



ARTISTS AS CHIEF PROBLEM SOLVERS IN BOSTON

Reading and Research Project 2018-2019
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PREFACE

PERSONAL

This project flows out of decades of personal and professional engagement with the arts, as a musician, curator and educator. My connection to the arts began at the piano, grew through communal projects in Jewish and Middle Eastern music, and led me to pursue degrees in Ethnomusicology. I am also an active member of the Boston arts community, where I have built my career working for local arts non-profits and initiating creative ventures. My approach to this project will undoubtedly be shaped by this body of experience in the arts.

FIELD

The role of arts in cities has traditionally been examined through one of four lenses: economic development, education, creative placemaking, and urban revitalization. This project looks at what happens when artists infuse creative practice into government and community work. This lens has important implications for how cities view the value of the arts and the potential for artistic practice to intersect with and shape broader policy areas.

PUBLIC

While this project is personally and academically meaningful, it is also important for the residents of Boston. Boston is a young and highly diverse city – the median age is 32 and 53% of the population are people of color. The city’s arts audiences, however, are much older and predominantly white. One of the core goals of the Boston Creates cultural plan was to, “integrate arts and culture into all aspects of civic life, inspiring all Bostonians to value, engage in, and reap the benefits of creativity in their individual lives and in their communities,” and these trends show us that much work is left to be done. Developing a conceptual framework for Boston AIR can help policymakers better understand how to evaluate this program and act on findings to create a more inclusive and integrated arts ecosystem in Boston.



PROBLEM DEFINITION

In June of 2016, the City of Boston completed a 15 month cultural planning process that culminated in the [release of the Boston Creates Cultural Plan](#).

The plan identified the need to “[integrate arts and culture into all aspects of civic life](#), inspiring all Bostonians to value, engage in, and reap the benefits of creativity in their individual lives and in their communities.”

To advance this goal, key tactics to “change city policymaking and practice to [integrate creative thinking into the work of every municipal department](#) and all planning efforts” were articulated.

One specific tactic was to establish the [Boston Artist-in-Residence program \(Boston AIR\)](#), which embeds artists in city departments and agencies for 10 months to initiate creative projects related to civic engagement.

The assumption that underlies this program is that when you place artists in municipal environments – with their innate ability to think creatively, lead collaborative processes, and build community – they improve city initiatives and offer new, actionable insights on social issues that impact Boston residents.





RESEARCH QUESTIONS



How did the leaders of Boston's cultural planning process articulate the theory of change for the Boston AIR program and what were their explicit and implicit assumptions?



Under what conditions are the artists-in-residence able to meet the goals of the program and the cultural plan more broadly? Under what conditions do they struggle, and why?



If the city were to initiate an independent evaluation of Boston AIR, what questions would they need to ask? How could they go about measuring the impact of the program against its stated goals?



LITERATURE REVIEW

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LITERATURE REVIEW

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Markusen, Ann, and Anne Gadwa. 2010. "Creative Placemaking." National Endowment for the Arts and The Mayors' Institute on City Design.

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METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

Curran Bernard, Sheila. 2010. *Documentary Storytelling: Making Stronger and More Dramatic Nonfiction Films*. 3rd Edition. Focal Press.

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Yin, Robert. 2017. *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. 6th ed. SAGE Publications.



ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK



CONCEPTUAL APPROACH

This project will examine Boston AIR as a **policy intervention** to expand access to arts and culture and infuse creative practice into city policymaking. To create a conceptual framework to evaluate this type of policy intervention, two elements must be better understood:

- the **theory of change** that led to the establishment Boston AIR;
- the **contextual factors** that influence whether the Boston AIRs can achieve the goals of the program.



METHODS

Two research methods will be utilized in this project:

- **Desk study research** to review pertinent literature on arts and urban policy as well as existing quantitative data on Boston arts participation and city demographics;
- **Exploratory case-study research**, which will involve interviews with leaders and beneficiaries of the Boston AIR program as well as direct observation of activities.



ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK

CASE-STUDY RESEARCH DESIGN



AIR



Partner/
Site



Community

An **embedded single exploratory case design**¹ will look at the range of contextual factors that enable artists to meet the goals of Boston AIR, or prevent them from doing so. Four residencies (unit of analysis) have been selected for the case that represent a range of artistic disciplines, projects, and sites.



CONTEXT: Boston Creates Leaders, NEA Funders, Boston AIR Leaders

BOSTON AIR

Karen Young (2018)
Boston Elderly Commission/
BCYF Grove Hall Senior Center



Nakia Hill (2018)
Women's Advancement Dept./
BCYF Grove Hall Senior Center



Lina Giraldo (2017)
Hyde Park BCYF



Rashin Fahandej (2017)
Blackstone BCYF/
BPD/Office of Returning Citizens



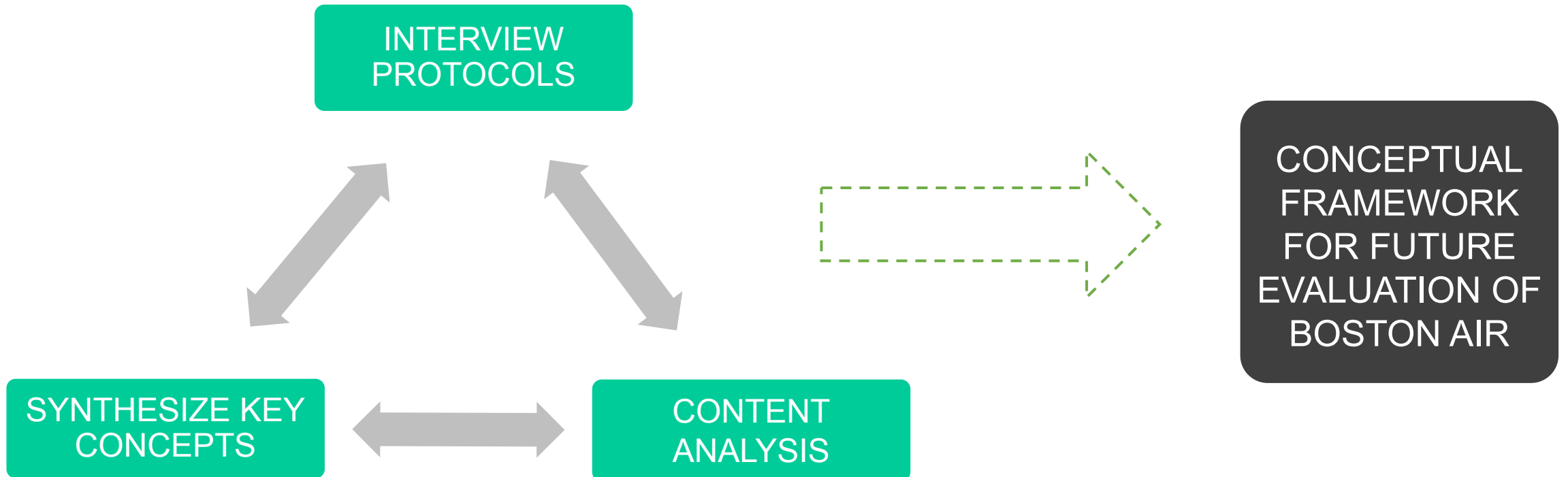
1. Yin, Robert. 2017. *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*. 6th ed. SAGE Publications.

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ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK

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DATA EVALUATION METHODS





DATA COLLECTION

EXISTING QUANTITATIVE DATA FOR CASE CONTEXT

1. National Endowment for the Arts: 2008 Survey of Public Participation in the Arts
2. DataUSA: Deloitte and the Collective Learning Initiative at MIT
3. ArtsBoston Audience Initiative data

QUALITATIVE DATA COLLECTION FOR CASE DEVELOPMENT

1. Assumptions, design variables, and conditions considered by policy makers when creating Boston AIR (via interviews with Boston Creates leads, Boston AIR leads, and NEA funders)
2. Design of Program (via filming programs/events/meetings)
 - 2a. Site conditions conducive to meeting AIR program goals (via interviews with AIRs and site partners)
 - 2b. Site conditions that inhibit AIRs from meeting program goals (via interviews with AIRs and site partners)
3. Perceived impact by individuals/community groups involved with AIR programs (via observations and interviews with community members)



INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Technical Reminders:

- Check sound
- Get out backup battery
- Get room tone!
- Set focus on camera
- Make sure to remind the interviewee that they should focus their gaze on your forehead right between your eyes

Prepping for Interview:

- When starting the interview, let the artist know to speak in complete sentences. For example, if you ask, "What is your name?" S/he should answer, "My name is Jane Doe" not, "Jane." Warm your interviewee up to responding in this way.
- Say that you plan to repeat a few questions in order to have options during your edit. This will make it easier for you to ask your interviewee to repeat a response without giving the impression that he/she is "failing" at conducting a good interview.
- Before you start filming, remind your interviewee that you can stop and start at ANY TIME! Remind your interviewees that *they* are the experts.
- Share your goals for the interview: make your thinking come to life with clarity and empowerment; have strong artist voices in this film -- I don't want to use a narrator, but have the artists, city partners, and participants tell the story.
- Start with some benign background questions to warm up the interviewee and get him/her comfortable in front of the camera (e.g. what is your name, what is your artistic medium, what is your role with the city, what motivated you to work for city government, etc.)

Interview Questions:

Facts + Starting
Conditions

1. Can you start by telling me about your residency -- the city departments you partnered with, the scope of your project, and the communities you touched?
2. What was your vision for the residency when you began?
 - 2a. What did you hope would happen?



INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

Interview Questions Cont'd:

Actions +
Events

- 3. Tell me about how you got started -- what were some of your first actions or activities?
- 4. What resources and support did you receive from your city department or site?
 - 4a. What worked well about the partnership?
 - 4b. What were some of the barriers?
- 5. What was a high point in the residency?
 - 5a. What was a low point?

Outputs +
Outcomes

- 6. What did you accomplish in the residency that you expected you would?
 - 6a. What did you accomplish that surprised you?
 - 6b. What didn't you accomplish?
- 7. What learning are you taking away from this residency experience?
 - 7a. What do you think your city partner learned?
 - 7b. What do you think the community members you engaged have learned?

Phrases for Follow-Up Questions:

- Can we circle back to what you said earlier...
- I'd like to do a deeper dive...
- Tell me more about...
- That's interesting, why?

Wrap-Up:

- Thank the interviewee for her time and insights
- Ask about any upcoming community events that may be ripe for filming, or ask about footage that could be shared from past events
- Recap any follow-up you plan to do



DATA COLLECTION



AIRs



City Partner



Community Member



Context: Funder/Prog. Leader

CASE #1

1. Karen Young

2. Ayana Green

3. Donna Redd

4. Kara Elliott-Ortega

CASE #2

5. Nakia Hill

6. Tania Del Rio

7. Naomi Robertson

8. Karin Goodfellow

CASE #3

9. Lina Giraldo

10. Winston Lloyd

11. Mia Bowen

12. Sharon Amuguni

CASE #4

13. Rashin Fahandej

14. Keith Houston

15. Josh Derosario

16. Jennifer Hughes

- 1. Karen Young, AIR 2018
- 2. Ayana Green, Director, Grove Hall BCYF
- 3. Donna Redd, Member, Grove Hall BCYF
- 4. Kara Elliott Ortega, Chief of Arts and Culture, Boston
- 5. Nakia Hill, AIR 2018
- 6. Tania Del Rio, ED of Women's Advancement Dept.
- 7. Naomi Robertson, Member, Grove Hall BCYF
- 8. Karin Goodfellow, Director, Boston Art Commission, Boston AIR
- 9. Lina Giraldo, Boston AIR 2017

- 10. Winston Lloyd, Program Supervisor, BCYF Hyde Park
- 11. Mia Bowen, Member, BCYF Hyde Park
- 12. Sharon Amuguni, Coordinator, Boston AIR
- 13. Rashin Fahandej, Boston AIR 2017
- 14. Keith Houston, Coordinator Blackstone BCYF
- 15. Josh Derosario, Member, BCYF Blackstone
- 16. Jennifer Hughes, Director, Design and Creative Placemaking, National Endowment for the Arts

STAKEHOLDER MAP



DATA COLLECTION

THEORY OF CHANGE

GOODFELLOW + AMUGUNI	ELLIOT-ORTEGA	HUGHES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explicit assumption 1: embedding artists in city departments will bring a “culture of critique” -- artists and city partners will have conversations about where changes are needed and explore creative solutions to work around challenges. ● Implicit assumption 1a: culture of critique will translate into policy change; city partners will be open to this way of thinking, operating, and acting. ● Explicit assumption 2: embedding artists in community settings will broaden residents’ expectations of an artist -- they are more than just their mediums and can help shape policy conversations ● Implicit assumption 2a: artists will serve as conduits between communities and government -- they will show residents the role that artists can play in organizing civil society ● Explicit assumption 3: The program will build capacity in the artist community by strengthening their voice, sharpening their understanding of how city government operates, and how they can work within the system to affect change ● Implicit assumption 3a: this capacity building will bear fruit over time and allow artists to continue growing in their strength as activists and conduits for civic engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explicit assumption 1: during Boston Creates cultural planning process, heard from artists that there were not dedicated opportunities for them, resources, platforms. Boston AIR was an effort to resource artists and give them that platform ● Implicit assumption 1a: participating in the AIR program would confer prestige and show larger artist community that the city values their contributions beyond cultural and economic production ● Explicit assumption 2: Embedding artists in municipal environments will help shake up the way city thinks about what it does. It will show officials, and other decision makers the value of creative thinking of cultural agents to find solutions to wicked problem ● Implicit assumption 2a: city staff will be open to change and invite new processes or ways of working sparked by collaboration with artists ● Other: Didn’t know at the time what residents would gain. The hope was that Boston AIR would increase access to city policy, and civic participation, as well as access to arts offerings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explicit assumption 1: artists are incredibly creative problem solvers and embedding them in municipal environments will expand city workers’ understanding of arts and culture as a mechanism for addressing wicked problems ● Implicit assumption 1a: city workers will be open to more creative ways of thinking and working and flexible in their agenda-setting and patterns of work to allow artists to bring this strength to bear ● Explicit assumption 2: embedding artists in municipal environments will help community members understand that there is great value in artists working together with city departments to help advance their needs and priorities (e.g. artists as conduit to city government and catalyst for citizen action) ● Implicit assumption 2a: the collaboration between city partners and artists will be visible to residents and engage them in meaningful action



DATA COLLECTION

THEORY OF CHANGE

	AIR	CITY PARTNER(S)	COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT(S)
YOUNG CASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explicit assumption 1: art is a strong vehicle to organize and bolster the voices of city residents around social issues ● Explicit assumption 2: The Taiko drum is a particularly strong tool for giving traditionally marginalized groups (e.g. older women of color) a sense of power and agency ● Implicit assumption 1: community organizing is the most effective way to achieve community-driven policy change ● Implicit assumption 2: empowerment is the key to organizing marginalized groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ayana Green (BCYF Grove Hall): didn't have a firm grasp of the program or its goals. Given that the BCYF site was newly converted to a Senior Center, Ayana and her team were looking for programming and were open to trying new formats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Donna Redd: saw the program as an opportunity to learn to play the drums, which is always something she had been interested in doing
HILL CASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explicit assumption: writing is a tool for empowerment and healing -- providing opportunities for girls and women of color to record their stories would help amplify traditionally marginalized voices in Boston ● Implicit assumption: this creative, qualitative work, paired with quantitative research to understand the roadblocks for women of color in the workplace (overlap of racial and gender discrimination) could inform city policy or programs to support the advancement of women of color in Boston 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tania del Rio (ED of Women's Advancement): didn't have a firm grasp of the program, or its goals, and therefore no concrete vision for what the collaboration could bring to her work or women in Boston ● Ayana Green (BCYF Grove Hall): didn't have a firm grasp of the program or its goals. Given that the BCYF site was newly converted to a Senior Center, Ayana and her team were looking for programming and were open to trying new formats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Naomi Robertson: wasn't initially sure what the residency would bring, and felt some reluctance around the idea of sharing her life struggles publicly. Initially thought about the workshops as 'creative writing' exercises, but not as personal storytelling as a means of empowerment or healing



DATA COLLECTION

THEORY OF CHANGE

	AIR	CITY PARTNER	COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT
GIRALDO CASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explicit assumption: Community-based arts projects can serve as participatory processes to empower citizens to tell their own stories. In particular, the medium of media (film, projection, etc.) can be a potent tool for exploring issues of identity -- in this case, the challenges of being an immigrant or first generation resident in Boston ● Implicit assumption: Citizen empowerment will lead to greater citizen engagement, which will ultimately influence city policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Saw it as an opportunity to have an artist to work with the community, which is not something BCYF Hyde Park would otherwise have funding for ● Was intrigued by the possibility of introducing the community to art experiences through a medium that is ubiquitous (technology), but also less associated with art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Originally thought the residency would be community service focused; getting kids out into the community to beautify parks or other public spaces in the neighborhood
FAHANDEJ CASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explicit assumption: Art can serve as a mediated space for people with different backgrounds to come together around issues of policing, mass-incarceration, and inner-city violence ● Implicit assumption: Bringing inter-generational groups and city representatives together through creative projects will make these issues more visible and will build capacity in citizens to take on policies that disproportionately impact their community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Imagined that art and creativity would enhance the way he does his work -- as an artist, immediately saw the value of embedding an artist in the center ● Thought it would be a good way to get young people involved in arts and technology ● Imagined it would push young people to try new things and gain new perspectives (both about the community and pathways for creative expression) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Thought it was about learning photography techniques and going out into the community to take pictures



DATA COLLECTION

CONDITIONS

GOODFELLOW + AMUGUNI	ELLIOT-ORTEGA	HUGHES
<p>What works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When artists feel welcomed by city partners • City partners commit time and show willingness to engage in a collaborative process • Artists work with content that's interesting to them -- they don't want to develop promotional materials, or feel like they are "commissioned," they want to have creative control • Sense of trust between artist and city partner <p>What doesn't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When city officials or workers don't make commitments, or are difficult to reach 	<p>What works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artist has experience with community organizing or co-design work • City partners are able to put in a lot of time and energy • Artists build a community in the cohort across disciplines and neighborhoods. Having a cohort to rely on and trade challenges and best practices <p>What doesn't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program puts a lot on artists – asking them to come up with projects, integrate themselves into city partnerships, integrate themselves into community centers, where they don't already have relationships, and have a clear process about how to get from point a to point z, and to articulate what it means to all the stakeholder groups • Artists are human and face a range of personal challenges, limitations • Where silos or conflicts exist in municipal environments, it can be very difficult for artists to bridge divides • When space, access to a receptive group of people is lacking in BCYFs 	<p>What works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Marty Walsh was very supportive and that support came from the top down. There was funding and real impetus from City Hall itself • When city host comes to the engagement with a really open mind <p>What doesn't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People working in government don't have the full understanding how expansive the potential is for partnering with an artist. They think of murals, they think branding, they think very tactical products • When city hosts aren't open to letting their agenda shift to respond to the questions and new ideas that an artist may interject into the process • When artists are not thoughtful about how to inject their creativity in a way that can lend to a shared outcome



DATA COLLECTION

CONDITIONS

	AIR	CITY PARTNER	COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT
YOUNG CASE	<p>What worked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warmly welcomed by BCYF staff; able to build a relationship of co-creation • Access to the senior programming • Space to store drums • MOAC was conduit for building relationships with other city/civic agencies: Age Friendly, BDT, Project Zero, etc. <p>What didn't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Didn't know how to work with the city; what the various departments did, what she could ask of them, what resources were available 	<p>What worked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness, willingness to compromise and be flexible • Strong rapport and partnership between BCYF staff and artists in residence; two-way learning and openness to experimentation <p>Barrier:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The biggest barrier at Grove Hall is getting the seniors involved, earning their trust, and commanding their respect. This takes time and external people need to be patient and resilient to build this foundation with community members 	<p>What worked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm and trusting relationship with Boston AIR • Easy access to programming at Grove Hall • Emphasis of residency on local issues and population <p>What didn't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not express anything substantial
HILL CASE	<p>What worked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City partners expressed a deep, genuine interest in Nakia's work and perspective • Placement within BCYFs embeds artist in the community, allows artist to attain better 'on the ground' understanding of issues and gives access to a group with which to develop programs/solutions <p>What didn't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If artist idea doesn't align with preexisting gov. dept. goals, artist is on their own to implement • BCYFs don't opt-in; staff felt surprised and unsure of how to utilize the AIR 	<p>What worked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as above <p>What didn't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a strong foundation of trust and powerful engagement within the community and then ending the residency ("it's like "having a crumb of a gorgeous banana bread") 	<p>What worked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the programming at Grove Hall as part of the schedule available to senior members • Intergenerational exchange with adolescents from the New Academy Estates Community Center <p>What didn't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not express anything substantial, only initial hesitation around sharing painful moments in life publically



DATA COLLECTION

CONDITIONS

	AIR	CITY PARTNER	COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT
GIRALDO CASE	<p>What worked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-creation process between artist and BCYF manager (on the ground staffer) BCYF manager has ownership over the community and understands needs well <p>What didn't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No studio space Artist doesn't chose placement Highly problematic Director of BCYF who was disconnected and unhelpful Little interaction with officials in city hall; particularly leaders of BCYF system, created a disconnect btw. artist and city goals 	<p>What worked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lina felt welcomed They provided the resources she needed -- computer lab, storage, materials, access to a consistent group of kids via the afterschool program <p>What didn't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget constraints; would have liked to purchase cameras, but this in fact led to a fruitful maker element of the project Slow pace of city agencies and payments Too many meetings with the city; were not necessary in his view 	<p>What worked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residency was anchored in the afterschool program; there was a built-in group to work with Medium of technology Lina shared personally about her background and art -- helped to build connection and understanding between her and members of the community <p>What didn't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It ended -- kids wanted to go deeper and have this offering year after year
FAHANDEJ CASE	<p>What worked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program helped Rashin develop connections w/ gov. officials/staffers; gave her insight into gov. inner workings Commitment from city partners to make time Staff counterpart at Blackstone had a background in the arts, which created immediate buy-in <p>What didn't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slow bureaucratic process for implementation No established infrastructure in place for arts engagement -- had to build from scratch Community expectations are narrow (ed. programs or tangible product like a mural) Lack of sustainability beyond 9-mo residency 	<p>What worked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had immediate connection as two artists -- brokering trust and a two-way learning relationship was very natural Rashin was flexible and creative -- able to work around obstacles <p>What didn't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Battled with health issues that made it difficult to engage fully in all activities of the residency 	<p>What worked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embedded in afternoon program offerings Provided an opportunity to get out of his comfort zone and try something new Encouraged by Center staff who he trusted to get involved <p>What didn't:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did not express anything substantial



DATA COLLECTION

OUTCOMES / EVALUATION

GOODFELLOW + AMUGUNI	ELLIOT-ORTEGA	HUGHES
<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artists form connections with city officials, build a base of shared understanding and empathy • Artists show city officials that they can be a conduit for constituents to advocate for themselves; they can also bring attention to city work • Artists learn that there are established pathways for getting involved; there are participatory processes in place they can leverage to effect change • Not changing policy as originally hoped • Strengthens the idea of Boston as an arts city -- not just a sports town, or a university town • Artists inject creative ideas and new ways of working in city government <p>Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have they equipped artists in a way that will enable them to make policy changes down the road? • Have they opened city officials' eyes to the potential for artists to shape their policy work? • Have they changed the narrative about how Boston values its artists? • Have they cultivated greater empathy between artists and city officials? 	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City partners are able to branch out, gain access to different tools, and explore doing their work in more fun, expressive ways. It has opened them up to the possibility of creative partnerships, the idea that they can tap a creative community to work on an issue, bring attention to it, etc. • Interesting takes on policy issues from artists and community projects • Relationships between artists, city partners, and community residents • The projects that they incubate wind up being major parts of the artists careers for years and years • Boston AIR is incorporated into city budget for FY20 <p>Evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation is an opportunity to try to synthesize common learnings, conditions • What is one framework that can capture the variety of work that is happening, at a variety of scales? • Would like to building knowledge city-wide and sector-wide about what it means to do socially informed artistic work in partnership with city hall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to be more expansive in what we track and measure -- not just economic growth and urban revitalization. What are the social outcomes? • Need to grow in our articulation of the value of what artists can do within government • Some measurements could be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ understanding of institutional shifts or ways of thinking ○ new methodologies of engaging the public (e.g. shifting from the Town Hall model) ○ workers sense of pride in what they do, etc. • NEA is also thinking about measuring systems change, some indicators include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ was the program sustainable beyond the initial period of support? ○ was it replicated or did other communities learn from what was done in Boston? ○ Are there a greater number of city staff/officials who are open to hosting an artist?



DATA COLLECTION

OUTCOMES / EVALUATION

	AIR	CITY PARTNERS	COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS
YOUNG CASE	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rally for street safety; mtg. with BDoT that led to speed reducing measures on Geneva Ave. Originally envisioned working on isolation or accessibility -- evidence that artistic process can be a good avenue for community problem nomination Funding to continue her work at Grove Hall through Boston Foundation <p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learned that she is an artist -- always saw Taiko as a cultural art form, but didn't see herself as an artist with a capital A 	<p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age-friendly Boston, Project Zero, Walkable Streets learned that artists can have a large impact through amplifying a message and organizing a community That the seniors want to have a voice, they are interested in getting engaged civically 	<p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Their voices matter; they have a way to engage with the city to bring about change that is meaningful to their community Felt like they were "rockstars" -- had a platform to perform across the city and move into spaces not traditionally held by older women of color
HILL CASE	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 books of poetry published Writing and editorial program for teen girls of color Writing workshops and intergenerational exchange for women at Grove Hall 250 responses for women in the workplace survey initial data <p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deeper understanding of city governance, policy development, evaluation, etc. How to listen deeply, understand the needs in a community, and then find ways of advancing your creative goals while meeting community needs 	<p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the seniors want to have a voice, they are interested in getting engaged civically Created a sense of possibility about how creative and bold Ayana could be in her work (e.g. Ayana thought it would be enough to record the women's stories in a Google Doc, but learned from Nakia that she can take the work further and that there are real opportunities for empowerment when the work is shared publicly) 	<p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sense of empowerment -- attaining new skills at an older age, sharing her story boldly in various community settings, healing past wounds, and helping younger women who have struggled with teen pregnancy Writing can be a tool for healing and resistance



DATA COLLECTION

OUTCOMES / EVALUATION

	AIR	CITY PARTNER	COMMUNITY PARTICIPANT
GIRALDO CASE	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participatory process that resulted in the creation of a final art piece and show in the South End Research about the intersection of technology and identity Installation of LCD screens at BCYF Hyde Park for continued art exhibition <p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to take risks with technology in the artistic process Sees the artists' role as facilitator to help communities craft a collective message 	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great openness to working with an artist in the future More expansive sense of what an artist is and does <p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lina felt that Winston and BCYF Hyde Park learned how to "dream" and approach their work in different ways 	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learned new coding language, basic electronics skills, and interviewing techniques <p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lina felt it was an opportunity to explore racial tension between first generation and new immigrant youth; this didn't come up in interview with Mia Coding and maker skills; ability to problem solve, more expansive view of technology as a form of self-expression and art
FAHANDEJ CASE	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 70+ students gained basic media literacy, interviewing and storytelling skills Developing program for formerly incarcerated fathers with Office of Returning Citizens and Federal Probation Office Starting a political/social justice movement around incarceration, immigration, absence <p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of city processes, resources, leaders in law enforcement; deeper understanding of the prison system and impacts on communities of color 	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Great openness to working with an artist in the future Media resources for BCYF Blackstone that can be utilized in future projects <p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A change in perception about what BCYFs can provide -- not just a sports center, but a place where young people can explore creative pursuits 	<p>Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New skills in photography, videography, interviewing and storytelling <p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growth in confidence, willingness to try new things and move out of comfort zone Better familiarity and comfort with the neighborhood and his place within it



ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

? How did the leaders of Boston's cultural planning process articulate the theory of change for the Boston AIR program and what were their explicit and implicit assumptions?



ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

ELEMENTS OF BOSTON AIR THEORY OF CHANGE FROM BOSTON CREATES CULTURAL PLAN AND NEA GRANT

The incomplete theory of change below is constructed from recommendations in the Boston Creates Cultural Plan and online materials about the Boston AIR program.

INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACT/VISION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 artists in each cohort• \$22,500 in funding for each Boston AIR• BCYF host sites and related city staff• City officials and staff from a range of departments and agencies• Administrative support from 2 MOAC staffers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshops to connect AIRs with city officials, to build understanding between both groups (educate artists about city governance, educate officials about artistic processes), and build bonds within the cohort for collaboration• Boston AIRs investigate policy issues of interest (first 3 mo. of residency)• Community-based arts residencies at BCYFs across the city	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not clearly articulated in cultural plan or other documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City policymaking and practice integrates creative thinking into the work of every municipal department and all planning efforts• Boston residents engage in civic discourse, planning, and creative problem-solving through artistic and cultural experiences	<p>Arts and culture are integrated into all aspects of civic life, inspiring all Bostonians to value, engage in, and reap the benefits of creativity in their individual lives and in their communities</p>



ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT ASSUMPTIONS FOR THEORY OF CHANGE

Aside from the Boston Creates Cultural Plan, there were no formal policy documents outlining anticipated outcomes or impact for the program. The explicit and implicit assumptions below were mined from interviews with policy makers, artists, and city partners involved with the program through their inductive understanding of the program's intended goals.

Policy Makers:

- **Explicit assumption 1:** embedding artists in city departments will bring a “culture of critique” or creative problem solving -- artists and city partners will have conversations about where changes are needed and explore solutions to work around challenges
 - **Implicit assumption 1a:** city partners will be open to this way of thinking, operating, and acting -- culture of critique will translate into policy change
- **Explicit assumption 2:** embedding artists in municipal community settings will broaden city staff and residents' understanding of what an artists is and does
 - **Implicit assumption 2a:** this expanded understanding will allow artists to step into the role of conduit between communities and government -- they will show the city and residents that they can play a significant role in organizing civil society
- **Explicit assumption 3:** The program will build capacity in the artist community by strengthening their voice, sharpening their understanding of how city government operates, and how they can work within the system to affect change
 - **Implicit assumption 3a:** this capacity building will bear fruit over time and allow artists to continue growing in their strength as activists and facilitators for civic engagement and policy change work
- **Explicit assumption 4:** Boston AIR will help to change artists' perceptions that the city doesn't invest in them or value their contributions
 - **Implicit assumption 4a:** The residency program will provide prestige, resources, and attention that will make artists in the community feel valued

AIRs:

- **Explicit assumption 1:** engaging in artistic processes can lift up community voices and empower traditionally marginalized citizens
 - **Implicit assumption 1a:** empowerment is the key to expanding civic engagement and ultimately grassroots activism to shape city policy

City Partners:

- Did not have a clear sense of the program, its goals, or how the city could benefit from the collaboration. No real theory of change or vision for the residency beyond supplemental programming for the communities they serve



? Under what conditions are the artists in residence able to meet the goals of the program and the cultural plan more broadly? Under what conditions do they struggle, and why?



ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

CONDITIONS OVERVIEW

In my interviews, I asked policy makers, artists, city partners, and community members to reflect on the conditions that contributed to success as well as barriers they had to overcome. Below is my synthesis of common themes related to positive conditions and barriers in the implementation of the program:

Positive Conditions:

- Artists feel welcomed by city partners at the outset of the residency (open to experience, express excitement, etc.)
- City partners commit time and show willingness to engage in an open-ended collaborative process
- Trust is forged between artist and city counterpart, which can lead to thought partnership and/or co-creation
- Artists are embedded in core programming or given access to peak program hours
- Artists receive necessary resources from city partners: work space, storage, administrative support, supplies, etc.
- Artists have previous experience with community organizing or community co-creation processes
- Office of Arts and Culture effectively stewards relationships between artists and other city agencies to amplify the artists' community-based work

Barriers:

- Agencies and artists don't select the residency site; sometimes the pairing is a good fit (e.g. relationships are easily forged), sometimes it is not
- City officials or staff don't make commitments, or are difficult to reach
- City officials have a narrow view of what an artist is and does -- murals, branding, or tactical products
- City hosts aren't open to letting their agenda shift to respond to the questions and new ideas that an artist may interject into the process
- City officials lack clarity around Boston AIR goals; makes it difficult to find alignment and shared purpose. Artistic process is by definition exploratory and nebulous in the early stages, which does not align well with the style of city bureaucrats
- Residency site doesn't have adequate physical resources for the nature of the artist's project
- Artists lack experience in developing community-based work and must build infrastructure in BCYFs from ground up

Other Challenges:

- Building a strong foundation of trust and powerful engagement for the community and then ending the residency; need for sustained arts engagement in the BCYFs and question of whether AIR is the best vehicle to provide this given its design (residencies end, artists turn over, etc.)
- Steep learning curve for artists who aren't familiar with the way city government works, what resources are available, and what they can reasonably ask of agencies
- For some city partners: many meetings with the city, which feels additive and not core to the work of the residency



? If the city were to initiate an independent evaluation of Boston AIR, what questions would they need to ask? How could they go about measuring the impact of the program against its stated goals?



ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

OUTCOMES OVERVIEW

In my interviews, I asked policy makers, artists, city partners, and community members to reflect on the outcomes, both intended and surprising, from the Boston AIR program. These outcomes form the basis of my 'Boston AIR 2.0 Theory of Change' in the final section of this deck.

- **Policy Makers:**

- Artists form connections with city officials, build a base of shared understanding and empathy
- Strengthens the idea of Boston as an arts city and artists feel more valued, resourced, etc.
- Artists inject creative ideas and new ways of working into city government or provide interesting takes on policy issues

- **AIRs:**

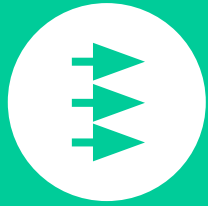
- Deeper understanding of city governance, policy development, evaluation, etc.
- Access to city staff and new professional relationships that can be strengthened over time
- Greater ability to align artistic vision with community needs and civic processes -- they grow their capacity to create socially-informed community art
- Changed self-perception; artist with a capital A, artist with value beyond artistic/cultural products

- **City Partners:**

- More expansive sense of what an artist is and does
- Greater openness to and understanding of the value an artist can bring: attention to city work, empowering and mobilizing citizens, etc.
- Deeper appreciation for the desire of constituents to have a creative voice and engage civically

- **Community Participants:**

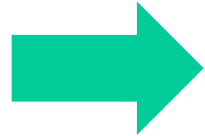
- Greater sense of empowerment, agency, and mobility (e.g. AIR activities take them to areas and spaces in the city that had felt closed off previously)
- Pathway for exploring and articulating challenges faced by communities -- racial equity, gender-based discrimination, mass incarceration, to name a few
- New creative skills
- Access to creative engagement as a tool for healing



CONCLUSIONS + RECOMMENDATIONS

What were the consequences of the gap between the policy makers explicit and implicit assumptions?

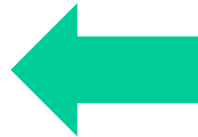
The intended goal for the program was to **infuse creativity into municipal processes and inform policy.**



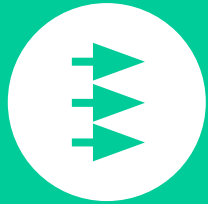
Yet, artists were based in **community settings, not municipal departments.** The assumption was that artists would be able to build on their community-based work to form collaborative relationships with city decision makers and begin to shape policy conversations.



However, the program did serve as an effective **vehicle to incubate socially-informed community projects and grow artists' capacity to do this work.**



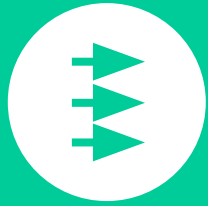
This gap between design and goals led to relatively **low levels of policy or municipal process influence.**



CONCLUSIONS + RECOMMENDATIONS

BOSTON AIR THEORY OF CHANGE 2.0

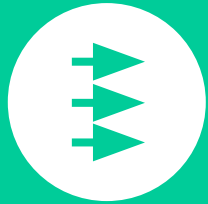
INPUTS	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	OUTCOMES	IMPACT/VISION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 artists in each cohort• \$22,500 in funding for each Boston AIR• Opt-in BCYF host sites and related city staff• Opt-in city departments/agencies and related staff• Administrative support from 2 MOAC staffers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workshops to connect AIRs with city officials, to build understanding between both groups• Opt-in community arts residencies at BCYFs (activities take different forms for each Boston AIR)• Opt-in partnerships between Boston AIRs and city departments to leverage art and creativity to advance and amplify city goals• Mediation and translation work by MOAC staff between artists and city colleagues	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Artistically-informed participatory processes• Arts-based community organizing activities• Arts education programming• Civically informed arts curricula• Public art installations• Short films• Exhibitions• Public performances• Recorded oral histories• Books and creative writing pieces• Joint-projects between Boston AIRs and other city agencies• Articles in local media outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Artists and city officials build relationships and shared understanding• Artists build their civic capacity through deeper understanding of city governance, access to city staff, resources, and systems• City staff gain a more expansive sense of what an artist is and does and greater openness to the value an artist can bring: attention to city work, empowering and mobilizing citizens, etc.• Community participants build new creative skills and grow their levels of empowerment, agency, and mobility• Artists create body of work and creative connections that anchor their careers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A stronger, more participatory civil society in Boston, facilitated by artists who are engaged in socially informed creative work



CONCLUSIONS + RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the Theory of Change 2.0, I would recommend the following learning questions as the foundation for evaluating Boston AIR's impact over time:

1. Does Boston AIR expand artists' civic capacity by increasing their knowledge of city government processes and access to a network of city staff and decision makers?
2. In what ways, if at all, do city staff and officials change their view about the role an artist can play in their work? Are they more open to creative partnerships and collaborating with artists in the future?
3. Do city staff and officials feel more anchored in their constituent communities through their participation in Boston AIR activities and processes?
4. What new skills or awareness do community participants gain through their participation in Boston AIR projects?
5. Do participants grow in their sense of empowerment or agency to address social issues that impact their communities? Do they gain access to new networks that enable them to do this advocacy work more effectively?



CONCLUSIONS + RECOMMENDATIONS

FRAMEWORK FOR EVALUATION

TYPES OF CAPACITY

INFORMATION

New skills, knowledge, awareness

ORGANIZATION

social anchoring, relationships, networks, agency

STAKEHOLDERS

ARTISTS

CITY STAFF

RESIDENTS

INDICATORS

Information

- deeper understanding of city processes and governance
- skills in community-based organizing and creative work

Information

- broader view of role of artist
- greater awareness of community issues or concerns

Information

- new creative skills
- broader view of role of artist
- deeper understanding of city processes and governance

Organization

- relationships with city staff
- stronger community relationships and anchoring
- expanded civic networks

Organization

- relationships with artists
- stronger community relationships and anchoring

Organization

- stronger or more cohesive community relationships
- access to networks for civic engagement