

# **Asia-Pacific Creative Communities: A Strategy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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## **SESSION TWO**

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### **Using an Asset-Based Community Development Approach Globally Beyond the Developed World**

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Successful community development begins with the premise that the more people affected by development have a stake in its formulation and implementation, the greater the likelihood that when the funding stops and the experts leave, what remains is a sustainable future for all community members. If development means giving people a maximum number of options and ensuring that a host of basic human rights are met, strategies to achieve it must combine adherence to universal principles of transparency, accountability, pluralism, justice, and participation, while tailoring development projects to the specific realities of each community's unique identity and condition. The challenge of sustainable community development is balancing the general with the concrete, marshaling a growing body of economic knowledge with the often complex dynamics facing project designers.

Any global agenda for community development that hopes to make positive contributions must be shaped within the context of four major trends or forces: globalization, urbanization, the spread of democracy, and an information technology revolution that promises to increase exponentially people's access to information. In addition, the world has witnessed during the last decade a dramatic trend toward devolution, with traditionally strong central governments ceding to local governments both the functions and resources to deliver services in an efficient and effective manner. Especially in Africa and Latin America, a new generation of mayors has demonstrated the wisdom of local control over community affairs, in which city hall or the state capital functions as a mediator between the concerns of individuals,

families, and neighborhoods and national policymakers in the country's capital

Increasingly, development strategies bring together players from within and outside the community and from various sectors – government, business, and civil society. This means people are forced to work together in ways that may seem to them alien and threatening. But an accepted truism of the professional development community is that no one sector can do it alone, not government, not business, not civil society. A primary ingredient of this new mix of talents and voices is trust, without which partnerships flounder and dissolve into cynicism and bitterness. Each participant, and, above all, the members of the community being sustainably developed, must feel that the other partners are playing according to accepted rules and saying what they mean. In other words, motives, operations, and processes must be transparent, which in part depends on effective public disclosures of information. To ensure that participants understand each other's values and methodologies, media presentations and use of the Internet can prepare the ground for fruitful development work.

Part of the Habitat II agenda formulated in Istanbul in 1996 addresses the primacy of transparency and accountability: "Policy formulation and implementation by Governments should be guided by the principles of accountability, transparency and broad-based public participation. Accountability and transparency are imperative in order to prevent corruption and ensure that the available resources are used to the benefit of all the people." Only when such conditions prevail, will community stakeholders and representatives of civil society feel confident that their participation rests on a shared platform of civic principles of honesty and openness.

According to the 1994 Report of the Eighth General Increase in the Resources of the Inter-American Development Bank, overcoming marginalization and poverty depends on society as a whole supporting democratic instruments of government, based on consensus derived from political participation. "The Inter-American Development Bank," the report states, "is directly accountable to its member governments and indirectly accountable to their parliaments and citizens; disclosure of information and transparency of operations is an important element in ensuring this accountability." Community participation requires consultation, which in turn presumes dialogue. But dialogue, too, rests on access to relevant data and

comprehension of the policy framework within which community development occurs. This leads to greater appreciation by all partners of each other's priorities and decision-making processes. In the new social contract taking hold in newly democratized societies, the price governments pay for active community engagement in their own development is ensuring the state's behavior accords with international standards of accountability and transparency.

### **Community Participation Breathes Life into Development Efforts**

Successful projects recast the community from being the object of development—acted upon by international lending agencies and experts—to being an active subject in the process leading to the goal of a sustainable future. However, community participation requires a preceding phase of community consultation in which members can become involved in and share control of the development process itself. The community's values and traditions should help shape the project, not only for reasons of upholding democratic principles, but because citizens possess knowledge that can dramatically affect the development process. Consultation leading to participation can unlock a storehouse of human, social, and cultural capital, the exercise of which on their own behalf can solidify commitment and provide vital lessons in self-determination, empowerment, and producing the cultural self-confidence needed to ensure that development projects are sustainable.

When communities cease being recipients of aid and instead become partners for change, they assume ownership over the development process. Empowerment of this sort is infectious: it easily transfers to other aspects of community life beyond the scope of the development project. For these reasons, lending agencies and development organizations recognize that participation must be nurtured despite the frequent difficulty of arriving at consensus. Indeed, a 1994 World Bank study on participation concluded that “although lasting benefits from participation take longer to emerge, and are more difficult to quantify, over time they can be expected to offset incremental costs.” Positive externalities include: fostering training in democratic decision-making; allowing community participants to supply “sweat equity” to the project, hence stretching development dollars; and facilitating an evaluation process in which community members willingly help generate and assess data measuring the project's success.

If government and civil society participants have obligations to act according to principles of transparency and accountability, communities must shoulder responsibility for inclusiveness and equity. Participation must extend to traditionally weak and voiceless members including the young, the elderly, those whose disabilities keep them from active engagement, women, and future generations. When development takes the long-term view—which it must to be truly sustainable—inevitably immediate, individual interests yield to the welfare of the family. Included in the Habitat agenda policy cited above is the provision that “Each Government should ensure the right of all members of its society to take an active part in the affairs of the community in which they live, and ensure and encourage participation in policy-making at all levels.”

The trend toward democratization and the decentralization of central authority blossoms in an environment of trust between central and local governments. Both increasingly feel compelled to involve citizens in planning for infrastructure, environmental, health care, and educational projects. New skills must be nurtured, especially negotiation and facilitation of mutually beneficial dialogue. To foster communication between authorities and community members, strategies include creating grass-roots community organizations, holding open town meetings, conducting referenda, and using existing networks of individuals and associations. To ensure that the voices emerging from communication do not ignore significant but silent portions of the community, focus groups and sociocultural research can guarantee that the process of arriving at consensus involves the participation of all citizens.

Active participation by all interest groups in a community enhances the likelihood of success. When, for example, environmental initiatives involve residents, civic organizations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), business and labor groups as well as a cross-section of affected government agencies, the outcome is more likely to achieve sustainability. One of the outcomes of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit was the propagation of Local Agenda 21, which recognizes the stake local authorities have in community development. Currently, more than 1,200 local authorities in 33 countries have accepted the challenge of initiating a Local Agenda 21 to mobilize community resources, set goals for the future, and measure results. In one of the most impoverished cities in the world, Cajamarca, Peru, implementation of the Local Agenda 21 divided the city into neighborhood councils and the surrounding area into population centers,

with their own mayors and councils. Cross-sector committees created six theme boards to develop plans for the areas of education, natural resources and agriculture, urban environment, cultural heritage and tourism, urban environment, and issues related to women, the family, and population. The various regions contributed to each theme board, which crafted a strategic plan to address issues filtering up from wide-scale participation.

Community participation is at the heart of a project in Calcutta, India, to formulate an effective environmental management strategy with the assumption that citizen involvement will strengthen the capacity of civil society to address pressing problems of the environment. Rather than being exclusively driven by better-off segments of society, special interest groups, and academics, conservation programs need the participation of lower income citizens, so that they can identify with the benefits and values of conservation. Enlisting the urban poor in conservation efforts holds the promise of breaking the vicious cycle of environmental degradation and poverty. Taking advantage of two recent amendments to the Indian Constitution that place greater authority in the hands of municipalities, the poor are being given incentives to participate in conservation.

The fruits of such community participation in conservation are plain to see in Curitiba, Brazil, where for nearly three decades its enlightened mayor Jaime Lerner has helped make it one of the country's most livable cities. His conservation strategies included citizen initiatives, public-private partnerships, encouragement of NGOs, microenterprises, and creative financial arrangements leveraging support from a broad range of contributors. A mark of his success in enlisting citizen participation is the fact that 70 percent of the people participate in the recycling program and many low-income families receive bus tokens or food in exchange for their garbage. In a profile of Curitiba in the March 1992 issue of *World Monitor*, Mac Margolis recounts how Lerner succeeded in convincing citizens that solutions were possible by involving them in efforts to improve their own situation. For Lerner, "The dream of a better city is always in the heads of the residents." The successful politician knows how to tap into those dreams and harness the energy that comes from citizen empowerment and participation.

*Chattanooga, Tennessee—The Fruits of Participation*

*By the end of the 1960s, Chattanooga had the dubious distinction of being one of the nation's most polluted cities. Its dirty air and polluted soil compelled citizens and officials to take immediate action to save their way of life. As a result, in 1984, business, community, and government formed a partnership called Chattanooga Venture to help map a sustainable future for the city. Acting as a community-building catalyst, it gathered diverse interests around a shared agenda that seeks to involve community participation and effect systemic changes in the way the city thinks about itself and-what it can accomplish. The Vision 2000 resulted from extensive public participation of 1,700 citizens, meeting over a period of 20 weeks to brainstorm ideas leading to the following goals: develop the riverfront (Tennessee River), revitalize downtown, advance human relations, involve public education, create affordable housing, improve cultural facilities, increase job opportunities, and project a positive image/or the city. An immediate outcome, unstated but tangible nonetheless, was the civic cohesion that comes from diverse interests and individuals working, together toward common goals and public good.*

### **Public-Private Partnerships Hold the Key to a Sustainable Future**

If transparency and participation constitute two legs of the community-development stool, the third is partnerships that link the three main social sectors of government, business, and civil society consisting of nonprofit organizations and informal associations. The challenge of public-private partnerships is to overcome traditional rivalries, stereotypes, and prejudices, find a common language of dialogue, and to focus on a vision that offers mutual benefits in a win-win situation. A corollary assumes that no one sector can produce community sustainability alone, but rather that the integrated and complex nature of contemporary society requires partnerships in which flexibility, inclusiveness, and openness operate as dominant values.

In an address to a 1996 Heritage Tourism conference in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, NationsBank CEO Hugh McColl described what makes successful partnerships: 1) ensuring that the goal of the partnership makes sense to all involved including the community; 2) being inclusive when bringing partners to the table so that all appropriate perspectives and capabilities are represented; 3) avoiding duplication of efforts already under way by others; and 4) involving businesses that understand enlightened self-interest

and that private enterprise benefits when the community flourishes. McColl cited the example of Tupelo, Mississippi, where a 50-year-old community development foundation made up of public, private, religious, and community leaders transformed what had been one of the nation's most impoverished counties without substantial natural resources into the state's leader in terms of per capita income. Civic amenities resulting from its civic tradition of partnership include having the largest nonmetropolitan hospital in the nation and being the smallest city to boast residence of a full-time symphony. A combination of good race relations, commitment to education, and an aggressive approach to dealing with problems has garnered the Innovation in State and Local Government Award from the Ford Foundation and Harvard's Kennedy School of Government for Tupelo's public-private partnership.

Similar principles apply when governments, lending agencies, and NGOs undertake partnerships with the private sector on the international level: find out what programs already exist and build on them; avoid exaggerating what the private sector can do to affect positive change; don't expect businesses to act like charities but rather realize they exist to make money; avoid idle talk realizing that for entrepreneurs time is money; focus on the long term; keep organizations simple; stress transparency and accountability; acknowledge the interests and capacities of all the partners; and recognize and praise the efforts of participants.

#### *A World Bank Initiative in Angola Uses Partnerships to Spur Recovery*

*In Angola where the society is attempting to recover from decades of civil strife, the World Bank has initiated a project to increase the country's capacity to forge partnerships among the private sector, government, and NGOs to help plan, finance, and operate program to build infrastructure, increase training opportunities, enhance agricultural production, and market the country's natural, social, and cultural assets to potential investors. Under management of the Angola Economic Development Corporation, the initiative seeks to show how simplified, transparent, efficient, and effective procedures of obtaining services can promote community development. A goal is to bolster the capacity of small-scale, local contractors to undertake a wide variety of tasks that employ an expanded pool of trained labor. Crafting a development strategy that places a priority on small businesses helps further the*

*processes of decentralization and community empowerment. Moreover, it recognizes the fact that often the private sector is best suited to deliver public goods and services.*

*World Bank planners seek to strengthen ties between the private sector and the government, as well as between national, provincial, and local authorities. Development agencies and NGOs hope to build cooperation between the Angola government and private companies doing business there, including such international giants as Chevron, Texaco, Caterpillar, and Coca-Cola. When World Bank staff asked these businesses what development activities they had previously undertaken, responses tended to focus on short-term, charitable contributions to health or education. Efforts did not relate to the company's core business, capacities, or experiences, nor did they address their underlying motive to make money. Lacking involvement of the government and NGOs, previous development attempts tended to fizzle out and have minimal impact. The World Bank emphasis on public-private partnerships in Angola reflects a growing realization that sustainable community development occurs at the local level and requires shared commitments of resources and skills.*

## **The Devolution of Authority and Resources Promises to Spur Sustainable Community**

### **Development**

The forces of globalization on the one hand and the spread of democracy on the other have presented unprecedented challenges and opportunities for cities and regions to assume a greater share of responsibility for community development. In Latin America and Africa, the shift toward local solutions for local problems has already had tangible results that translate into greater community livability and civic engagement in the development process. National leaders face the challenge of letting go of authority and trusting in local authorities to plan and manage resources in a matter that involves citizens in making choices about infrastructure, environmental quality, health care, and education. Increasingly, planners and lenders recognize that devolution requires a transference of both responsibility *and* resources to tackle the complex task of urban revitalization, which characterizes so much of the world's development activity. A 1994 meeting of Latin American and Caribbean mayors in Washington, D.C., demonstrated the growing skills of local leaders, many of whom come from the private sector, to devise

and implement programs at the community level. Power sharing with the national government and automatic revenue transfers to fulfill new obligations have led these mayors to turn to the private sector for the efficient delivery of public services and to involve citizen participation in formulating programs and policies. Cities are learning that contracting out city services such as construction and garbage collection can produce outcomes that citizens perceive as getting value for their tax dollars and making them more willing to fulfill their tax obligations. Decentralization efforts must increase civic participation and build confidence that communities can improve their well-being. Of course, local participation and control does not mean that the central government no longer has responsibilities.

Devolution also characterizes the trend in the growing number of “megacities” to rely on neighborhood associations and resident associations to solve problems of environmental degradation and poverty. For example, in Hyderabad, India, the city helped residents form an association to be in charge of garbage bins. It appointed one person to go from door to door collecting refuse and then to deposit it in a central bin. The cost of \$.26 per family was shared between the city and association, smaller than what it would cost the municipality to operate the service door to door. Initial success has led to 170 neighborhood setting up resident associations to manage garbage removal. As is the case with any community-based program, success in one area such as sanitation increases the likelihood that residents will cooperate in other projects that better conditions in their neighborhood.

In the Ivory Coast, when opposition candidate Marvel Amondji campaigned for office in one of Abidjan’s municipalities, he concentrated on local issues, promising voters to raise more capital, improve sanitation and schools, and spur housing; His victory and subsequent success have served as an example for other leaders to follow, to portray themselves as service providers and differentiate themselves from a previous generation of corrupt, ineffectual, government . . . ; bureaucrats. Amondji hired workers to clean the streets, preached the virtues of sanitation, and carried out inspections of restaurants. He relocated vendors from a crime-infested and dirty area into a central market. To pay for these improvements he enforced taxes on small businesses, many of whom had never paid before. But people do not mind paying taxes if they see results. And, in Abidjan, Amondji managed to triple the municipal budget over a period of 18 months, demonstrating that reform candidates who respond to citizens’ voices can bring about a new

atmosphere of accountability and effective delivery of services.

### **Nonprofits and the Private Sector Have Taken on New Roles and Identities**

The growing number of NGOs (upwards of 800,000 nonprofits worldwide, according to management guru Peter Drucker) demonstrates that civil society participation in the development process can ensure continuity, public support, and transparency. Perfect to serve as mediators between the frequently short-term interests of city hall and the bottom-line obsession of businesses, nonprofits are ably suited to act as intermediaries, clearinghouses, catalysts for change, policy advocates, and technical assistance providers. Moreover, many nonprofits have shed their traditional persona as charities seeking handouts; for their own survival during a period of reduced philanthropy and government support, nonprofits are becoming more entrepreneurial and businesslike. They are dropping the confrontational style associated with the 1960s civil rights and environmental movements and adopting strategies of negotiation and arbitration as more appropriate to the public-private partnerships in which they find themselves working for a shared vision and common goals.

In the United States, private, nonprofit community development corporations draw on the strengths of all sectors to orchestrate the revitalization of inner cities and neighborhoods. Because of their hybrid nature—mixing academic experts with business leaders and philanthropic representatives— these nonprofits tend to be pragmatic, not polemical, innovative rather than dogmatic in their relations with the private sector and with government. Their capacity for grassroots mobilization and attention to the diverse interests of their constituencies make them effective impresarios of successful partnerships of government, business, community members, and other representatives of civil society.

The rest of the world also has turned to private nonprofit organizations, often to replace the failed welfare state in promoting development, protecting the environment, and giving expression to a wide variety of interests and voices. The nonprofit sector brings to the table the interests and concerns of the politically under-represented and brings new issues to public attention.

The counterpart of these hybrid nonprofits is the social entrepreneur, combining resourcefulness with eagerness to pursue opportunities not only to bolster the company's financial well-being but to contribute toward community development and sustainability. Social entrepreneurs redirect the private sector's talents at mobilizing resources, making contacts, and solving problems toward social ends. According to social entrepreneur Bill Drayton, whose organization Ashoka: Innovators for the Public seeks out people across the globe who are effecting positive change in critical areas of human needs, the globalization that has occurred since the end of the cold war requires societies to change their ways of thinking and acting.

Social entrepreneurs by their words and deeds create models for social adaptation. They combine the traits of visionaries and pragmatic problem-solvers with strong ethics and a flair for bold, innovative ideas that they see through to their implementation. Often, the key to their success comes from their understanding of and ability to capitalize on the cultural traditions and strengths of a community.

Convinced that businesses have a role to play in community sustainable development, the U.S.-based Social Venture Network, founded in 1987 and now with 400 members, lists as its objectives: social justice, community, cooperation, diversity, education, sustainability, and innovation. Its Urban Enterprise Initiative has selected five cities and regions in which to test its principles and methods. The business-sponsored Challenge 2000 is applying venture-capital models to California's Silicon Valley 10<sup>th</sup> graders to improve their skills so they can work in the area's booming high-technology industry when they grow up. Pairing business people, educators, and community-minded volunteers with 10 school districts, the program includes drawing up business plans to improve math and science literacy. Students are judged like a start-up company and held accountable in the form of test scores.

### **Using an Asset-Based, Not Problem-Driven, Approach Can Increase the Likelihood of Success**

Traditionally, efforts to improve the living conditions of the poor have adopted an approach that focuses on the community's problems and needs rather than their strengths, capacities, and assets. When most people think of impoverished neighborhoods a mental map of deprivation serves to represent the entire community—that is what they hear politicians and social workers discuss and what they see in the media.

This one-dimensional picture has spawned an industry of social-service providers who perceive the community in terms of the extent of its problems and needs. Tragically, residents themselves share this distorted, negative picture of their community and succumb to pessimism and apathy. Citizens in these situations become consumers of services rather than producers of solutions. It behooves them to emphasize their deprivation rather than contemplate the possibility that they have some of the tools to improve their well-being.

In such a situation the individual in need of assistance looks to outside funders and experts to make things better, ignoring and diminishing the capacity of those human bonds that exist in church groups and recreational clubs, for example, to serve as sources of strength and provide the social glue to hold the community together in the face of adversity. When a needs-based strategy prevails, the best residents can hope for is survival. Energies go toward maintaining a marginal status quo rather than contribute toward visioning future growth. The pervasive sense of hopelessness bars any possibility that the community will have the confidence and desire to participate in shaping its own destiny.

The alternative to this bleak picture is a capacity-building strategy that identifies and brings into play those skills, assets, and human networks often overlooked and untapped by agencies seeking to improve living conditions. When the strategy adopted assumes an attitude of “seeing the glass as half-full rather than half empty,” decades of feeling inferior and without value can give way to a future where community members participate in their own improvement. A new mental map contains landmarks of opportunity, possibility, and innovative solutions to the challenge of poverty. Community members must participate in generating this map and use it to formulate a development process that builds on their human, cultural, and social capital present in individuals, informal associations, and institutions.

An asset-based approach to development *must* be driven from the bottom-up in order to instill a sense of empowerment and self-sufficiency with community members designing and implementing improvement strategies; it must be comprehensive in cutting across and integrating bureaucratically distinct areas of social services, crime prevention, health, job creation, and housing; and it must begin with an accurate analysis of indigenous talents, resources, and networks. According to this approach, benefits only result

when community members take an active hand in the process and assume a sense of ownership of the development agenda. The role of the outside expert is advisory and providing guidance.

For example, on the outskirts of Lima the sprawling shantytown known as Villa El Salvador has witnessed an asset-based approach that builds on the residents' pre-Hispanic traditions of solidarity. Begun in 1970 during a time of rampant inflation, what started as a food program of communal kitchens pooled resources and bought food in large quantities at lower prices. Over decades of service and with international assistance, the result has been the construction of more than 50,000 houses, provision of essential food requirements, basic health care for the entire population, almost 90 percent enrollment in primary and secondary education, reduced illiteracy and infant mortality rates, the creation of arable land, and establishment of an industrial park to support a growing number of microenterprises. The goal has been to move people from being recipients of aid to small-scale entrepreneurs producing handicrafts and other enterprises. At Villa El Salvador, cultural values of solidarity have served as sources of self-esteem that has produced a shift in residents' attitudes toward the rest of society, themselves, and their families.

Proponents of an assets-based approach to development, John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight, authors of *Building Communities from the Inside Out* (Chicago: Acta Publications, 1993), do not, however, suggest that communities don't need outside help or that they can accomplish everything on their own. Rather, they stress the point that community participation can be a powerful tool of development. It requires a strong internal focus that capitalizes on building relationships between and among local residents, associations, and institutions. A test case in Chicago has demonstrated the wisdom of investing in inner-city neighborhoods. Banks found that customers actually had a more reliable record of repayment than wealthier communities. If investment returns to neighborhoods that have suffered from decades of being ignored by lending institutions, communities that adopt an asset-based approach can also take advantage of the density and central location of inner cities, which is why people settled in cities to begin with.

*Providence, Rhode Island, Adopts an Arts-Based Approach to Development* :

*Twenty years ago, Providence experienced a reduction in population of 30 percent and an extreme contraction of its economic life. The city's mills and warehouses stood vacant and derelict, dinosaurs evoking a long-gone period of vitality. Yet under the leadership of Mayor Vincent "Buddy" Cianci, millions of dollars have gone into restoring downtown landmarks, as-part of a campaign to bring forth a renaissance in Providence's fortunes. The city looked to its art and natural assets to provide the road-map for downtown revitalization*

*Arts played a major role in this strategy: the city gained federal designation as an arts and entertainment empowerment zone, which used tax incentives to encourage property owners to convert abandoned buildings into housing. To attract artists to live and work downtown. inexpensive loft space and tax incentives to sell their work enticed an active community of artists, many of whom had remained in the city after studying at Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design.*

*With help from the mayor, a nonprofit organization purchased derelict buildings and converted them into artist apartments, studios, galleries, theater, and dance space. The presence of artists downtown supported an assortment of small businesses and brought visitors to the area. The 1993 decision by the state to restore the Woonasquatucket River that urban planners of the 1950s paved over with a six-lane highway adds to the growing sense of place that links Providence to its history, particularly its connections to the river and sea. By using city assets that already exist—Providence's natural setting and built environment—planners have succeeded in attracting private investment. For every dollar the state invested in historic preservation, an additional \$29 of related spending helped boost the state's coffers.*

### **Using Culture and Heritage Assets to Spur Community Development**

The potential to use cultural strategies to revitalize urban areas across the globe is enormous, given the World Bank's estimation that 80 percent of future growth will occur in towns and cities— where the concentration of citizens in renovated historic neighborhoods can sustain businesses and a host of cultural amenities. When cultural activity assumes the form of historic preservation or a vibrant artist community, rich and varied opportunities emerge for employment and civic pride. Often the restoration of a building

communicates to local residents that something of value exists in their community, something that others deem worth investing in. This encourages residents to view their own condition in a positive light, that they, too, have something of value to cherish and care for. Moreover, cultural heritage preservation can awaken a spirit of community connectedness, provide fertile ground for small-scale enterprises that attract innovative entrepreneurs, and nurture the revival of traditional building techniques and craft skills.

Because culture contributes to societal harmony, a nation's educational system should use it as a tool to build individual and group confidence and identity. Culture provides the context within which humans attempt to understand and manage the inevitable change and challenges they encounter in life. The traditional humanistic argument that seeing Shakespeare or listening to a symphony expands the range of human possibility through contact with concrete products of human creativity holds true for an expanded view of culture as patterns of living together. Businesses that rely on innovation and creativity recognize this need and, hence, gravitate to people and places with strong identities, where the cultural environment is high on the social agenda.

International campaigns such as those waged by UNESCO to preserve the world's cultural and natural heritage have spread awareness of the fragility of the world's inheritance. Preservation movements in the United States and Europe have focused increasing attention on the potential of cultural assets to provide enrichment and spur creative solutions to current problems. Like the world's finite supply of rainforests or fresh water, the survival of cultural resources requires society's active participation in balancing their sustainable use to ensure their preservation for future generations.

**Conclusion: An Agenda of Innovative Intervention Based on Participation and Partnership Can Translate Cultural Assets into Sustainable Community Change**

Over the last decade, the entire world has experienced a sea change in attitudes toward the public role in economic and social development. Short-term, narrowly focused solutions of the past have been recognized to be incapable of bringing about the kind of sustainable growth that communities so desperately need. With the end of the cold war and the spread of democracy, the black-and-white polarity

of capitalism and socialism has given way to a more sophisticated appreciation of social dynamics and the absolute necessity to factor community ideals and traditions into development strategies.

In Latin America, Africa, the United States, Europe, and the former Soviet Union, greater emphasis on the local level stems from admission that the central government cannot solve all problems facing its citizens. At the same time as authority is shifting to the territory where development needs to occur, planners are realizing that partnerships with nongovernmental organizations can provide the catalytic spark that energizes the community to take ownership of its own betterment. Maintaining a positive attitude that places great value on human potential to solve problems creates the “can-do” environment in which sustainable outcomes emerge as testaments to the capacity of humans to take charge of their own destiny and effect lasting positive change. Any development agenda that hopes to accomplish these ends must start with the three fundamental principles of transparency, participation, and partnership. The examples cited above demonstrate the wisdom of this approach, which holds out hope and promise for improving the conditions for millions of people across the globe.

## The New Economy

### Characteristics and Challenges

#### *Creative Cities: Power for the New Economy*

*Resource Paper by Partners for Livable Communities*

1) Characteristic: The new economy has reduced the power of factors that favored central locations and strengthened the centrifugal forces in metropolitan areas.

**Challenge: Find ways to hold and attract residents, workers and businesses.**

2) Characteristic: The new economy requires a well-educated, skilled and adaptable workforce.

**Challenge: Strengthen K-12 school systems and develop and strengthen the educational Institutions that respond directly to the needs of new economy employers.**

3) Characteristic: The new economy has enhanced the significance of quality of life factors in determining where new economy enterprises will locate.

**Challenge: Control negative factors such as crime and blight and enhance potential positive factors such as cultural Institutions and diverse and Interesting architecture.**

4) Characteristic: The new economy is global.

**Challenge: Support and expand opportunities to link efficiently with the national and International economies.**

5) Characteristic: The new economy demands a new infrastructure.

**Challenge: Provide state-of-the-art digital infrastructure while upgrading traditional infrastructure.**

6) Characteristic: The new economy is regional and not divided neatly among local jurisdictions.

**Challenge: Develop ways to bridge the divide separating them from the suburban areas of metropolitan regions.**

7) Characteristic: The new economy puts a premium on speed, responsiveness and flexibility.

**Challenge: Reform local institutions and processes that may be too slow and rigid to take advantage of new economy opportunities.**

8) Characteristic: The new economy is causing a radical restructuring in the composition of the business community.

**Challenge: Identify and engage effectively with representatives of the sectors most important for the future of the community's economy.**

9) Characteristic: The new economy makes clusters and networks within the local economy especially important for innovation and growth.

**Challenge: Find ways to foster and support productive interrelationships in the local economy.**

10) Characteristic: The new economy increases the importance of higher education and research institutions for local economic development.

**Challenge: Work with higher education and research institutions to develop good working relationships.**

11) Characteristic: The new economy threatens to leave behind those who were at the bottom of the ladder in the old economy.

**Challenge: Make sure all of our residents have the opportunity to succeed in the new economy.**

12) Characteristic: The new economy is constantly changing at a rate unmatched in previous history.

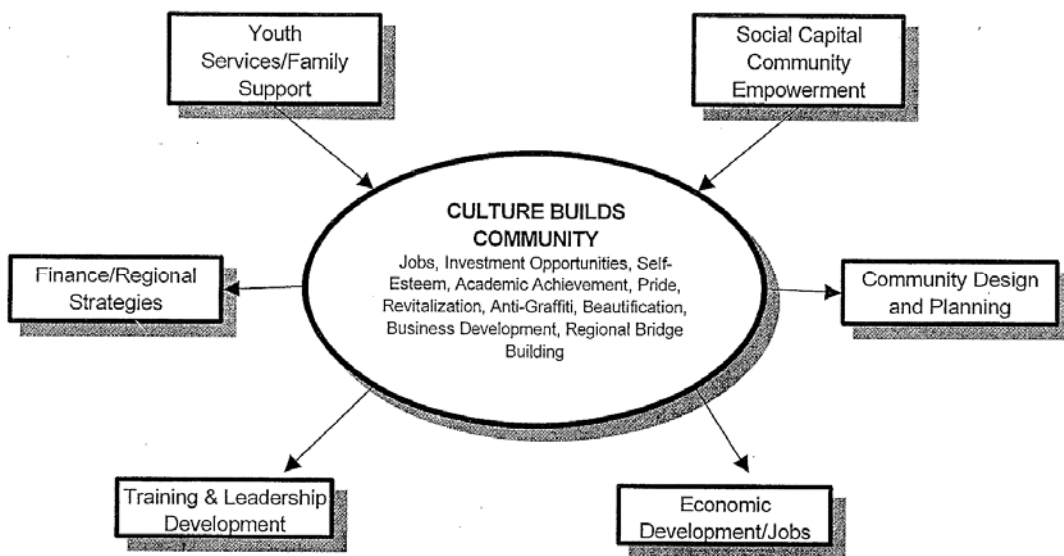
**Challenge: Develop the capacity to keep abreast of change and maintain a clear understanding of the implications for their own prospects.**

## Culture Builds Communities

Putting Culture and Amenities to Work for Community Betterment:  
“Going to Scale”

### SIX GATEWAYS FOR CULTURE AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Partners seeks to put culture and amenities to work for community betterment through focusing upon six key issues:



1. Economic Development
2. Youth Development/Non-traditional learning
3. Social/Human Development (at the neighborhood advancement scale)
4. Training and Leadership Development
5. Community Design and Planning
6. Finance

## **Introduction**

Cultural assets come in all sizes, types and areas of interest — from neighborhood based arts organizations to high-profile regional museums and performing arts centers. They can be public or private entities, and can be found in church basements, abandoned stores or glamorous architect-designed buildings. While cultural assets are located in nearly every neighborhood, they are often overlooked when plans for human and physical revitalization are being laid. This oversight is particularly detrimental to individuals working to improve the economic and social condition of neighborhoods because cultural assets can be powerful partners to leverage physical improvements and create a climate of investment, to provide important services to at risk youngsters and their families, to farther efforts of multicultural understanding, and to become the catalyst for regional cooperation.

## **When Culture Builds Communities is Most Effective**

There are six primary areas where cultural-community strategies are exceptionally effective; youth/families, community building/community empowerment, local economics/jobs, race/ethnicity, revitalization/beautification, and regional cooperation/sharing.

### **1. Economics/Jobs**

- Cultural resources can be marshaled to complement and underscore creative economic initiatives.
- Cultural organizations are an excellent place to learn job skills and receive job training.

### **2. Youth/Families**

- Cultural processes work as a groundbreaker and foundation-layer for addressing basic needs and skills.
- Arts and cultural activities are excellent education tools that transmit information in new ways.

### **3. Social Capital/Community Empowerment**

- Cultural resources are an effective means of strengthening community, Race/Ethnicity

- Cultural resources are bridge-builders that translate information about culture and ethnicity and reduce prejudice.

#### 4. Training and Leadership Development

#### 5. Community Design/Planning

- Neighborhood and “Mainstreet” revitalization and beautification
- Arts organizations are a logical place to turn for facade improvements, landscaping and other beautification efforts.
- The presence and number of arts and cultural organizations in a neighborhood are known to strengthen the revitalization process.

#### 6. Regional Cooperation/Finance

- Arts and culture, both their programs and their institutions, are an excellent catalyst for bringing disparate groups together with Metro Financing Strategies.

Some Examples of How Culture Builds Communities

## **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INVESTMENTS**

### Youth Skills Critical Intervention/Crime Reduction

Theater programs for youth offenders train young people at risk as peer educators by helping them write, produce and perform for other teens in their own plays about pressing social issues.

*Benefits:* Reduced youth crime, violence, and recidivism  
Deters young people from drugs and gangs  
Creates safe havens and connects young people with caring adults  
Teaches problem solving, critical thinking, and conflict resolution skills

*Case Studies:* Break the Cycle Teen Theatre Troupe, Longwood, CO  
Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, Pittsburgh, PA  
Perkins Center for the Arts, Voorhees, NJ

### Cultural Entrepreneurship

Training for young artists both hones their artistic skills and teaches them how to market and sell their artwork.

*Benefits:* Increases income and strengthens employability

*Case Studies:* Gallery 37, Chicago IL  
Green Chair Project, Minneapolis, MN  
Ya-Ya, New Orleans, LA

## **RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY BUILDING**

### Community-Based Efforts

Arts and history programs in historic New England mill towns and elsewhere teach residents about their history, commemorate it in woven form, and work actively to preserve local heritage as a resource for both tourism and townspeople.

*Benefits:* Increases sense of belonging, pride, and identity  
Motivates people to become active in their own community

*Case Studies:* Appalshop, Whitesburg, KY  
Mill Tapestry Project, Newport, NH  
Stageworks Touring Company, Glasboro, NJ

### Multicultural Projects

A resource and arts center focused on Latino culture that educates a larger community about this rich tradition, provides Latino people with a venue where they can experience their heritage, and encourages local development efforts.

*Benefits:* Improves understanding between ethnic groups and preserves cultural legacies

*Case Studies:* Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, San Antonio, TX  
Historyonics Theatre Company, St. Louis, MO  
Unity in Community Celebration, Tallahassee, FL

## **PHYSICAL INVESTMENTS**

### **Revitalizing Neighborhoods into Cultural Areas**

Revitalized historic buildings and theaters create new African-American heritage zones and generate new low-income housing closely linked with these cultural resources.

*Benefits:* Revitalization  
Adds to tax base  
Provides jobs  
Improves image  
Leverages local economic development  
Draws businesses  
Generates heritage tourism

*Case Studies:* Grand Center Revitalization, St. Louis, MO  
Black Economic Union of Greater Kansas City, Kansas City, MO  
Project Row Houses, Houston, TX

### **Revitalizing Existing Cultural Facilities**

Abandoned historical school buildings, refurbished as cultural centers, emphasize multiculturalism, draw tourism, and leverage other improvements in an empty downtown neighborhood.

*Benefits:* Revitalization  
Generates tourism  
Leverages other development  
Improves image  
Draws businesses

*Case Studies:* Artists Collaborative, Dayton, OH  
Social and Public Arts Resource Center, Los Angeles, CA

### **Artists Housing**

Old buildings are rehabilitated to create affordable housing and work space for low-income artists selected because of their commitment to community action.

*Benefits:* Creates housing and commercial space  
Spurs local revitalization  
*Case Studies:* Artspace Projects, Inc., St. Paul, MN  
One Artists' Row, Chicago, IL  
Portsmouth Community Development Group, Portsmouth, VA

## **INCOME-GENERATING INVESTMENTS**

### **Festivals and Animation Efforts**

Annual blues festivals, created by local community development corporations, draw thousands of people and have spawned a theme park, a living history village, and an arts center.

*Benefits:* Generates tourism  
Improves image and builds a cohesive community

*Case Studies:* Cultural Collaborative Jamaica, Queens, NY  
Mississippi Delta Blues fest, Greenville, MS  
Spoleto Festival, Charleston, SC

### **Selling Arts and Crafts**

Homeless shelters outfitted with art studios enable homeless and low-income people to create and sell artwork, generate Christmas cards or participate in an art loan program to local corporations.

*Benefits:* Creates jobs and revenue

*Case Studies:* Hospitality House, San Francisco, CA  
Peoples Housing, Chicago, IL