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**SURVEY RESULTS: PARTICIPATION-BUILDING ACTIVITIES**

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This appendix examines the approaches organizations use to build participation. Following the sequence of steps involved in the participation-building process, we begin by looking at the goals of the participation-building efforts, including how organizations define increasing participation and how increasing participation relates to organizational purpose and mission. We then turn to how institutions select target populations and go about collecting information about current and potential participants. This information-gathering process identifies both the reasons why individuals may be attracted to the arts and the various obstacles that might stand in the way of their participation. Using that knowledge, organizations set out to design tactics to help people overcome the obstacles; they then allocate the resources needed to implement those tactics.

In the following discussion, we report on how the institutions we surveyed approached each of these tasks. We first look at these participation-building activities for all organizations, then compare differences across organizations with similar primary purposes.

**SETTING GOALS**

Given that almost all of the organizations we interviewed noted that resource constraints (in terms of dollars, staff, and time) affected their participation activities, we expected that they might limit their participation-building efforts to one or at most two of the three goals for participation: broadening participation, diversifying it, and deepening it. However, approximately half of the organizations responded “very much” when asked how much they focused on each of these goals. This pattern also held when the survey results were tabulated by type of organization—i.e., those focused principally on the canons of specific art forms, those focused principally on improving their communities using art as a vehicle, and those focused principally on engaging individuals in the creative process and training new artists (see Table B.1).

**Table B.1**  
**Relative Emphasis on Participation Goals Reported by the**  
**Three Types of Organizations**

Participation-Building Goal	Type of Organization		
	Canon- Focused	Community- Focused	Creativity- Focused
Broaden	4.3	4.4	4.1
Diversify	4.3	4.4	4.6
Deepen	4.1	4.3	4.4

NOTE: Survey asked about extent to which organization focuses on this goal. 1 = not at all; 2 = little; 3 = fair amount; 4 = much; 5 = very much.

This pattern contrasts sharply with what the Funds' staff told us about the participation goals of their grantees, however. According to the Funds, there are clear and often sharp differences in the priorities the different types of organizations place on the three participation goals (see Table B.2). The results in this case show that canon-focused organizations are much more likely than the other two types of organizations to stress both broadening and diversifying their audience. The vast majority of creativity-focused organizations (86 percent) gave the greatest effort to deepening participation. Community-focused organizations fall between these two extremes: Half of them concentrated on deepening involvement, about a third on broadening participation, and the rest on diversifying participation.

We are not sure what accounts for this discrepancy. It may be that self-reports do not reflect the priorities organizations actually attach to the different goals, or that organizations do not differentiate clearly between these goals, considering them all part of participation building. It may also be that the organizations are simply unwilling to assign a higher priority to one goal because they are aware that the Funds values each goal equally.

**Table B.2**  
**Funds' Evaluation of Emphasis Organizations Give to**  
**Participation Goals**  
**(in percentage)**

Participation-Building Goal	Type of Organization		
	Canon- Focused	Community- Focused	Creativity- Focused
Broaden	44	31	7
Diversify	40	19	7
Deepen	16	50	86

## DEFINING SERVICE COMMUNITIES

In addition to deciding what form of increasing participation they seek, organizations must identify whom they want to target. This process typically requires two steps: defining their service communities and identifying the specific groups within those communities that will be the target of their participation efforts.

Table B.3 shows how the institutions surveyed defined their service areas. Almost 75 percent defined their market areas geographically—perhaps not terribly surprising since it is much easier to identify and serve participants located close to the institution. Indeed, some of the institutions (such as those in rural areas or that define their service community as an entire state or region) stressed the difficulties they face in attempting to serve such broad geographic areas.

**Table B.3**  
**Definition of Service Areas by the Three Types of Organizations**

Definition	Type of Organization			All
	Canon-Focused	Community-Focused	Creativity-Focused	
Geographic	3.8	4.1	4.0	4.0
Demographic	3.3	4.1	3.7	3.7
Behavior	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.4

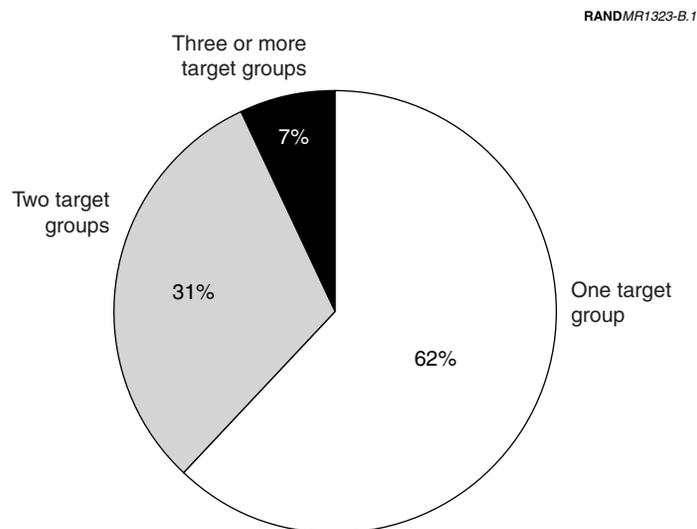
NOTE: Survey asked about extent to which organization defines service areas in this way. 1 = not at all; 2 = little; 3 = fair amount; 4 = much; 5 = very much.

## IDENTIFYING TARGET GROUPS

However an arts organization defines its service area, it still needs to determine which groups within that area it wants to target for its outreach efforts. As the participation model suggests, the more closely an organization can target its outreach efforts, the more successful (and efficient) its outreach efforts are likely to be. There are several different criteria organizations might use in selecting their target populations. They might, for example, select populations currently underserved or that are rapidly growing. Or they might base their choice on the nature of their current activities and how closely they align with different groups. Although we did not ask respondents how they identified the interests of their target groups, we did ask them *whether* they targeted their participation-building efforts and, if so, how they defined those target groups.

Only 84 percent of the organizations claimed they had identified a target population when directly asked that question. However, a thorough review of the survey instruments suggested that almost all of the respondents (93 percent) did in fact target their outreach efforts in some way. One reason for this apparent discrepancy may be that almost 20 percent of the respondents reported that their target populations varied depending on the performance or exhibit being presented. Almost 50 percent of these organizations relied exclusively on an event-specific targeting strategy.

Among those organizations that identified target populations, some identified a single group, some two groups, and others three or more (see Figure B.1). When asked how they identified target groups, almost 75 percent responded that they identified them demographically—that is, they defined their target populations in terms of specific age or ethnic groups (see Table B.4). Twenty-eight percent of the institutions identified their target populations geographically—for example, the residents of the state or of a particular neighborhood—and 28 percent defined their target populations in terms of interest in a specific art form. Finally, 20 percent varied their targeting strategy with the type of program they were sponsoring.



**Figure B.1—Proportion of Organizations with One or More Target Groups**

**Table B.4**  
**Organizations' Definitions of Their Target Population**

Strategy	Percentage of Target Population <sup>a</sup>
Demographic	73
Age	43
Ethnicity	54
Income	14
Behavioral	28
Geographic	28
Varies with program	20
Other	3

<sup>a</sup>Since many organizations identify more than one target audience, the figures here sum to more than 100 percent. Also, 7 percent of the organizations reported they did not have a target group.

Table B.5 compares the targeting strategies of the three different types of institutions. By and large, there does not appear to be much difference across the three types. All three are most likely to define their target groups demographically and about equally likely to use one of the three other targeting strategies. The greater frequency with which community-focused organizations use all three of the approaches seems more likely to stem from the fact that these organizations average somewhat more (1.6) target populations than the canon- (1.2) or creativity-focused (1.3) organizations.

Although we did not specifically ask the organizations about the predisposition of their target groups, it is interesting that so few defined these groups in terms of behavior.

**Table B.5**  
**Definition of Target Populations by the Three Types of Organizations (in percentage)**

Definition	Type of Organization		
	Canon-Focused	Community-Focused	Creativity-Focused
Geographic	23	31	21
Demographic	54	83	71
Behavior	19	28	21
Program-specific	19	19	14

## GATHERING INFORMATION

Having identified its target populations, an organization needs to gather information about those populations in order to design strategies to influence their participation behavior. As noted in Chapter Three, which discusses the participation model, individuals fall along a continuum from those not interested in the arts to those truly committed to the arts. This distinction is important, because the types of barriers that organizations face in their efforts to increase participation will differ for different groups of individuals.

To gain a better understanding of the organizations' knowledge of their participants, we asked them how much they know about current participants and target populations, how they obtained this information, and what they viewed as the major motivations for and barriers to increasing participation for each of these groups.

### How Much Do They Know?

As might be expected, the organizations knew considerably more about their current participants than their target populations (see Table B.6). Although almost two-thirds of them knew "very much" or "much" about their current participants, only about one-third knew an equivalent amount about their target population. Conversely, close to one-quarter knew little or nothing at all about their target populations, whereas less than 5 percent knew little or nothing about current participants. The most likely reason for this difference is that it is much easier to get information about current participants than about target populations. Contact with current participants is typically direct and often repeated. Most target groups are chosen specifically *because* they are not currently involved with the institution.

**Table B.6**

**Assessments of Levels of Knowledge of Current Participants and Target Populations by the Three Types of Organizations**

Group	Type of Organization		
	Canon-Focused	Community-Focused	Creativity-Focused
Current participants	3.8	3.7	4.2
Target population	3.2	3.2	3.5

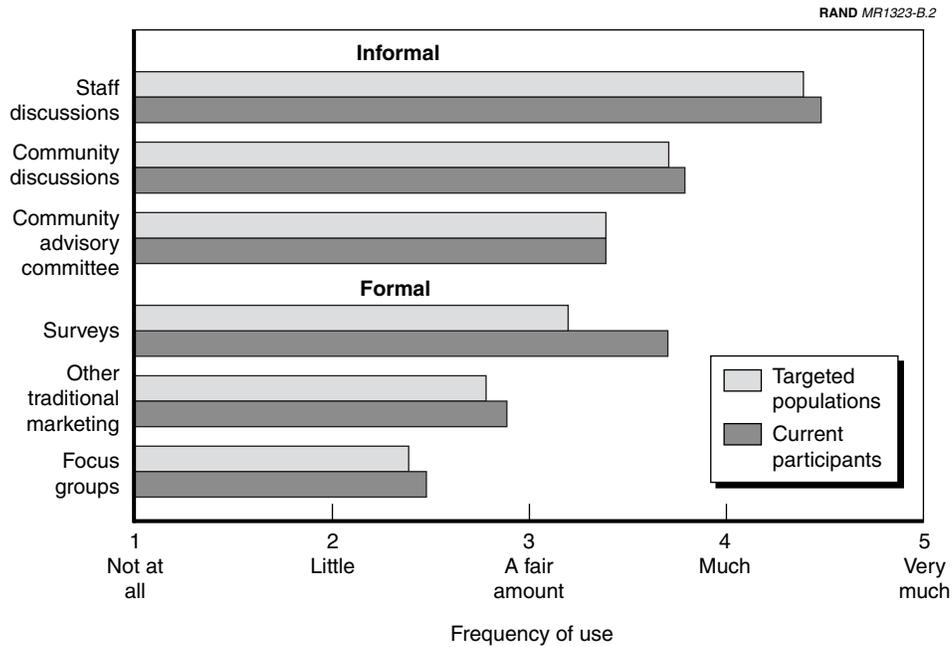
NOTE: Survey asked about extent to which organization is knowledgeable about this group. 1 = not at all; 2 = little; 3 = fair amount; 4 = much; 5 = very much.

All three types of organizations knew more about their current participants than about their target populations. However, creativity-focused organizations knew more about both groups than did canon- and community-focused organizations. This difference is consistent with the level of involvement required by creativity-focused institutions and the greater involvement they tend to have with their communities—a point demonstrated previously.

### How Do Organizations Gather Information?

We also asked the organizations about their use of several informal and formal techniques to gather information. The informal techniques were discussions with staff, advisory committees, and community members; the formal techniques were surveys, focus groups, and other traditional marketing means. Figure B.2 compares the frequency with which these techniques were used for current participants and target populations.

The organizations were much more likely to use informal than formal techniques to collect information. Each of the three informal methods was used more frequently than any of the formal methods. Although less systematic, these informal methods are undoubtedly less costly than the formal methods.



**Figure B.2—Use of Informal and Formal Techniques for Gathering Information on Participation**

In addition, the organizations may feel more comfortable using informal rather than formal methods because they are more familiar with the former.

Staff discussions were the most frequently used way to obtain information about participants and were also likely to be the least expensive in terms of dollars and staff time. Despite its cost advantage, however, this technique may introduce a selectivity problem in that staff discussions will be directly influenced by staff impressions of and interactions with individuals who may or may not be typical of the wider populations they are thought to represent.

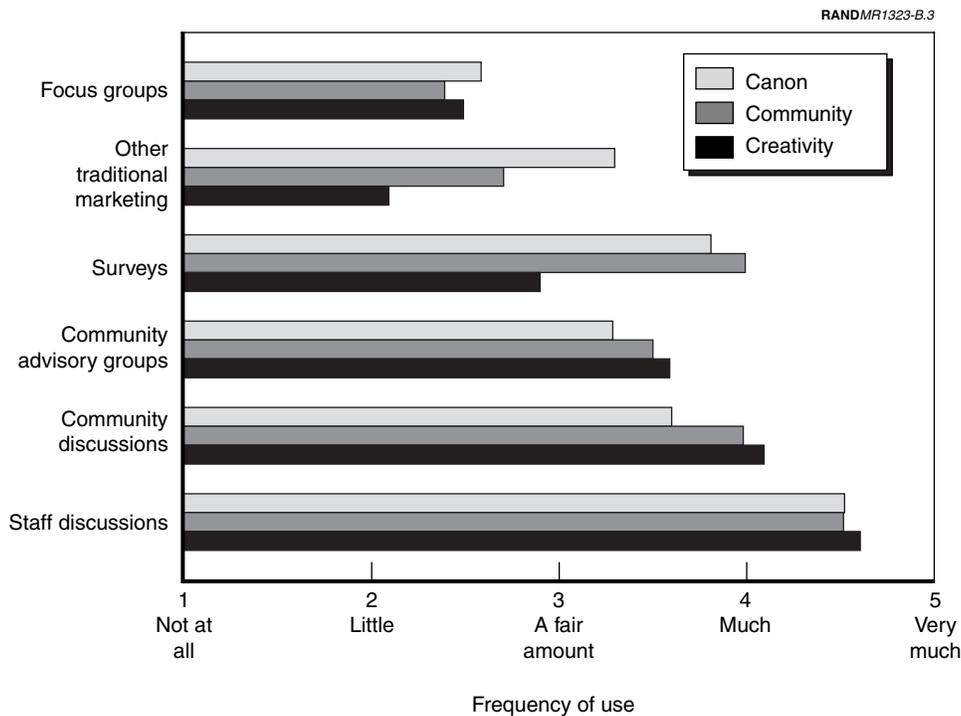
Among the formal methods, surveys were used most frequently; however, they were used considerably more often to gather information about current participants than about target populations. This difference may reflect the fact that it is easier and less costly to identify and survey a sample of people already in contact with the organization than a sample of the population the organization is trying to reach.

Figure B.3 shows how information-gathering techniques varied by type of organization. To clarify the patterns here, we report the results only for current participants. The ways in which the organizations gather information about target populations were essentially the same as those for current participants except that each technique was used at a somewhat lower level.

There are several patterns worthy of note here:

- All three types of organizations rely more frequently on staff discussions than on any other technique.
- Creativity-focused organizations consistently rely more on informal than formal techniques and do so at a higher rate than the two other types of organizations.
- Canon- and community-focused organizations make extensive use of surveys to find out about their current participants.
- Canon-focused organizations are somewhat more likely than community-focused organizations and much more likely than creativity-focused organizations to use the other traditional marketing approaches.

The fact that organizations vary in how they collect information about participants reflects their different characteristics. Creativity-focused organizations take a more hands-on approach to participants than do canon- or community-focused organizations. Thus, they may well have more direct and detailed knowledge of their participants than do the other organizations. Canon-focused organizations, however, often have the resources to employ formal surveys and other traditional marketing techniques.



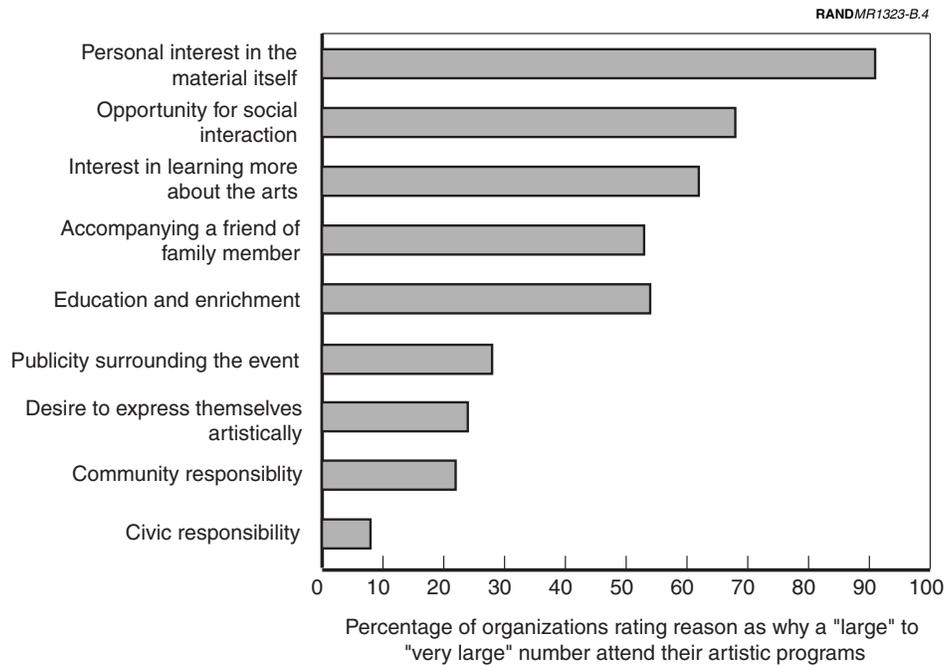
**Figure B.3—Techniques Used by the Three Types of Organizations to Gather Information About Current Participants**

### What Do the Organizations Know About Motivations?

Finally, we asked the organizations what they knew about their participants and target populations. We first examine their understanding of the motivations of their current participants;<sup>1</sup> we then look at their responses to questions about the major barriers to increasing the participation of both current participants and target populations.

Each organization was asked, How many of your participants are involved in your organization's activities for these reasons? and provided nine reasons to rank on a scale of 1 to 5. Over half of the organizations cited five primary reasons that motivated either a "very large" or a "large" number of their current participants (see Figure B.4).

<sup>1</sup>It is important to note that the motivations for and obstacles to participation discussed in this and the subsequent section are based on the responses of organizations, not individuals.



**Figure B.4—Reasons Organizations Identified for Why People Participate in the Arts**

They ranked the following reasons as the most important:

- **Personal interest in the material itself.** Over 90 percent said that either a “very large” or a “large” number of their participants were attracted to their programs because of their intrinsic interest in the material being presented. This finding seems to underscore our behavioral model’s assertion that current participants in the arts are already interested in and predisposed toward the arts.
- **Opportunity for social interaction.** Approximately 70 percent said that a “very large” or a “large” number of their participants were motivated by the opportunity that participation provided to enjoy the company of others.
- **Interest in learning more about the arts.** Over 60 percent reported that at least a large number of their participants were attracted by their desire to learn more about the arts. This response, which is related to the personal interest motivation described above, underscores the notion that arts participants not only find the material interesting but want to know more about it.
- **Accompanying a friend or family member.** Almost 55 percent said that a “large” to a “very large” number of individuals participated because of their ties to someone else who had made the decision to participate.

- **Education and enrichment.** About 55 percent reported that a “very large” or “large” number of those who participated in their activities did so because they wanted to expose their family members to the arts. Presumably because the arts provide an enriching experience for them, they wanted to provide that experience to others. Note that although this motivation is related to accompanying a friend or family member, there is an important distinction. In the former case, the decision to participate is made by the friend or family member who invited the participant; in the latter case, the participant makes the decision.

Although these five reasons stand out, they were not the only reasons cited as motivating participants. About 25 percent of the organizations reported that a “very large” or “large” number of their participants were attracted by the “desire to express themselves artistically” or by the publicity surrounding their programs. Civic and community responsibilities were cited less frequently as reasons for participation.

Table B.7 shows how the responses to these motivation questions varied by type of organization. Although there are more similarities than differences evident in this table, three points are noteworthy:

- All three types of organizations reported that the foremost motivation of their participants is personal interest in the artistic material itself.
- Creativity-focused organizations were much more likely than their counterparts to report that their participants are motivated by a desire to express themselves artistically and to learn about the art form.

**Table B.7**  
**Ratings of Participants’ Motivations by the Three Types of Organizations**

Motivations	Type of Organization		
	Canon-Focused	Community-Focused	Creativity-Focused
Personal interest	4.5	4.5	4.7
Social experience	3.9	3.9	3.6
Learn about art	3.8	3.6	4.4
Invited by family/friends	3.6	3.8	3.6
Education and enrichment	3.5	3.5	3.8
Publicity	3.0	3.2	2.4
Express self	2.6	2.8	4.1
Community	2.3	2.9	2.9
Civic duty	2.2	2.2	2.4

NOTE: Survey asked about the number of participants motivated by these factors. 1 = almost none; 2 = a small number; 3 = a fair number; 4 = a large number; 5 = a very large number.

- Compared to their counterparts, creativity-focused organizations were much less likely to report that their participants were motivated to participate as a result of the publicity surrounding the organization and its activities.

### What Do the Organizations Know About Barriers to Participation?

We asked the organizations we interviewed about the potential importance of 15 separate barriers to individuals increasing their participation. In presenting the results, we have grouped these barriers into four general categories. Chapter Three discusses three of them: perceptual, practical, and experience-based barriers. We included a fourth—personal circumstances—which is often mentioned in the literature on participation. This category includes lack of leisure time and preference for other leisure activities.

Table B.8 provides the results. The higher the number shown, the stronger the barrier it poses to current nonparticipants, according to the respondents. The barriers are defined as follows:

- **Perceptual barriers:** (1) the nature of the art or art form does not appeal; (2) it is hard to connect with the meaning or message of the work; (3) would feel uncomfortable; (4) perceptions of elitism associated with the art form or organization.
- **Personal circumstances:** (1) difficult to make time; (2) rather spend leisure time in other ways; (3) cannot find anyone to go with; (4) friends or family would not understand interest.
- **Practical barriers:** (1) childcare problems; (2) organization is not accessible; (3) not sure what the organization does; (4) hours of operation are inconvenient; (5) location is not safe; (6) costs too much.
- **Prior experiences:** The individuals have not enjoyed their prior experience with the particular art form.

In discussing the results of Table B.8, we compare the findings first for current participants and then for target populations. We also report the average scores for each category of reasons.<sup>2</sup> The two most important obstacles to increasing participation that organizations identified both for current participants and for target populations are not related to participants' prior knowledge of, attitudes toward, or experience with the arts, but rather to their personal circumstances.

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<sup>2</sup>Once again, it is important to note that these results are based on the responses of organizations, not individuals.

**Table B.8**  
**Organizations' Assessments of Barriers to Participation**

Barrier	Current Participants	Target Population	Difference
<b>Perceptual</b>			
No appeal	2.11	2.94	0.83
Hard to connect	1.93	2.66	0.73
Uncomfortable	1.78	3.08	1.30
Elitist	1.74	2.69	0.95
Subtotal average	1.88	2.84	0.95
<b>Personal circumstances</b>			
Not enough time	3.09	3.46	0.37
Other leisure activities	2.65	3.52	0.87
No one to go with	1.75	2.36	0.61
Wouldn't understand interest	1.39	1.93	0.54
Subtotal average	2.22	2.82	0.60
<b>Practical</b>			
Childcare problems	2.44	2.88	0.44
Inaccessibility	2.16	2.85	0.69
Not sure what organization does	2.00	3.13	1.13
Hours inconvenient	1.64	1.81	0.17
Location unsafe	1.70	2.09	0.39
Costs too much	1.80	2.48	0.68
Subtotal average	1.96	2.54	0.58
Prior experience	1.66	2.15	0.49

NOTE: Survey asked about importance of barrier. 1 = not at all; 2 = little; 3 = fair amount; 4 = much; 5 = very much.

Specifically, the organizations reported that both current and potential participants are very busy and cannot find the time to participate in the arts as much as they might like. Moreover, the arts must compete with a host of other potential leisure activities for participants' time.

It is interesting to note that these two items are perceived as more of a barrier to target populations than to current participants—despite the fact that there is no reason to assume a priori that current participants have more free time than target populations do. Indeed, the fact that competing leisure time activities are viewed as a significantly greater barrier for potential than for current participants strongly suggests that this difference may be as much attributable to different inclinations toward the arts as to free time per se.

This difference in preferences is revealed most clearly by the fact that current participants are, of course, already involved in the arts and target populations are not. It is also suggested, as noted above, by the target populations' greater attraction to other leisure activities. What remains unclear, however, is whether

this difference is due to prior negative arts experiences among the target groups or to a more general unfamiliarity with what the arts have to offer.

In this context, it is instructive to compare the difference between the scores for current participants and target populations on the individual items in the table. In every case, the respondents viewed these items as posing more of a barrier to target populations than to current participants. Moreover, prior experience with the arts is not a particularly important barrier to either group; nor is the difference between these groups large. By contrast, the two measures showing the largest differences between the two groups—would feel uncomfortable and not sure what the organization does—both appear to be related to the target population’s uncertainty or misgivings about arts organizations and what they have to offer. Indeed, the third major difference between the two groups—the perception of elitism—reflects a similar sense of misgiving about the unfamiliar.

It is also interesting to note in this context the high importance assigned to “not enough time” versus the much lower importance assigned to “hours inconvenient.” The first of these relates specifically to individuals’ perception of the “busyness” of their lives and the relative attractiveness of the arts versus non-art leisure alternatives as a way to spend free time. The second refers to how an organization’s schedule of activities fits with potential participants’ available time. Clearly, the respondents viewed the first as a major problem, but not the second. Since Americans’ free time is increasingly fragmented, these two findings are not necessarily inconsistent, but it seems likely that something more is operating here. Indeed, we believe these complaints about not having any available free time only partly stem from the pace of everyday life and the difficulty of adding the arts onto a list of other leisure activities. They also are a convenient way to describe a more general uncertainty and in some cases misgivings about the arts that stem more from a lack of information than from a host of prior negative experiences.

Somewhat less important but still cited frequently were three practical barriers—difficulties finding childcare, difficulties associated with getting to artistic venues, and the lack of information about the programs offered—and one perceptual barrier—the belief that the art form had no appeal. These were viewed as most important in their categories.

Table B.9 breaks out these data to show the distinctions across the three different types of organizations surveyed. These results generally have the same patterns found in the previous table, but there are some interesting differences. The canon-focused organizations, for example, reported that perceptual and personal circumstances are more important barriers to getting target populations involved in their activities. They also viewed costs as a more significant

**Table B.9**  
**Assessments of Barriers to Participation by the Three Types of Organizations**

Barrier	Type of Organization					
	Canon-Focused		Community-Focused		Creativity-Focused	
	Current Partici- pants	Target Population	Current Partici- pants	Target Population	Current Partici- pants	Target Population
<b>Perceptual</b>						
No appeal	2.4	3.3	2.0	2.7	1.5	2.8
Hard to connect	2.1	3.0	1.9	2.4	1.5	2.1
Uncomfortable	1.8	3.4	1.8	2.7	1.7	2.8
Elitist	1.9	3.1	1.7	2.4	1.4	1.9
<b>Personal circumstances</b>						
Not enough time	3.2	3.8	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.3
Other leisure activities	2.6	3.7	2.6	3.3	3.1	3.4
No one to go with	1.9	2.6	1.7	2.2	1.7	2.0
Wouldn't understand interest	1.4	2.1	1.4	1.6	2.4	2.7
<b>Practical</b>						
Childcare problems	2.6	3.2	2.1	2.5	2.6	2.5
Inaccessibility	2.2	2.7	2.0	2.9	2.7	3.4
Not sure what organization does	1.9	3.0	2.2	3.4	1.9	3.0
Hours inconvenient	1.7	1.9	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.8
Location unsafe	1.7	2.1	1.7	2.2	1.5	1.8
Costs too much	1.9	2.9	1.8	2.2	1.5	1.8
Prior experience	1.7	2.3	1.6	2.1	1.6	2.0

NOTE: Survey asked about importance of barrier. 1 = not at all; 2 = little; 3 = fair amount; 4 = much; 5 = very much.

obstacle for target populations. Creativity-focused organizations, however, reported that access was a notably bigger problem for both current participants and target populations.

Although these differences are suggestive, it is difficult to know whether they reflect differences in the types of participants the organizations are trying to attract, differences in the activities of the organizations themselves, or perhaps a combination of both. For example, according to Table B.2 (shown earlier), canon-focused organizations place a higher priority on diversifying participation (that is, on attracting groups not currently involved with the arts) than do either creativity- or community-focused organizations. Thus, one might expect that changing target populations' attitudes might be particularly important for canon-focused organizations—a fact that might account for the greater importance they attach to perceptual barriers. On the other hand, canon-focused organizations are also more established and wealthier than the other two types of

organizations, so they may also be perceived as more elite and less comfortable environments by those not inclined toward the arts. Creativity-focused organizations, in contrast, were reported as being much more focused on deepening participation. In this case, perceptual barriers, which often involve changing individuals' attitudes toward the arts may pose less of a problem.

## **DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING TACTICS**

Once an organization has identified and collected information on its target populations, including both the motivations for and obstacles to increasing participation, it then needs to consider the tactics it will use to meet its participation goals. As a first step, organizations need to consider how to publicize their programs and activities so that potential participants are aware of what they have to offer. In addition, organizations must consider what types of programs and activities to offer, where and when to schedule them, what prices (if any) to charge, and how to create an atmosphere that attracts potential participants. This section describes the various tactics used by the arts organizations we surveyed, how intensively they used them, and how effective they believed them to be.

### **How Organizations Publicize Their Activities**

We asked the organizations about how they publicized their activities: (1) what techniques they use, (2) how often they use those techniques, and (3) whether they thought those techniques were effective. We measure effectiveness as the percentage of organizations that use a particular technique and also rate it as "very effective." Table B.10 provides the results.

It is clear from our results that the organizations we interviewed place a high priority on publicizing their activities and use a combination of techniques to do so. Seven of these ten techniques were used by close to 90 percent or more of these organizations, and no technique was used by fewer than 50 percent. All organizations frequently used word of mouth and free publicity they receive in the media, and almost all use direct mail. Five other techniques—presentations to community groups, use of community collaborators, handouts, paid media advertisements, and the Internet—were used by between 80 and 95 percent of the organizations but less often. The two least popular techniques—personal phone calls and billboards—were also used less frequently.

Although we did not ask respondents to explain the reasons for their usage patterns, at least two factors, effectiveness and availability of resources, appeared most important. The effectiveness of different techniques varies depending on their reach (who hears or reads them) and their ability to convey the

**Table B.10**  
**Use and Effectiveness of Outreach Techniques**

Technique	Percentage of Organizations Using Technique	Frequency of Use <sup>a</sup>	Percentage of Organizations That Find Technique “Very Effective”
Word of mouth	100	4.3	41
Free media	100	4.3	31
Direct mail	98	4.4	40
Presentations to community groups	95	3.0	12
Community collaborators	92	3.5	20
Handouts	89	3.0	4
Paid media	87	3.2	29
Internet	79	4.1	18
Telephone calls	69	2.8	13
Billboards	51	1.9	6

<sup>a</sup>Frequency of use: 1 = not at all; 2 = little; 3 = fair amount; 4 = much; 5 = very much.

desired message. Individuals use a variety of ways to get information about their leisure choices, such as talking to friends, listening to radio, watching TV, reading, and attending community meetings. Although the ways that individuals gather this information may be similar, the specific sources they use vary depending on who their friends are, what newspapers they read, what stations they listen to, what associations they belong to, and where they live. Thus, in choosing how to advertise, arts organizations need to consider whom they are trying to reach and where and how these groups get their information.

Methods of communication also differ in their ability to convey the intended message. Messages conveyed by friends or family members and by organizations with which the individual is familiar are likely to be given more credibility than messages on billboards or in media commercials. Stories about the arts reported in the media also have greater credibility than advertisements.

The frequency of use of the various information sources may also vary across organizations depending on how much they cost (measured not only in dollars but in terms of available time and expertise) and what resources the organization has available. Use of the Internet, for example, requires more than a basic knowledge of computers and programming—something that not all arts organizations possess. Similarly, telephone calls to prospective participants require sufficient staff or volunteers to make the calls. Even the use of community resources—either community collaborators or presentations to community

groups—requires staff to meet with these groups, convince them to collaborate, and then arrange for that collaboration. In sum, when considering how to spread the message about their institutions and their activities, organizations need to weigh both the effectiveness of these techniques and the resources that are required to employ them.

How, then, do the organizations we interviewed evaluate the effectiveness of the various information techniques and how does their use compare with their reported effectiveness? First, no single technique was rated as effective by more than 41 percent of the organizations that used it. The two techniques that were consistently rated most effective—direct mail and word of mouth—rely on an established link between the organization and the target population. Word of mouth relies on contacts among family and friends of potential participants, and direct mailings are sent out either to those who have already visited the organization or to those who are on a mailing list that the organization has obtained from some other organization (and thus might be expected to have attended there). Thus, information obtained from these sources may be given greater credibility than that obtained from other sources. Free publicity in the form of general interest stories about the organization published by the local press and paid advertising are also rated as effective by a substantial number of organizations. This finding may be due to the greater reach of these techniques.

Second, organizations tend to use the techniques they believe to be effective. For example, the three most effective techniques (direct mail, word of mouth, and free media) are used by more organizations and used more frequently than other techniques. Techniques used with moderate frequency are rated as effective by somewhat fewer organizations (between 10 and 29 percent). The techniques used least frequently (such as billboards) were not viewed as very effective.

There are, however, three exceptions to this pattern:

- Handouts are used by 90 percent of all organizations even though few organizations view them as effective.
- The media are used relatively infrequently despite the fact that many organizations view the media as effective, probably because of the high cost of this technique.
- Telephone solicitations are also used infrequently despite being viewed as moderately effective, probably because of the cost in both money and time required to carry them out.

Table B.11 displays our survey findings in terms of the three types of organizations. The table shows that all organizations rely very heavily on word of mouth

**Table B.11**  
**Assessments of Use and Effectiveness of Outreach Techniques by the Three Types of Organizations**

Outreach Technique	Type of Organization					
	Canon-Focused		Community-Focused		Creativity-Focused	
	Frequency of Use <sup>a</sup>	Effectiveness <sup>b</sup>	Frequency of Use	Effectiveness	Frequency of Use	Effectiveness
Word of mouth	4.2	35	4.4	42	4.6	64
Free media	4.4	33	4.6	33	3.2	21
Direct mail	4.3	37	4.5	47	4.2	29
Presentation to community groups	2.9	8	2.9	14	3.7	21
Community collaborator	3.2	12	3.9	28	3.6	21
Handouts	2.6	4	3.5	6	3.3	0
Paid media	3.6	31	3.0	22	2.4	7
Telephone calls	2.5	14	3.3	3	2.8	7
Billboards	2.1	4	1.8	3	1.4	0

<sup>a</sup>Frequency of use: 1 = not at all; 2 = little; 3 = fair amount; 4 = much; 5 = very much.

<sup>b</sup>Effectiveness: Percentage of organizations rating the technique “very effective.”

and direct mail to publicize their activities and that they avoid advertising on billboards. Their use of other techniques varies. Canon- and community-focused organizations rely quite a lot on the media to publicize their activities—especially on stories in the media but also, to a lesser degree, on purchased media advertisements. Creativity-focused organizations, in contrast, are not only less likely to have stories about their activities appear in the media, but they are also much less likely to place paid ads in the media. Instead, they rely on word of mouth and various types of direct outreach into communities, such as presentations to community groups, referrals from community collaborators, and handouts to the community. Canon-focused organizations are least inclined to use these sources. The techniques of community-focused organizations generally fall in between these two groups.

These organizations also differ in their assessment of the effectiveness of different techniques. By and large, these effectiveness ratings correlate closely with the intensity with which techniques are used. (The correlation coefficient between intensity of use and effectiveness is quite high,  $r = 0.85$ .) There are, however, some noteworthy differences in this respect. Although all three types of organizations view word of mouth, free media, and direct mail as effective and use them frequently, canon- and community-focused organizations also believe paid media advertisements are effective, while creativity-oriented organizations generally do not. However, creativity-focused and, to a lesser

extent, community-focused organizations find community-focused techniques effective, while canon-focused organizations do not.

### Other Tactics Used to Increase Participation

In addition to asking organizations how they publicize their activities, we also asked them what other tactics they use to increase participation. We subsequently grouped these individual items into five general clusters:

- **Artist involvement.** Encouraging artists to interact with participants by offering discussions before and after the performance, offering workshops, and sponsoring artist residencies.
- **Programming.** Involving the community in general planning and in designing artistic programming. Linking programming to target groups by providing artistic programs that appeal to nontraditional participants and offering ethnically diverse programming.
- **Pricing.** Offering discounts or free activities and various memberships and subscriptions options.
- **Schedule and venue.** Varying the schedule (hours and days) of programming, providing programming in more accessible locations, and providing transportation to events.
- **Other practical.** Training staff to be more responsive to the public, providing more appealing and user-friendly activities, opening the facility up to other uses, and providing services or materials in other languages.

These clusters generally correspond to different types of barriers to participation. The programming cluster addresses perceptual barriers. The pricing, scheduling and venue, and other practical tactics speak to practical barriers. Finally, by attempting to improve the quality of the participation experience, the tactics involving artists address the kinds of barriers associated with previous experience. Table B.12 shows the extent to which the organizations surveyed use these techniques, how frequently they use them, and how effective they find them.

It is clear from these results that arts organizations recognize the need to deal with each of the different potential barriers to participation. Indeed, there is considerable similarity in the tactics that arts organizations use to achieve their participation goals. All but three of these tactics are used by at least two-thirds of these organizations. And even these three exceptions—providing transportation to participants, providing materials in languages other than English, and opening facilities to other uses—may represent special cases. For example,

**Table B.12**  
**Uses and Effectiveness of Various Tactics**

Technique	Percentage of Organizations Using Technique	Frequency of Use <sup>a</sup>	Percentage of Organizations That Find Technique "Very Effective"
<b>Artist involvement</b>			
Involve with participants	99	3.9	16
Lectures	97	3.7	11
Workshops	95	3.6	9
Residencies	85	3.9	13
<b>Programming</b>			
Involve community in planning	96	3.4	19
Nontraditional programs	97	3.8	19
Ethnic programming	97	4.1	24
Involve community in programming	82	2.5	10
<b>Pricing</b>			
Discounts	100	4.2	32
Subscriptions/memberships	75	3.8	16
<b>Schedule and venue</b>			
Vary hours	95	3.6	9
Improve access	82	3.2	17
Offer transportation	53	2.0	0
<b>Other practical</b>			
Train staff	99	3.1	4
User friendly	84	3.8	6
Open facility	27	3.5	12
Materials in other languages	65	2.4	9

<sup>a</sup>Frequency of use: 1 = not at all; 2 = a little; 3 = fair amount; 4 = much; 5 = very much.

since over 80 percent of these organizations offer programming in accessible venues, it may not be necessary (or efficient) to provide direct transportation to participants. Similarly, providing materials in other languages may not be relevant to most of these organizations if most of their current and target populations are English-speaking, and opening up their facilities may not be an option for many organizations.

Not only do these organizations use the same tactics, they tend to use them with the same intensity. Perhaps the most surprising finding in this table is the universal use of discounts to attract participants, given the fact that costs were not rated as a principal barrier to participation (see Table B.8).

One apparent explanation for this finding is found in the fact that discounts were rated the most effective single tactic. The other noteworthy finding in this comparison is the relatively high effectiveness ratings given to programming tactics. By involving the community in program planning and broadening pro-

programming to include less traditional and more diverse content, organizations are appealing to what they believe to be the main motivation of participants, both current and potential: their intrinsic interest in the arts. Apart from these two results, there appears to be considerable variation in the reported effectiveness of these tactics. Since most of the organizations have a variety of target populations, with a corresponding mixture of predisposition toward the arts as well as different personal circumstances and experiences, it would be very surprising if any particular cluster of tactics was consistently rated most effective by all organizations.

Table B.13 breaks out the data on tactics for arts organizations with different purposes. This display shows that all organizations use techniques for improving the quality of the artistic experience quite frequently. The data also show that organizations with a focus on promoting individual creativity use a greater range of tactics to attract new participants and use these tactics more frequently than other organizations:

- Creativity-focused institutions rely more heavily than other organizations on using artists in their activities, involving the community in program planning, adjusting their programming to appeal to different populations, and varying pricing and practical tactics.
- Creativity-focused organizations use discounts more intensively than other organizations do, although they are less likely to use subscriptions and membership packages.
- Creativity-focused organizations vary their schedules and the location of their activities more than other arts organizations do, a practice that addresses the problem of lack of access that they ranked as a serious obstacle to their participants.

The table also presents organizations' effectiveness ratings for each tactic. Although the ratings correlate reasonably well with the intensity of usage ( $r = 0.60$ ), the correlation is smaller than that found in the assessment of techniques for publicity and outreach. The technique rated most effective by canon-focused organizations, ethnic programming, is rated very effective by only 25 percent of these organizations. Three different techniques are rated as very effective by over 20 percent of the community-focused organizations, with discounts rated the most effective. Finally, creativity-focused organizations rank a much higher proportion of the techniques they use as effective (eight different tactics are rated as very effective by at least 20 percent of these organizations), and the most effective technique, providing discounts, is rated very effective by almost 60 percent of these organizations.

**Table B.13**  
**Ratings of Uses and Effectiveness of Various Tactics by the Three Types of Organizations**

Outreach Technique	Type of Organization					
	Canon-Focused		Community-Focused		Creativity-Focused	
	Frequency of Use <sup>a</sup>	Effectiveness <sup>b</sup>	Frequency of Use	Effectiveness	Frequency of Use	Effectiveness
<b>Artists</b>						
Involve with participants	3.7	10	3.8	14	4.9	43
Lectures	3.8	8	3.6	17	3.5	0
Workshops	3.3	10	3.8	11	4.2	21
Residencies	3.1	4	3.6	19	3.8	14
<b>Programming</b>						
Involve community in planning	3.2	14	3.4	25	4.2	21
Nontraditional programs	3.7	19	3.7	22	4.2	7
Ethnic programs	3.8	25	4.4	19	4.5	29
Involve community in programming	2.2	2	2.6	11	3.2	21
<b>Pricing</b>						
Discounts	4.0	19	4.2	42	4.6	57
Memberships/subscriptions	4.1	12	3.8	14	1.7	7
<b>Schedule and venue</b>						
Vary hours	3.5	6	3.5	6	3.9	21
Improve access	2.7	12	3.3	11	4.2	29
<b>Other practical</b>						
Train staff	3.0	4	3.3	6	3.2	0
User-friendly	3.7	4	3.8	6	3.9	7
Open facility	3.3	6	3.9	17	3.5	0
Materials in other languages	2.1	6	2.6	8	3.0	0

<sup>a</sup>Frequency of use: 1 = not at all; 2 = little; 3 = fair amount; 4 = much; 5 = very much.

<sup>b</sup>Effectiveness: Percentage of organizations rating the technique as “very effective.”

## KEY CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

Most of the questions we asked the respondents were framed as direct queries about specific aspects of their operation. Although this approach facilitated comparisons across respondents by assuring consistency in responses, it limited the respondents’ opportunities to express themselves more freely on these and other subjects. To provide them with this opportunity, we included two open-ended questions:

- What are the biggest challenges your organization has faced in trying to meet its participation goals?
- What do you consider to be the three most important steps that your organization has taken to meet its participation goals?

## KEY CHALLENGES

Respondents emphasized three problems as the most difficult to surmount in building participation:

- **Lack of visibility.** Many organizations viewed their lack of visibility in the community as the central challenge they faced. Sometimes this issue was raised in terms of the difficulties of reaching specific populations not familiar with their organizations or the arts in general. One literary organization, for example, referred to the difficulty of reaching people who “just don’t read anymore.” Indeed, some organizations that were interested in deepening the level of their participants’ involvement complained that “even our subscribers don’t visit our museum more than once or twice a year.”
- **Increasing competition with other leisure activities.** In many ways, these organizations viewed this lack of visibility as a by-product of a second major challenge that they faced—growing competition with other leisure activities. This theme was described in terms of the increasing range of options that people have available today for entertainment and the perception that people are busier than they used to be, with both men and women increasingly in the workplace and often working irregular hours. One typical comment was made by a theater organization in Seattle: “The competitive marketplace in Seattle is a challenge—there are lots of arts and other entertainment for people to spend their disposable incomes on. It’s a crowded marketplace, which increases people’s awareness and interest in the arts but also creates a more savvy and demanding customer.”
- **Resource shortages.** Combating these two problems poses a real resource problem for most organizations. Virtually all of the organizations we interviewed identified their greatest challenge as the difficulty of balancing competing demands against their available resources. One respondent described his organization’s three biggest challenges as “First, dollars; second, dollars; and third, dollars.” Some described their needs in more detail: “We need funds to computerize our box office receipts so that we can track where our money is coming from and who is buying tickets.” Many organizations mentioned more general needs: to develop new programming for specific target groups, conduct research on target populations, and develop new outreach initiatives. Others mentioned the need to increase their orga-

nization's ability to respond to growth or institutional change through strategic planning, hiring and training new staff, and getting their buy-in on the organizations' participation goals, and by increasing the size of their facilities.

When citing their resource constraints, what these institutions are acknowledging is not simply the obvious fact that they do not have the resources to do all the things they want to do, but also that increasing participation takes commitment, money, hard work, and time. As the long-time director of a repertory theater company put it, "The techniques that RAND and the Wallace Funds are studying are well-known; the challenge is finding the resources to do them. A lot of people have tried a lot of things to increase participation, but the techniques that really work require a lot of work and time."

These three challenges are, of course, interrelated. Because organizations are competing with a vast leisure industry for people's scarce free time, they need to get the word out about their programs and activities. This necessarily involves increasing the visibility of their institutions in the community, and that takes resources that are in short supply.

## **MOST IMPORTANT ACTIONS**

The most important steps institutions took to address these problems and sustain participation building are summarized below.

### **Improving Visibility**

Respondents described two sets of actions to improve the public's awareness of their institution and its programs:

- The first step was developing the message they wanted to convey. For several organizations, the key to improving their visibility was to develop a clear message or "brand image" for their organization—something that often required them to consider their institutional purpose and mission. Sometimes this involved changing their organizational image. As one respondent put it, "We were founded and run by the same individual for 23 years. . . . Over the past two years we have worked to alter our image . . . indeed we are changing the definition of literary art and don't even use that phrase any more."
- The second step was deciding how to deliver that message. Some organizations focused on improving media relations and developing promotional materials. Other organizations simply could not afford large-scale media campaigns or found it difficult to sustain the media's attention in a very di-

verse entertainment market. These organizations relied on their outreach efforts with community groups to publicize their programs. Our respondents repeatedly stressed that the ties they had established with community-based organizations were one of the most important steps they had taken to inform potential participants about their organizations and activities.

### **Building Strategic Alliances**

Many organizations developed ties with a variety of community organizations and groups, with other arts organizations, and with artists. Respondents reported that these alliances were an important conduit of information, but they also emphasized that these partnerships brought them other benefits as well, such as a greater understanding of the people in the communities they were pursuing and a relationship of trust with those communities. Sometimes other organizations were able to offer the use of their facilities or other materials.

Respondents also mentioned a number of lessons they had learned about the process of building good partnerships:

- **Choosing an organization with a complementary mission.** Collaborating organizations should have complementary missions. Without common goals, organizations may never build the deep connection needed to foster mutual commitment. The alliance between Poet’s House and the New York City Public Library, for example, is based on a shared commitment to fostering the appreciation of literature and recognition of each institution’s distinct strengths and mutual needs.
- **Choosing organizations with complementary assets and strengths.** It is important to find organizations that can contribute skills, connections, and material assets that are complementary. Hancher Auditorium in Iowa City, for example, brought together the Colorado String Quartet with three local public libraries and three churches to perform chamber music in their spaces. This collaboration allowed musicians to perform in locations that were accessible and comfortable for their audiences. As a result, many community residents who had never before experienced chamber music bought tickets to the concert.
- **Building trust.** Relationships must be perceived as mutually beneficial. Unless arts institutions make the effort to build trust in the relationship, they run the risk of being seen as “missionaries” or “users” by collaborating organizations. It is important for institutions to identify the right people to cultivate this relationship, both on their own staff and within the collaborating organization. As the director of Poet’s House explained, “The

difficulty in working with organizations different from your own is getting to know each other and developing an understanding of the way the other organization works. You need to hook up with the right person to get you through the maze, someone who can translate between the two organizations.”

- **Understanding mutual capabilities.** When Hancher Auditorium decided to start performing in nontraditional venues, they sought out a factory setting. This early venture was fraught with operational problems because the factory staff had no background in setting up the performance space, promoting the event within the factory, and assuming other roles necessary to mounting a production. What the staff of Hancher Auditorium learned from this experience was the importance of providing more hands-on training when collaborating with non-arts organizations in the community.
- **Maintaining commitment over the long term.** Organizations change over time—missions alter, people come and go, budgets shrink and grow. Good relationships with outside organizations can quickly deteriorate if key people depart or financial support disappears. Many of the exemplary arts organizations mentioned the fact that short-term funding undermines ongoing collaborations. They suggest a steady investment of staff time in building relationships that can weather such uncertainties in financial support.

### Changes in Programming

By far the most frequently given response to the question about actions taken to increase participation was changes in program offerings. This finding is, no doubt, related to the fact that these organizations believe, as we noted earlier, that the single most important motivation for participation is the participant’s interest in the arts. Thus, a wide variety of programming-related tactics were mentioned—initiation of specific programs (such as arts festivals, poetry readings, and other events) and more general strategies (such as developing programming to appeal to specific target populations and/or increasing the amount or quality of programming or both). Although these programming changes were often focused on attracting specific target groups, several organizations stressed that the key to sustained participation was “high-quality productions.” As one respondent put it, “The only way to keep people coming back is to do high-quality work.”

However, the respondents emphasized that it is not enough simply to develop programs likely to appeal to target populations; it is also important to anticipate the kinds of obstacles that prevent individuals from participating and to take steps to overcome those barriers. One way of doing this is to project a different

institutional image. As one respondent put it, their institution developed new programming to project a vibrant image: “We wanted our programming to stand for something—diversity, freshness, extreme, smart, savvy, and producer of American voices.” Other respondents stressed their work to make audiences familiar and more comfortable with their programs, particularly the more demanding programs, by developing activities such as lectures and workshops before and after performances. They also mentioned their efforts to schedule their events so as to minimize problems of access, convenience, and cost.

### **Improving Operations**

Although the majority of these organizations focused on the tactics they instituted to further their specific participation goals, quite a few of them mentioned actions that they took to improve their general organizational structure and operations.<sup>3</sup> In most cases, the actions mentioned directly supported participation-building activities, but they often also helped to improve the general operation of the institution.

Among the actions respondents mentioned were improved strategic planning, selecting participation goals, allocating resources according to their strategic plans, and ensuring staff commitment to the organization’s participation goals and plans. They also included such structural steps as funding new positions, restructuring departments, diversifying staff, and bringing in new administrative or board leadership. Operational improvements included changes in box office practices, ticketing, record-keeping, and office management.

Some of the important steps respondents mentioned had a direct effect on the ability of the organization to pursue its more general missions. Most frequently mentioned in this context were successful initiatives to increase financial resources, such as applying for and receiving new grants and building internal resources by hiring new staff and changing board membership.

Also in this category, many respondents emphasized that their most important step in building participation was expanding or improving their facilities. Several smaller and growing organizations noted, for example, that they had moved to new quarters or substantially upgraded their existing facilities by adding more meeting or performance space, upgrading capacity, or providing eating facilities. Such capital expansion allowed them to attract and serve new participants as well as to improve the quality and range of their programming.

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<sup>3</sup>It should be noted that some of these operational improvements were required as a condition of the grant from the Funds.

Overall, we found that most respondents focused their observations on the specific tactics that they used—with a particular emphasis on the steps they took to attract participants and marshal the resources they needed. However, they also commented on the need to pay heed to the other elements of an integrative approach to the participation process by talking about the importance of strategic planning in choosing their participation goals and measuring and evaluating their progress. Indeed, we were struck by the fact that when viewed in the aggregate, the respondents mentioned elements from each of the different steps that identify an integrative approach to building participation.