneously, we must be judicious in our use of resources in addressing the aspirations of our authorizing environment.

Applying these concepts affects the internal and external work of the Arizona Commission on the Arts:

- Internally, we have learned different methods of understanding the perspectives of grantees, constituents and co-producers -- for instance, we have changed the content and promotion of our statewide arts conference, which has increased attendance and the quality.
- Externally, we listen more acutely to issues of authorizers and where they are coming from, at the same time keeping an awareness of our mission. Previous communications to the authorizing environment talked about the activities we did and the numbers of grants we made. We now talk about the differences made through the arts and arts funding.

Shelley Cohn, Executive Director, Arizona Commission on the Arts

Different Impacts are important to different groups



Authorizers

Mayors - Livable Communities

Chambers - Jobs/Economic Dev

PTA-Parents-Happy/Healthy Kids

Faith Based -Strong Families

Tourism Industry - Visitors

Artists

Workforce/Unions

Rural Leaders - Access

People (Me)

This “value mapping” matrix asks us to consider what value aspirations might be held by others and to align them with the value created by our organization. By identifying and assigning “value aspirations” through observing, asking and listening, rather than assuming or generalizing, you can ensure a more authentic dialogue and relationship.

How might you ascertain the aspirations of your authorizing environment?

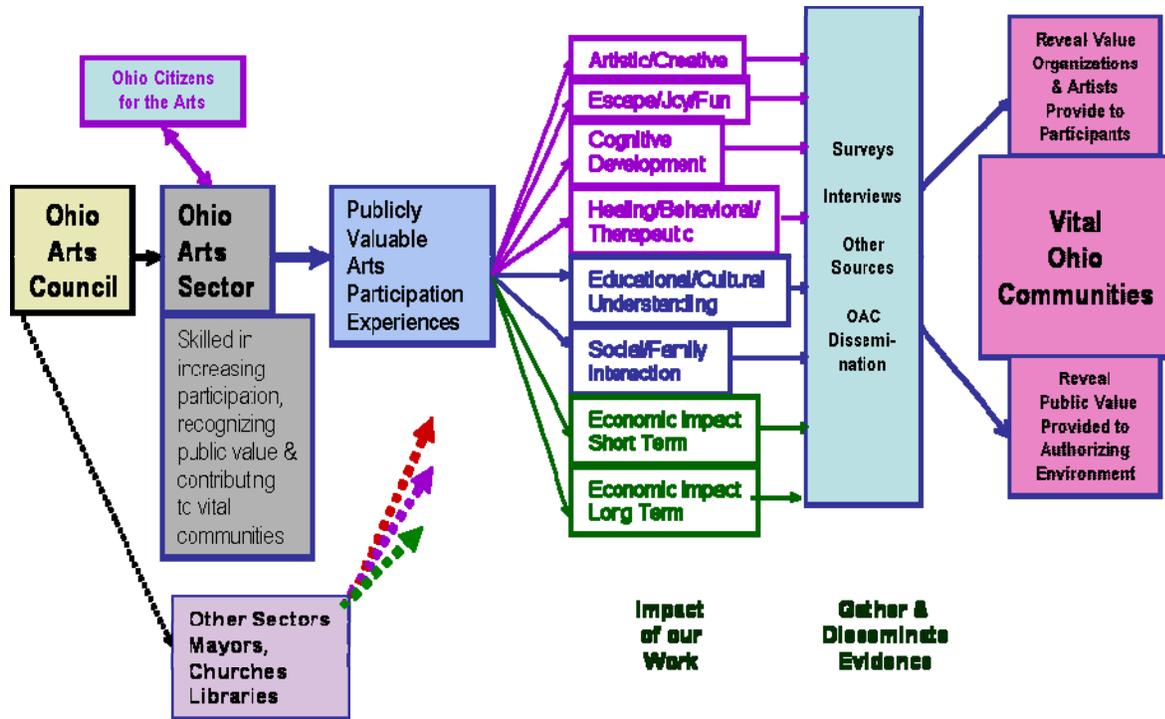
Determining what these are, you can use the matrix above to consider which elements of your work are important to which authorizers and how to focus your dialogue with them. Use check marks at the intersection of the value you create and the various authorizers. Vary the matrix depending on your environment.

What will the OAC do to assist this work?

To help individual organizations and artists begin to use these frameworks and collect evidence, and to collectively understand the public value of the arts in Ohio to build state support, OAC is currently, or planning to:

- Develop and present participation-building workshops and other trainings for arts organizations & artists
- Increase our understanding of Public Value in arts and other sectors (e.g. Akron Roundtable Hosts OAC Executive Director Wayne Lawson⁸)
- Develop prototypes for surveys, questionnaires and other methods (online, paper and interview format) to collect data directly as well as to assist organizations and artists to easily collect public value information. For example, an online survey might be developed to ask: “How are you, your relationships with others or your community different as a result of this arts experience?”
- Effectively communicate results to the Legislature, Governor, media, local elected officials, and the field
- Develop an improved grants application process

To Summarize: The Future We Imagine



Christy Farnbauch
Mollie Lakin-Hayes
Jerry Yoshitomi
c. March 2004

¹ Charge by Executive Director Wayne Lawson to the [Ohio Arts Council's](#) convening: *Reveal the Public Value of the Arts in Ohio*, March 2004. "How can we more effectively reveal the public value we already provide to participants and to the state as a whole?" This paper draws from remarks and comments before, during and after the Ohio Convening as well as presentations sponsored by the Minnesota State Arts Board to the *What's Next for the State We're In?* hosted by the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits and the Minnesota Council on Foundations, October 2003.

² The terms transactional and transformational are inspired by [Kay Sprinkel Grace](#) and Alan L. Wendroff. In [High Impact Philanthropy](#), they describe a transactional model of philanthropy vs. a transformational model

³ McCarthy, Kevin F. and Jinnett, Kimberly, [A New Framework for Building Participation in the Arts](#), RAND, 2001

⁴ For more in depth presentations on participation, see Yoshitomi, Gerald, *Engage Now!* (2002) sponsored by the Heinz Endowments and work in behavioral and social sciences by Martin Fishbein; Robert Cialdini; Wayne Baker; Peter Senge, Etienne Wenger, and Ronald Heifetz

⁵ McCarthy, Kevin, et. al., *Study of the Benefits of Participating in the Arts*, RAND (in process); Brown, Alan, [Classical Music Segmentation Study](#), Knight Foundation, 2003; Walker, Chris, [Reggae to Rachmaninoff](#), Urban Institute, 2003; - www.mayoclinic.com; <http://www.apa.org/ed/goodlife.html>, references to *positive psychology* from the American Psychological Association; - <http://www.cornerstonetheater.org/> and <http://www.danceexchange.org/>

⁶ Moore, Mark H., Daniel and Florence Guggenheim Professor at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, [Creating Public Value](#), Harvard University Press, 1995; Kennedy School of Government Case Study # 1523.0, *Corruption in La Paz: A Mayor Fights City Hall*. Plus Lectures, Writings and work by 13 State Arts Agencies in the Wallace START (State Arts Agency) Initiative coordinated by Arts Midwest, 2001 to present;

⁷ In Kentucky see "Visions for the State" or in the North Carolina Governors Policy Council.

⁸ <http://198.234.98.241/news/AkronRoundtable2004.doc>