

PARTICIPATORY PLANNING IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: A STUDY OF
BEST PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

The role of the museum throughout its history has been to serve its community, through the education and entertainment of the public (Starn 2005; Skramstad 1999). An institution, where education intersects with entertainment, creates a space where people are drawn together and in which community flourishes (Association of Children's Museums 2005; Gates 2003, Kreps 2009). The museum builds community by strengthening relationships through shared experience and interests. Many museums identify community-building as a goal in their mission statements. Unfortunately, some organizations fall short of that mission because they fail to effectively reflect and respond to their communities. With each exhibit installment and program design, with every newly developing museum organization, museums have the opportunity to share the power of decision-making with their audience, young or old. Some museum organizations have trouble relinquishing their "expert authority" while others fail at their feeble attempts of token public participation.

Successful integration of the public does occur when museum leaders are diligent in their efforts and willing to commit to public participation at the institutional level. Participatory planning provides stakeholders, including community members, with a voice in the changes that will affect them, making the planning and design process a collaborative, grassroots production. With this method, the public is no longer just the audience, but an active participant in the museum design.

For children's museums, the child is the targeted visitor and the participation of children should be sought after. Enlisting children to participate holds real value, but that value is often overlooked. Children who are given the opportunity to participate and have their voice heard will more likely continue to seek out other opportunities to contribute to their community in meaningful ways. When today's youth are encouraged to contribute to society, it fosters a culture of civic-mindedness, leading to a more engaged community tomorrow (Frank 2006; Hart 1992).

This project identifies strategies for successfully enacting participatory planning in the context of museum development, highlighting the voice of the child in children's museums. This was accomplished using multiple methods including key-informant interviews and participant observation. Content analysis of interviews was used to identify patterns of methods used by museums to successfully integrate the voice and actions of the surrounding and visiting community into a development project. Results and conclusions were synthesized into a best practices guide, which may serve as a reference for leaders in museum organizations. The guide's purpose is to outline strategies to effectively incorporate communities into the planning and development process of a new museum project, such as an exhibit, a renovated museum component, or an entirely new museum building. By creating and distributing an easy-to-use guide which demonstrates past successes in participatory organizational planning, this project may benefit and aid in the advancement of the museum community as well as other similar organizations genuinely interested in the perspective and participation of the communities they serve.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine the practices used in successful participatory planning projects amongst museum organizations in order to create a best practices guide which may help direct museum leaders successfully integrate their communities into planning projects. Although relevant to various types of community organizations, this study focuses on children's museums and highlights the voice of the child in the planning process.

The study of "genuine participation" in planning projects is important because organizations all too often mistake input for involvement. Participation moves beyond mere "tokenism" and more towards "genuine participation" when the public participates in the decision-making process and the implications of their involvement are made clear to them (Hart 1992, Iltus & Hart 1995, Shier 2001). Sharing in decision-making ultimately empowers the community to create the changes that they wish to see. They must be engaged through dialogue, communication and collaboration to be empowered with voice and influence. When this is accomplished, community members feel more confident, more trusting in the organization, and more connected to the museum and the planning project (Hart 1992). Accordingly, the organization benefits from increased participation and ability to better serve their audiences.

This project was conducted in collaboration with a children's museum located in Arizona during the visioning stages of their new museum building. While some guides have been developed for participatory planning (i.e. Children & Young People's Unit

2001; Kirby et. al. 2003; Tufte & Mefalopulos 2009), no known document exists for the field of museums and particularly for children's museums. In April of 2009, this study was accepted to present at the Association of Children's Museum's annual conference "Declare Your Impact! InterActivity2009." The children's museum in Arizona is one organization of many that stand to benefit from this study.

Furthermore, the communities in which participatory planning take place will benefit greatly. The practice of genuine participation, where the public is collaboratively involved in making decisions on aspects of their communities creates stronger ties between the greater community and its organizations, and between community members themselves. This leads to the generation of social capital and to a greater sense of community. Individuals who participate in such a project may also experience a growth in character, through increased self-confidence and sense of power. This sense of growth is magnified with conventionally excluded groups, including young people. A participatory project which seeks out the perspective and voice of the child will give youth an opportunity to contribute to their community in a meaningful way, building their confidence and their skills.

Too often, adult attitudes toward children's perceived limited capabilities or vulnerabilities prohibit openness to children's perspectives (Frank 2006; Hart 1992; Petts & Leach 2000; Sinclair 2004). Children are not allowed into the conversation because socio-cultural attitudes towards their capabilities cast them into submissive roles and subdue their potential. Children deserve to be treated with respect and their perspectives and opinions deserve proper consideration, especially in projects that directly affect them

and their communities. A participatory project that involves children and counts them as citizens will work to deconstruct negative socio-cultural perspectives towards children, contributing to a shift towards an appreciation for children's capabilities and an increased value for their perspectives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purposes of this study are first, to identify strategies to engage community in successful participatory planning projects in museum organizations and second, to identify successful approaches to integrate child participation in children's museum planning projects. The following literature review provides a brief overview of current literature regarding participatory planning and museum studies. It also synthesizes current literature concerning child participation in development projects as separate from public participation as a whole. Note that the terms "children," "youth," and "young people" are used interchangeably here. These terms can be defined as "people younger than 18 years old." The literature review draws from professional fields including planning and development, community development and museum studies among others. The meaning of participatory planning and its motivations and barriers are addressed. The role of the museum and children's museum in the community are also discussed. Lastly, an overview of literature concerning effective practices for participation and child participation is provided.

Defining Participatory Planning

The concept of participation is a very convoluted term, frequently used, misunderstood, loosely applied and difficult to define (Hart 1992; Sinclair 2004; Tufte & Mefalopoulos 2009). The most basic understanding of participation is to take part in

something and so this label is easily applied to a spectrum of experiences. People understand and conceptualize the idea of participation within the context of planning and development projects differently (Cornwall 2008; Horelli 2002). While there are seemingly endless ways to define participation, this study speaks to the concept of what Andrea Cornwall (2008) has termed “invited participation” that is, participation of community members in a project which is initiated by an agency or organization (2008: 280).

Models of Participation

Degrees or levels of participation in which a person or public may be perceived as less participatory or more participatory are modeled in Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation (Arnstein 1969). Created in the late 1960s, Sherry R. Arnstein’s Ladder is a well-known and often-used typology applied to participation; it situates citizen control at the top, non-participation at the bottom and tokenism in between with varying degrees of participation within the three sections (Cornwall 2008). Practical application of models such as Arnstein’s ladder is difficult though, because the lines between one type of participation and the next are ambiguous (Cornwall 2008). To further complicate the concept and misconception of participation and participatory planning, numerous labels are used to name the type of planning that actively involves the public, such as advocacy planning, user planning, community action planning, deliberative planning, collaborative planning, and community planning (Horelli 2002).

Participatory Planning: A Method in Visitor Studies?

In the museum field, visitor studies is a quickly-expanding and evolving area of study which deals with eliciting input from visitors or potential visitors in order to improve on organizational goals and services (Fakatseli 2010). It involves the visitors and gives them an opportunity to “take part.” Research methods found in social science, are often employed to obtain such input. Examples include surveys, focus groups, observation, and prototyping to name a few (Babbie 2001; Berg 2004; Cassell 2004; Chamaz 2006; Diamond 1999; Fakatseli 2010; Singleton and Straits 1999). Front-end, formative and summative evaluations are conducted at the beginning, middle, and end stages of a new development respectively (Diamond 1999; Falk and Dierking 1998; Fakatseli 2010). This type of work is valuable and necessary in order to learn and understand more about an organization’s audience, but participant input does not equal genuine participation (Kreps 2009).

Participatory Planning as Social Agency

Participatory Planning and genuine participation go beyond the realm of visitor studies. It brings the consumer in, not only as a consultant, but also as a partner, building on local knowledge and experience, growing out of the community in a reciprocal fashion; both the project and the community work through a process of self reflection and identification (Kreps 2009). In her chapter entitled “A Methodology of Participatory Planning,” Liisa Horelli (2002) gives a thoroughly synthesized definition of participatory planning as:

“a social, ethical, and political practice in which individuals or groups, assisted by a set of tools, take part in varying degrees at the overlapping phases of the planning and decision-making cycle that may bring forth outcomes congruent with the Participants’ needs and interests” (2002: 612).

Participation is “the fundamental right of citizenship” and that by which a democracy is built and should be measured (Hart 1992). The power dynamic goes through a drastic shift during genuine participatory projects, from expert-authority to collaborative-shared, empowering those who might not have previously had any voice at all (Cornwall 2008; Kreps 2009; White 1996).

The Voice of the Child: Children as Participants in Planning

In November of 1989 the United Nations held the Convention on the Rights of the Child which stimulated conversation and drove policies pertaining to the rights of the children as human beings and their deserved respect as citizen participants (Hart 1992; Frank 2006; Shier 2001; Sinclair 2004). Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is an important statement in the document, declaring that a “child who is capable of forming his or her own views [shall be assured] the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child” (Officer of the High Commissioner for Human Rights 2007). The convention and subsequent treaty was the impetus for increased attention to children’s participation and the body of literature in this field has since been rapidly growing (Frank 2006; Iltus & Hart 1995; Shier 2001).

In an article published in the *Journal of Planning Literature*, Kathryn I. Frank (2006) reports on her findings from a comprehensive review of empirical studies addressing the impact on participants and communities of youth participation. The eighteen studies she examined took place from 1987 up to the early 2000s and were located within a total of seven different countries. The results of her review positioned the practice of youth participation in a positive light, with little to no negative impacts found on either the community or the participants (Frank 2006). Youth participants increased civic capacity, communities increased awareness of youth concerns and projects generally “improved livability for all” (Frank 2006: 369).

In the field of planning and development, one individual has been “uniquely influential” as a pioneering proponent of child participation: Roger Hart (Shier 2001: 108). His typology for varied degrees of child participation, *The Ladder of Child Participation* (see Appendix A: Hart’s Model), was modeled after Arnstein’s Ladder; it is widely adopted for ascertaining the degree of child participation or non-participation in a planning project (Frank 2006; Shier 2001; Sinclair 2004). Hart’s (1992) Ladder has eight rungs, ascending from the lowest three rungs of non-participation up to a final rung of full participation: a project that is child-initiated and in which adults are invited to join in the decision-making (Hart 1992; Shier 2001). Hart (1992) dedicates much of his writing to accounts of children and youth from around the world working together to negotiate through problems, to make decisions and to build community, but his work also criticizes the exploitation and manipulation of young people, warning against “tokenism,” the frail and manipulative application of the term participation (Hart 1992; Iltus & Hart 1995).

Projects which establish genuine child participation are beneficial in many ways. As active participants who have actual influence in the decision-making process, young people will feel an “enhanced sense of efficacy and civic competence” (Checkoway, Pothukuchi, and Finn 1995 as cited in Frank 2006: 359). Hands-on experience gives them self-confidence and they are able to apply their newly found planning skills to future projects, for which they also have increased capacity and greater interest (Frank 2006). Given the correct tools and skills, children need only to learn that they are capable in order to overcome a challenge or accomplish a task. Youth will also become more self-aware of their capabilities as a group (Frank 2006). Their hard work is rewarded by the feeling of empowerment and the ability to create change in their community.

Additionally, youth participation seems to have a positive impact on adults as well, for working with youth in a participation project invariably increases adult’s perceptions of youth; adults develop more respect for children’s capabilities and interests (Frank 2006). Participatory planning projects may help adults break out of some common preconceptions of children as second-class citizens, advancing societal respect towards young citizens and their capabilities as a whole (Frank 2006). This alteration in adult awareness may eventually lead to a critical and impending paradigm shift in the societal perception towards children and the role they play in our society (Sinclair 2004).

The Museum as Community Organization

The history of American museums is about as old as the United States itself, with the first museums dating back to before the 19th century; these early associations were established by creative entrepreneurs for the purpose of educating and entertaining the public (Skramstad 1999). Dependent on visitor's admission fees, characteristic of these organizations was a bias towards community values (Skramstad 1999). Exhibitions blended education and entertainment in a manner meant to inspire wonder and encourage dialogue in the community (Skramstad 1999).

In the 1900s, with the onset of the American public education system, the museum became very tied to the academic world and was frequently founded in partnership with universities, giving direction to a strong focus on collection-based research (Phillips 2005; Skramstad 1999). This shift was further progressed by American economic development, which allowed museums to begin building large collections of precious artifacts (Skramstad 1999). The goals then were to collect, preserve, study and display exhibitions meant to inform the public whereby the curator was expert interpreter and public, passive learner. The institution determined content and message - it selected which stories to tell.

The latter decades of the twentieth century, from the 1960s through 1990s again brought about changes to the museum role in the community (Williams 2001). Museums responded to the social revolution of the 1960s, after the American public called on museums to represent social groups previously ignored or otherwise misrepresented

(Williams 2001). Frequently marginalized groups challenged the authority of museums, criticized them for their lack of cultural respect and sensitivity, and charged them to exhibit accurate representations of different groups (Skramstad 1999; Williams 2001).

Also in the 1960s and 1970s, museums began to further develop their outreach programs, extending their services from their buildings and taking them out to the community (Williams 2001). By the 1980s, museums were concentrating much more on their civic responsibility and being held accountable for their actions; they were seriously re-examining their role in the community and the institution's traditional relationship with the public (Starn 2005; Williams 2001).

In recent decades this major transition in the museum professional field has continued its shift towards a more publicly accessible and responsive organization (Skramstad 1999; Williams 2001). Some institutions hold fast to their expert authority and research-based collections, offering a type of didactic informational model to the public, while others have a new focus: the goal of providing visitors with an affective experience (Skramstad 1999; Starn 2005; Williams 2001). In this model, the visitor is engaged with interactive exhibits and multimedia demonstrations, a practice in experiential education. This shift from an object-centered to a visitor-centered model requires a museum to reverse its strategies for determining its content; instead of beginning with their collected artifacts, they need to go outside of their walls to the public and work inward from there.

Children's Museums

Museums and other like organizations, meeting needs in communities are commonly established by joint efforts of civic-minded groups of lay citizens (Skramstad 1999). Many communities were acutely aware of the need for an informal learning space for children and so emerged the idea of a museum specifically designed for children. The world's first museum for children, The Brooklyn's Children's Museum, was established in 1899 and Boston soon followed in its footsteps, but it was not until the mid-sixties that they took the form that they are today (Duitz 1992; Lewin-Benham 1997). Concurrent industrial museums were the precursor to present science centers such as the Exploratorium founded by Frank Oppenheimer in 1969, a modern model-standard that children's museums often use (Lewin-Benham 1997; Starn 2005). Within the past two or three decades community museums have sprung up throughout the country bringing about a museum boom (Skramstad 1999; Starn 2005). Parallel to other museums at the time, children's museums were undergoing a transformation and establishing new directions from the sixties onward.

Also as reflected in the general museum field, children's museums have become much more intently focused on an interactive experience for their visitors. Children's museums encourage play with hands-on exhibits and interactive technologies. The Association of Children's Museums (ACM), an international association created for the purpose of leading and supporting children's museums, states that part of their mission is to help create spaces where "play inspires lifelong learning" (Association of Children's

Museums 2009). Children's museums are intently focused on providing an affective experience.

Informally established in 1962, today ACM serves 341 museum members throughout the world to help "build the capacity of children's museums to serve as town squares for children and families" (Association of Children's Museums 2009). The image of town squares stirs a sentiment of togetherness and collaboration, an authentic feeling of community. This is the potential of museums: to serve as a place where people and families gather to discuss shared issues or just to meet others and form lasting relationships (Association of Children's Museums 2005; Gates 2003). Children's museums extend their services through outreach programs which aim to increase access to those who otherwise would not be able to benefit from the experience. Museums have the ability to inspire trust, help to create community identity, and provide the space for meaningful social interaction, making them centers for democracy and civic engagement (Gates 2003; Kreps 2009; Kwak et. al. 2004).

Participatory Planning: Museum Motivations

The content and mission of public institutions, such as museums, should be rooted in their communities. Without properly reflecting and responding to the people they serve, museums soon lose their credibility and connectedness, which are essential to their effectiveness and success (Kreps 2009; Skramstad 1999). Harold Skramstad (1999) elaborates on this idea, arguing that changes in the community may require changes in the mission and goals of the organization and furthermore, that if a museum fails to be

reflexive and responsive to community needs, it is a good possibility that another organization will form to meet those needs (1999). Responding to their community and serving them accordingly is in the best interest of the museum.

Organizations like children's museums, that are in the businesses of serving youth, may be interested in determining the needs of the population they serve in order to better inform their programming and services (Children & Young People's Unit 2001; Sinclair 2004). Although museums in general are predominantly non-profit organizations, they are still businesses and even non-profit organizations need to sustain an income in order to keep their doors open (Skramstad 1999). Organizations can obtain pertinent information through the use of research tools such as surveys, interviews, observations and prototyping. By obtaining the opinions, behaviors and attitudes of their target population, an organization is better-equipped to provide a product that their audiences are interested in consuming. Museums also frequently conduct evaluation research, whereby the visitors' opinions and behaviors are researched to determine effectiveness of a program or exhibit or to determine if goals are being met (Diamond 1999).

Participatory projects can forge strong relationships between the public and the organization as well as between participants. These types of networks and relationships between institution and members of the community contribute to bridging social capital and increased social capital may lead to better public institutions and systems, such as better schools and lower crime (Grootaert 2004; Putnam 1995). According to Robert Putnam (1995), social capital can refer to features of social organization, such as

coordination and cooperation, which serve to facilitate mutual benefit in the effort to achieve common goals. These are the same tenets of participatory practices. Networks of civic engagement encourage social trust (Kwak et. al. 2004) which in turn builds social capital; stronger networks increase likelihood of future collaboration between community members (Grootaert 2003; Putnam 1995; Veenstra 2003).

Motivations to Include Child Participation

In addition to the motivations for participatory planning discussed above, other motivations for incorporating child participation into a planning project may be more child-focused, benefitting the child in a more meaningful way. Providing an opportunity for a young person to exercise their voice in an important matter is a worthy goal for an organization. To empower youth is to create a great impact in a young person's life. Museums can provide this opportunity for growth in a young citizen. A child whose thoughts and opinions are heavily-weighted and who is treated with respect will develop more self-respect and confidence (Children & Young People's Unit 2001; Frank 2006; Shier 2001; Sinclair 2004). Children involved in participatory projects develop a mutually beneficial relationship with the adults with whom they collaborate, reciprocally learning and teaching one another (Frank 2006). During a participatory planning project, youth are in a constant state of learning through practice of communication, social and decision-making skills, learning about the process of planning and development and learning about themselves. Young people are also very likely to have fun and make friends while they remain focused on a productive task in a participatory project, building on their own social networks (Frank 2006).

The community also benefits from youth participatory projects. As youth participate and begin to realize they have a voice in their community, they begin to feel more connected to that community, building social capital (Frank 2006; Shier 2001). Democracy and civic engagement are also increased. Democratic practices are strengthened and affirmed when children make decisions and act on behalf of themselves, whether or not as representatives of a larger group (Hart 1992; Shier 2001; Sinclair 2004). Civic capacity is enhanced and encouraged by participation; youth who become involved in their community will more likely partake in civic engagement later (Frank 2006; Hart 1992). By promoting democracy, building social capital and contributing to civic engagement, participatory projects are beneficial to the community. By altering the perceptions of adults towards children and increasing the value of child-as-citizen, participatory projects are likewise beneficial to the greater society as a whole.

Barriers to Conducting Participatory Planning Projects

While the literature (Cornwall 2008; Sinclair 2004) touts of the numerous benefits of participatory planning, some researchers warn against over-simplification of what is a very complex process with numerous stakeholders (Frank 2006). A participation project that does not elicit some conflict is cause for suspicion (White 1996). The “community” or the “public” are often dealt with as homogeneous entities with singular interests when in fact they are not, and their varying views need to be taken into consideration (Cornwall 2008; Kreps 2009; White 1996). Participatory planning projects involve diverse players

including organizational leaders and staff, designers and builders, youth participants and their families, and possibly outside researchers, other institutions or other invested groups. Collaboration is about synthesizing different perspectives, but not everyone gets what they want because, most likely, people will have conflicting interests (Botes & Van Rensburg 2000). With so many diverse perspectives to take into account, effective collaboration and settling on an agreement where all stake-holders feel satisfied can be immensely challenging. Oftentimes, economic interests and funding sources dictate planning projects, which can severely restrict the capacity of the community to effectively engage in collaboration (Frank 2006). From the participatory planning perspective, the weakness of “invited participation” is that it remains owned and orchestrated by the organization, despite the most noble intentions (Cornwall 2008).

Additionally, involving groups who are usually on the periphery may be a challenge and if organizations fail to exercise diligence in providing opportunities for these marginalized groups, participatory projects may serve to further entrench their exclusion (Cornwall 2008; Kreps 2009; Petts & Leach 2000). If participation means that the voiceless will have a voice, it is inevitable that there will be some objections (White 1996). Power shifts do not sit well with many people, especially those whose power is being dissipated and possibly for those to whom the power is shifted. It may be an issue of discomfort for people to speak up and take ownership, especially if they have since been denied this right.

People will also actively choose not to participate for a variety of reasons, which may include lack of self-confidence, resources, i.e. time, or interest (Botes & Van

Rensburg 2000). They may have been turned off to the idea due to lack of results in prior participation or they may have an aversion to the organization or setting based on previous experiences (Botes & Van Rensburg 2000; Cornwall 2008; Petts & Leach 2000). The organization should respect the right of an individual to choose not to participate, possibly a challenge for the organization (Hart 1992).

Fear and mistrust are common roots for these obstacles, but they must be overcome in order to evolve from inclusion and participation to influence and empowerment. People need to feel free to genuinely express themselves without fear so that their uninhibited opinions can be heard (Cornwall 2008). This necessitates trust which is built over time. Participatory planning done correctly can take an enormous amount of time, which can be a major obstacle (Botes & Van Rensburg 2000). During projects where the level of participation is intense, players grow weary of the cumbersome and time-consuming process, lose interest and drop out (Cornwall 2008). Consensus can be a draining and tedious process.

Challenges to Child Participation

Children's museums may seek out the perspectives of children in order to better inform their services, but many challenges arise when involving children, most of which come from adults. Adults can be afraid of initiating a child-participatory project because they do not want to relinquish their decision-making powers to children with no experience or expertise, thus, the challenge stems from adult perceptions and attitudes towards children and their capabilities (Iltus & Hart 1995). Youth participation can be seriously challenged by societal views towards young people in general (Frank 2006;

Hart 1992; Petts & Leach 2000; Sinclair 2004). Frank (2006) identifies four societal views towards youth which seriously hinder their participation: 1) developmental: children are not fully capable of making decisions based on their lack of experience; 2) vulnerable: children are vulnerable to adult exploitation; 3) legal: they do not yet have full rights and responsibilities; and 4) romantic: children's views are privileged over adults and insufficiently blended with adult opinions. Negative adult perceptions and attitudes is the most important challenge to overcome because genuine child participation cannot occur without an open and accepting frame of mind towards youth and their competence.

Youth engagement must begin with an open frame of mind, but participatory planning leaders must also be realistic about children's capabilities: they are limited by their emotional and psychological stage of development. Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child uses the language "the child who is capable of forming his or her own views" and "in accordance with the age and maturity of the child" to qualify a child's ability to participate (United Nations 2010). When helping to make decisions that affect other people, it is important to be able to take the perspective of other people, in other words, to see through someone else's eyes. Hart (1992) discusses this at length as the "perspective-taking ability" of children. Although this skill may not fully develop until a child is around 12 years of age, younger children are still capable of working with sensitive adults who can guide children through planning projects (Hart 1992).

Research challenges are common with child participation. Children are often considered sensitive subjects in research and special considerations need to be made for

involving them (Diamond 1999; Sinclair 2004). They are legally required to have parental consent for participation (Babbie 2001; Berg 2004; Diamond 1999). Due to legal hurdles such as these, an organization may develop reservations about including children in a participatory project.

Another barrier may be motivating children to become involved. Some children have grown tired of their consultations being sought out, only to have little to no influence over the decisions being made (Sinclair 2004). Other reasons participation may be challenging are that children may simply be uninterested or perhaps they lack the self-confidence in their abilities as a reflection of adult perception (Sinclair 2004).

Equal opportunity to participate may be very difficult for organizations to offer to all young stakeholders. Special care and increased efforts need to be made in order to do so. Youth participation projects begin to provide children with tools and strength to fight for equal rights and fight against discrimination (Hart 1992). Young people are no exception when it comes to historically marginalized populations; children of the racial minority, poor or disadvantaged children, younger children, non-English speaking children, and children with disabilities or special needs are often overlooked and excluded (Children & Young People's Unit 2001; Sinclair 2004). Like their parents or other adults, logistical and financial barriers and lack of resources will be present; some kids are unable to find or afford transportation to an event or meeting. Availability and access to participation need to be considered.

Identifying Best Practices for Community Participation

A common misconception of organizations is that they can replicate another organization's successful participatory project within their own community with the same results (Botes & Van Rensburg 2000). I would like to dispel this misconception here. In a well-executed participatory project, the process derives organically from the unique and specific dialogue between organization and community. Each case will take on different characteristics including the players, the setting, the project goals, the funding, the processes and the degree to which power is shared. No single model exists, no recipe to inform leaders on how to execute a successful participatory project on a step-by-step basis. Leaders must determine the appropriate level of engagement and participatory strategies, based on their context and purpose, while taking account of their own biases and assumptions (Sinclair 2004). Although every project will vary, the literature addresses general recommendations for the visualization and implementation of a participatory project. These recommendations are highlighted below.

An important initial challenge for project leaders is to determine intent and goals of the participatory project (Petts & Leach 2000; Sinclair 2004). The essential question for organizations considering a participatory planning project to ask is "Why are we interested in community participation? Other questions may be "Who will it benefit and how? A typology put forward by Sarah White compares the motivations of organizations to those of participants at various levels of engagement in a project (cited in Cornwall 2008). The highest level of participation is labeled "transformative" where it is used for

the purposes of empowerment by both groups (Cornwall 2008). The lowest form of participation is called “nominal” in which both participants and the organization interact under the guise of “participation” in order to get by at the minimal level required to receive benefits such as funding or services (Cornwall 2008). White’s model may prove useful for organizations in determining their own interests and motivations and also perhaps for shedding light on possible motivations from the community perspective as well.

With genuine participation, the public is optimally involved throughout the process from the beginning stages of visualization to the follow-up stages of evaluation (Kreps 2009; Potter 2006; Tufte & Mefalopulos 2009). The visitor shares power with the provider of services—in this case, museums—and that shared power is often achieved through various tools and methods for consensus-building and decision-making (Horelli 2002; Kreps 2009). Project leaders should act as facilitators and assistants in tandem with the public rather than consulting experts (Botes & Van Rensburg 2000; Frank 2006; Horelli 2002). This collaborative partnership is the foundation of a successful participatory planning project (Horelli 2002; Kreps 2009). Without the built relationship between the organization and the visitor, there is no shared power, no genuine participation. Sustained dialogue and ongoing interactions and communication are necessary in order to maintain such a relationship (Kreps 2009; Tufte & Mefalopulos 2009). If organizational leaders are genuinely concerned with the thoughts, opinions, motivations, and behaviors of the visitor, those leaders will welcome their once-clients to become future-friends.

Trust, rapport, reciprocity, flexibility and transparency are just a few main components to a participatory approach to museum development (Botes & Van Rensburg 2000; Petts & Leach 2000; Kreps 2009; Tufte & Mefalopulos 2009). Transparency is essential to a good participatory project (Cornwall 2008). It should be evident exactly who has the opportunity to contribute to decisions at various stages and why (Cornwall 2008). Does the community vote on who serves on an advisory board? Are particular subjects selected and determined by demographics? The process should be plain and clear. Respect is a fundamental element in a successful participatory project. The organization must view the community participant as a source of knowledge and culture then build from there (Botes & Van Rensburg 2000; Kreps 2003; Petts & Leach 2000). This requires facilitators to act with cultural sensitivity, openness, and respect. It also requires the skill of active listening. Listening and responding accordingly to community members, especially those who are frequently marginalized is a requirement (Botes & Van Rensburg 2000; Kreps 2009). The organization that desires to successfully involve their community will strive to fully integrate these goals into their development project and furthermore, into their organizational mission so that the invested trust and resulting relationship between organization and community is sustained.

Strategies to Consider for Effective Participation with Children

Based on her review of studies of child participation, one of the lessons Frank observed for effective child participation was to give youth a voice (2006). With further examination regarding this lesson, she speaks to the power imbalance of adult-child relationships and asserts that the first condition for effective youth participation is to

address that power imbalance, especially during the decision-making process (Frank 2006). These types of dialogues can begin from the perspective and situation of the child (Potter 2006; Sinclair 2004). It is important for adult leaders to sit down and sift through goals, roles and responsibilities together with the children. Youth should be involved in all aspects of the planning process from conceptual to technical (Hart 1992; Iltus & Hart 1995). Children should take part in these conversations in order to elucidate perceptions unknown to adults. Characteristics for project team members to consider while visualizing a participatory project include the organization and its goals, children participants, development project details, and available resources such as time and funding (Sinclair 2004).

Clarity of intent and purpose is necessary for successful projects (Sinclair 2004). Questions to help determine intent include “What are the project goals?” and “What do the children get out of it?” Sinclair suggests applying the “Pathways to Participation” model (see Appendix B: Shier’s Model) by Harry Shier (Shier 2001; Sinclair 2004). Shier’s (2001) model offers project facilitators a chance to reflect on their own perceptions and their readiness to take children’s views into account at various levels of participation. It poses questions about procedure, policy, and perception—issues best considered during the visioning stages of a planning project.

Transparency should be an important goal for organizations. Children should help to decide or at least be informed, about how their input will influence and has influenced the decision-making process (Children & Young People’s Unit 2001; Hart 1992; Iltus & Hart 1995; Shier 2001). Children should be engaged with openness and

honesty; for example, if a proposal made by a child advisory group cannot be incorporated into the plan, the reasons should be explained to them in a timely fashion and in terms they are capable of understanding.

Skills and knowledge effective contribution requires should be made available to children and adults. In order for adults to be more accepting of children's participation, it may be helpful to educate adults on the ways in which children are capable (Iltus & Hart1995). Children should be equipped and prepared for adults to build the children's capacity to learn and contribute; children like adults have to learn a skill before they can practice it effectively (Frank 2006). Skill-building workshops may be helpful for this task.

Methods and techniques for eliciting child perceptions should be "sensitive to children's ways of communicating and constructing meaning" (Potter 2006: 130). These methods may include modeling, mapping, interviewing, surveying, or videotaping (Frank 2006; Hart 1992; Iltus & Hart1995). Other strategies to include children in the planning process include consultation processes such as youth advisory groups (Petts & Leach 2000; Sinclair 2004). According to Iltus and Hart (1995), the most commonly used method for ascertaining children's ideas in a planning project is for them to make drawings of how they envision the new construction. They argue that it is significantly more informative to have conversations with the children about their depictions and to make annotations accordingly (Iltus & Hart 1995). This narrows the margin of error for deciphering children's art. In any project, organizers should use a variety of methods in

order to incorporate multiple voices at various stages of the process; use of diverse methods is key (Hart 1992; Iltus & Hart1995).

When children are taking part in the discussion and their participation is more meaningful, the next step forward in the movement is to ensure that children's participation has a greater impact on the decisions being made and the results being determined (Sinclair 2004). Instead of existing merely as a project in practice, participation can begin to be embedded in the culture of an organization. Senior management, other organizational leaders and staff at all levels need to buy-in to collaboration with children in order to successfully foster a culture of active child participation (Diamond 1999; Kirby et. al. 2003). A commitment towards child participation can be demonstrated in the text of an organization's mission. Actively engaging and empowering youth by sharing opportunities to influence decisions further realizes that commitment.

Genuine Participation versus Tokenism

Validation of genuine participation as opposed to tokenism or non-participation is important. At the minimal level, organizations or project leaders must convey the details of the project to participants, including the purpose and intent; who is involved, who is not involved and for what reasons; and the possible benefits to all parties involved (Cornwall 2008; Petts & Leach 2000). Clarity, transparency, and communication are important in accomplishing this. Furthermore, in order to increase the level of

participation, organizations must relinquish some power and begin to work together with community members to make decisions that will affect community member's lives (Cornwall 2008; Kreps 2009).

The literature on participation with children echoes these ideas (Hart 1992; Iltus & Hart 1995). The bottom three rungs of Hart's (1992) ladder (Appendix A: Hart's Model) represent the non-participation levels, that is to say the bottom rungs are where children take part but do not share power. Their opinions may not be used at all and in most cases, children are unaware of the intent and purposes of their own involvement. The lowest rung on Hart's Ladder of Children's Participation is labeled "Manipulation" and it represents situations when adults exploit children for their own benefit without the child's awareness or when there is no feedback to the child on how their input will be used (1992). "Tokenism" is the highest rung of non-participation and it describes situations such as when children are recruited to sit on a panel to represent their peers without having any prior knowledge of the issue or consultation with the ones they are to represent (Hart 1992). This level of (non)participation does not allow the child to have any choice in the subject and little influence if any at all.

According to Hart (1992) and his typology, it only takes a matter of information and understanding in order to move up to the "participation" section of the ladder. If adults are honest and transparent about the process and the goals of the project, tokenism will be no longer. The following requirements need to be met in order to qualify for the next level of participation: 1) children's understanding of intentions for the project; 2) children's understanding of who is making the decisions and the reasons behind their

participation; 3) children have a meaningful role or are able to influence decisions and 4) children volunteer to participate with full understanding of what the project entails (Hart 1992). Children need to be respected enough to be informed and their participation has to be meaningful so that their actions or opinions are at least taken into consideration when making decisions.

Shier's (2001) model, Pathways to Participation (Appendix B: Shier's Model) veers slightly away at this juncture in comparison to Hart's ladder. Shier (2001) argues that in order for children to experience the benefits of participation, i.e. increased self-confidence, democratic participation and civic-engagement etc., children must be directly involved with the decision-making process. The difference between Shier and Hart at this point, is that decisions may be influenced by children (Hart 2003) and decisions require the influence of children (Shier 2001) in order to be deemed as genuine participation. At this level of engagement, children are truly working collaboratively with adults. Both Hart (1992) and Shier's (1991) models progress upward to the empowerment of children where adults fully share the power of decision-making and furthermore where children make decisions for themselves.

Tokenism is vanquished when participants are engaged with full awareness and the power of decision-making is shared. A number of the typologies addressed here may be helpful to assess the levels of participation of community members, including children (Arnstein 1969; Hart 1992; Shier 2001). Leaders should determine concrete ways in which they can both support community as needed and ultimately to share power with participants (Frank 2006).

Shortcoming of Existing Literature

There are sufficient works on participation and participatory planning (Arnstein 1969; Botes & Van Rensburg 2000; Cornwall 2008; Kwak et. al. 2004; Laws 2003; Petts & Leach 2000; Shier 2001; Sinclair 2004; Tufte & Mefalopulos 2009; Veenstra 2003; White 1996), museums (Philips 2005; Skramstad 1999; Starn 2005; Williams 2001), and even children's participation in planning (CYPU 2001; Frank 2006; Hart 1992; Iltus & Hart 1995; Kirby et. al. 2003). Contrarily, there seems to be a gap in the literature addressing participatory planning, specific to museum development. The field of museum studies does have its visitor studies component which seeks the input of museum visitors, as discussed earlier, but the level of engagement with the community is not quite as profound as in participatory projects. Kreps (2009) and Potter (2006) both address this particular participatory planning in museum contexts, but generally, the topic seems to be open for further development. This study may contribute fittingly.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the conceptual framework, functioning to define and organize relevant theoretical concepts of this study and to discuss the meaning of their relationships. The model below (Figure 1) offers a visual description of the relationship between the museum organization and the community and how it affects social capital and participation. Originating from the concepts found in the literature, this conceptual framework will serve as a hypothetical model with which I will examine the results of this research. I will use it to reflect on the literature in light of the results and it will guide my discussion of findings. As a hypothetical model, the conceptual framework will also be flexible, allowing for possible shifts dependent on the findings of this study.

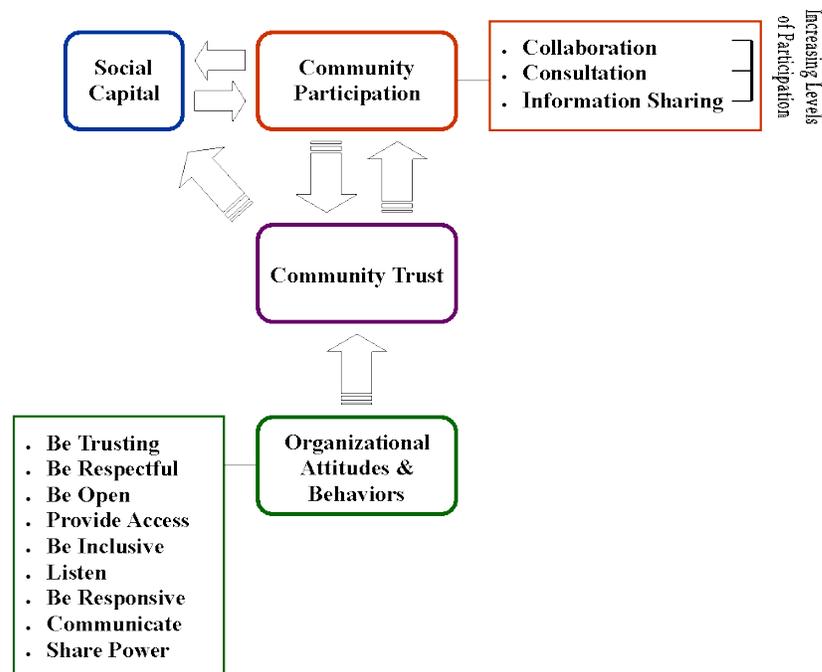


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework: Organizational Attitudes & Behaviors Affecting Community Participation.

Attitudes and Behaviors

This study addresses projects which are initiated by the organization rather than by the community, which may be referred to as *invited participation* (Cornwall 2008). Organizations demonstrate intent and purpose through their actions and attitudes, which affect a museum or organization's engagement with the larger community. A community will respond to perceived actions and attitudes of the museum or organization that attempts the outreach. The more trust, respect, openness, responsiveness, etc. the museum demonstrates to the community, the more effective the organization will be at building community trust.

Be Trusting

Trust is a requirement for an organization to be open to the idea of initiating a participatory project. The organization has to trust in the capabilities and knowledge of the community; they have to trust that enlisting the opinions and support of the public will be beneficial to all stakeholders. Trust is extended to the community from the organization through an invitation to become involved in a planning project, in a leap of faith that the community will reciprocate this gesture of trust by participating in the project, thus trust is reciprocal between museum and community (Covey 2006; Grootaert 2003).

Be Respectful

When an organization demonstrates a sentiment of trust towards members of the community it communicates respect and willingness to work together (Covey 2006).

Sincere respect for people's perspectives is important in order to instill a sense of self-value. Cultural sensitivity and respect is essential to understanding others' perspectives. These sensitivities will come into play when an organization begins to implement research strategies like interviews and focus groups. Each group of people will have their cultural norms in which even casual conversations operate, let alone public discussions. Permissions may need to be granted by elder populations or head of households or other group leaders. This is particularly applicable when interacting with children. Organizations should be respectful of cultural norms and traditions if they are aiming for genuine participation (Botes & Van Rensburg 2000; Kreps 2003; Petts & Leach 2000).

Access and Inclusion

The successful organization will create spaces for various groups from the community to become involved and will provide ways to increase access to these opportunities. They will also act mindfully by ensuring that all efforts are made to include a diverse of an audience as possible, making especially concerted efforts to include those populations that are traditionally marginalized and excluded (Cornwall 2008; Hart 1997).

Be Responsive

Organizations such as museums that are rooted in the community need to be continually responsive to be effective (Skramstad 1999). Responsiveness primarily requires listening and secondarily necessitates follow-through. Communication plays a large part in this. Responsiveness is necessary for demonstrating to the public that their

voice was heard and that their opinions have resulted in something concrete. It furthers the connectedness between organization and community by increasing community trust.

Sharing Power

The organization must resolve to share their power when it comes to making decisions concerning the development project (Frank 2006). Although this will take various forms at different levels for each project, this is the core principle for participatory planning projects. The museum or other organization that fails to share this right with public participants, fails to execute the participatory project successfully. Methods and tools that lend themselves to shared power include consensus-building and collaborative decision-making processes (Horelli 2002; Kreps 2009).

Communication

Communication is imperative to relationships between organization and community and contributes to the development of community trust (Kreps 2009; Tufte & Mefalopulos 2009). Communication here entails information-sharing (one-way communication) and dialogue (two-way communication). “Listening” is the receptive side of communication while “Being Responsive” is the active side; both are necessary to motivate “Community Trust” in this model. Transparency is also very important to the development of trust, which requires the communication of intentions, goals, benefits, and purpose (Cornwall 2008; Petts & Leach 2000). All other “Attitudes and Behaviors” are expressed through communication. “Collaboration,” “Openness,” “Trust,” “Access” and “Inclusion” all depend on how effectively an organization communicates with the community.

Community Trust

The abovementioned attitudes and behaviors will lead to the production of community trust, that is, trust in the organization and trust between members of the community. A certain amount of trust is necessary for initial participation and increased trust is required for further participation. Trust builds connectedness and increases future interactions (Grootaert 2003; Putnam 1995). The organization must continue to prove itself reliable, honest and trustworthy in order to increase community trust (Covey 2006). Community participation is also a contributor to community trust.

Community Participation

“Community Participation” is both the end goal and process for a participatory project. As discussed in the literature review, there are numerous forms of participation at various levels. The current model identifies participation at the lowest acceptable level for a successful project in the form of “Information-Sharing.” Information-sharing includes examples such as completing surveys, taking part in focus groups or interviews. This level of participation qualifies as successful as long as results from such studies, do in fact, influence decisions. The next higher form of participation is “Consultation,” whereby the community’s input is integrated by means of a more enduring method such as advisory councils. The last level addressed here is “Collaboration” in which the

community and organization are partners. The organization has shared their power and decisions are made collaboratively.

“Community Participation” is interdependent with both “Community Trust” and “Social Capital.” Each one builds on the other, therefore increased trust results in increased community participation and vice versa. The same holds true for increased social capital and participation.

Social Capital

Social connectedness, trust and civic-engagement such as seen in participatory planning project, are all contributing factors to the development of social capital (Grootaert 2003, Kwak et. al. 2004; Putnam 1995). Social capital is increased with the strengthening of relationships between community members and with community organizations (Grootaert 2003; Putnam 1995). Museums are organizations that play a vital part in increasing social connectedness by strengthening democracy, encouraging civic engagement and building community (Gates 2003). All of these social processes can be achieved through the successful adoption of a community-based participatory project. Participation in museum programs or visiting a museum contributes to the production of bridging social capital (Gates 2003, Grootaert 2003, Putnam 2005). Involvement in a participatory planning project increases social capital because it strengthens relationships, trust, and civic-engagement (Kwak et. al. 2004; Veenstra 2003). Furthermore, social capital and participatory planning share very similar

attributes, including trust, relationships, participation, cooperation, and civic-engagement.

“Social capital” and “Community Participation” build upon one another.

From Organizational Attitudes and Behaviors to Community Participation: The Flow

Through the demonstration of a number of specific attitudes and behaviors, a museum may contribute positively to the generation of “Community Trust.” These attitudes and behaviors include “Be Trusting,” “Be Respectful,” “Be Open,” “Provide Access,” “Be Inclusive,” “Listen,” “Be Responsive,” “Communicate,” and “Share Power.” The production of “Community Trust” increases the likelihood of “Community Participation.” “Community Participation,” “Social Capital,” and “Community Trust” are interdependent. “Community Participation,” the end goal, can be measured by degrees of participation based on practices used, including “Information-sharing,” “Consultation,” and “Collaboration.”

The attitudes and behaviors an organization communicates to its stakeholders directly affect the trust that is invested in the organization (Covey 2006). Museum organizations earn trust from the larger community when they carry out actions and behaviors perceived as being in the best interest of the larger community. For example, if a museum translates their exhibit signage into a common local second language after feedback from the community, the museum is likely to elicit trust from that community. This single action involves a number of attitudes and behaviors highlighted here, including “Responsiveness,” “Listening,” “Respect,” and “Access and Inclusion.”

The relationship between “Trust” and “Participation” is interdependent and reciprocal, to the extent that it is difficult to determine which is the other’s predecessor (Kwak et. al. 2004; Veenstra 2003). Trust is necessary for people to engage at any level of participation. When people are trusting, they are more likely to participate (Kwak et. al. 2004; Veenstra 2003). After participating they are more connected and as long as the experience was positive, they are more trusting.

Connectedness, strength of relationships, and trust and participation are all indicators of social capital (Grootaert 2003, Kwak et. al. 2004; Putnam 1995). Social capital also reciprocates trust and participation. It is a byproduct of trust and participation (Grootaert 2003; Kwak et. al. 2004) yet informs them as well. Social capital is produced when people join together to work on common goals and trust is a lubricant for collaboration and cooperation, which are indicators of social capital (Veenstra 2003). Social capital begets social capital through development of trust and participation (Grootaert 2003; Kwak 2004; Veenstra 2003).

The increasing levels of participation represented in the “Community Participation” box (see Figure 1) mimic the ladder models of participation discussed in the literature review (Arnstein 1969, Hart 1992). The further up the ladder one goes, one works closer toward genuine participation and the further from tokenism. “Information-sharing” is the lowest level. “Consultation” is the next level and “Collaboration” is the highest level. “Collaboration” represented here indicates the sharing of information and the sharing of decision-making power, thus, surpasses the pitfalls of tokenism. Once power-sharing occurs it moves past tokenism and towards genuine participation, an

overall more collaborative and participatory relationship between the museum and the community it serves.

METHODS

The purpose of this study is to identify common practices of museums and other community organizations which have successfully integrated community participation into a planning project. The study is founded in qualitative research using an objectivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz 2006, Glaser and Strauss 1967) in which the role of the researcher is to discover the objective facts and meaning inherent in the data (Holstein and Gubrium 2003). Multiple research methods were used including key-informant interviews and participant observation. Content analysis of the interviews was conducted utilizing a qualitative analysis software program (Atlas TI 6.2-6.2.13). Participant observation took place during my time as a research consultant at a children's museum during this study.

This project was designed in collaboration with a children's museum. The research question which originated from the museum was: What methods and strategies used by museums, were successful for integrating the community into a planning project? The question and purpose of the study directed its design and defined its boundaries. Although this study deals with participatory planning projects, which involve various players, the population studied here is the community organization, specifically the children's museum. The examination of the research question is situated from the viewpoint of the museum organization.

Participant Observation

The children's museum from which this study derived is located in Arizona. I established a working relationship with the organization as a research consultant and conducted my participant observation during this time. As part of the participant observation, I reviewed museum research reports on studies conducted to elicit community participation in the museum planning and outreach process. These reports provided a first-hand overview of example outreach practices employed at the museum. The museum directors were aware that I was conducting participant observation research and provided me with the documents in order to further inform my research. In this capacity, my role was participant observer with full disclosure of my research objectives (Babbie 2001; Singleton and Bruce 1999).

During my interactions with the museum officials, I easily immersed myself in their point of view, which is beneficial in the effort to understand a research subject (Babbie 2001). This ability to "take on" the museum professional perspective stemmed from my past experience as an employee of a children's museum. For three years, I worked in a children's museum in northern California designing programs, working on community development and co-directing. Although this experience took place within a very different context, it provided some insight into the museum world, or what some refer to as "insider understanding" (Lofland and Lofland as cited in Babbie 2001: 279).

Key-Informant Interviews

The museum officials I worked with wanted to discover the methods that other organizations, specifically children's museums, had employed to promote greater community involvement in museum development. They also wanted to share with other organizations, the information that this study would yield, in the form of an easy-to-use best practices guide. These research goals dictated the sample population. Potential research participants would be organizational leaders in the museum field who had hands-on experience with successful participatory projects. Key-informants were selected to be interviewed for this study as representatives of their organizations and would be drawn, in large part, from the children's museum field.

Children's museums are located across the country (Association of Children's Museums 2009), so due to the geographically diverse locations of potential subjects, it was determined that the best method to examine their experiences was through an in-depth interview by telephone. A key-informant interview can be used to gather information from people who have knowledge about a specific topic or issues (UCLA Center for Health Policy Research 2007). In-depth key-informant interviews offer a rich and intensive data set on the perspectives of key individuals. In-depth interviews also lend themselves fittingly to the grounded theory approach as used in this study (Berg 2004; Holstein and Gubrium 2003).

Interview Schedule Development

A list of created objectives determined the interview focus. Interview questions were developed and shared with museum officials with whom I worked. An interview schedule (see Appendix C: Interview Schedule) was devised because telephone interviews are likely best with specific questions prepared ahead of time (Berg 2004). The interviews followed a semi-standardized format where predetermined questions were asked but I, the interviewer, was free to ask additional questions to delve deeper into a topic or to otherwise make clarifications as necessary (Babbie 2001; Berg 2004; Cassell and Symon 2004). It was important to keep the questions to a manageable number, for the subjects were professionals in the museum field participating during their work days. Thirty-three questions were developed; 14 were open-ended qualitative questions and the remaining were close-ended, quantitative questions. Close-ended questions addressed topics like demographics and utilized limited response sets and Likert scales. Ten probe and follow-up questions were also developed in case more information was needed from any given subject on a particular question or issue (Babbie 2001; Berg 2004; Cassell and Symon 2004). The interview schedule was pre-tested in order to determine length of time for administration and clarity of questions (Berg 2004).

Sampling and Acquisition of Key-informants

A media archive review was conducted in order to identify potential participants. Because the geographic location of potential subjects was widespread across the entire

United States, an Internet search for archives of news articles and telecasts was conducted in order to locate museum organizations that had integrated their community into the design and development of a construction project. A key-word search was conducted using combinations and variations of the following Internet search terms: “museum,” “participation,” “planning,” “design,” “community,” “collaboration” and “children.” From the search results, media affiliated links, such as newspaper archives and newscasts were reviewed to determine if the reported organizations could be potential subjects for this study. I consulted with the museum officials with whom I worked in Arizona to help target appropriate museums to sample. Additionally, a review of current literature including such fields as participatory planning and design, museum development, community participatory research and child participation pointed to successful participatory projects in the museum field.

Potential subjects were identified by the museum experts and by the media archive and literature reviews. These potential subjects were compiled into a list consisting of 15 different museums and community organizations, seven of which agreed to participate in the study. A snowball sampling (Babbie 2001; Berg 2004; Laws 2003) or chain-sampling (Diamond 1999) method was used to recruit other potential interview participants by asking respondents if they could identify another museum that had also successfully integrated community participation into their development projects. A snowball strategy is considered a purposive sampling technique whereby the sample is selected because it meets the purposes of the study (Babbie 2001), a more suitable technique for qualitative studies (Laws 2003). This method is a non-probability strategy

and therefore, is unable to be used as statistically representative of a larger group (Babbie 2001; Laws 2003).

Protocol

Approval to work with human subjects was received from Humboldt State University's Institutional Review Board prior to any contact with subjects. An initial email (see Appendix E: Subject Email) was sent in order to solicit participation in the study and also served as a brief introduction to me and the study. A follow up phone call was made in order to establish familiarity with me as a researcher, to answer any questions about the study and to also schedule the interview for a later date (Berg 2004). The subjects received a consent form (see Appendix D: Consent Form) by email, signed and returned it via email or fax before the interview began.

Administration and Transcription of Interviews

Thirteen in-depth key-informant interviews were conducted to acquire a broad base of perspectives and varying strategies for participatory planning. As research participants were located across the country, 60-minute telephone interviews were conducted from my home office and were transcribed on a computer in real time. This required a hands-free headset and strong typing skills in order to keep up with participant responses. The semi-structured style allowed for clarifications and prompts when necessary. Interview files were coded for anonymity then stored in a locked filing cabinet to maintain security.

Data Analysis

Content analysis founded in grounded theory was the principle form of analysis in this study. I used a grounded theory approach to explore theories and emergent themes from the interviews.

The systematic process of coding the responses was important to identify common themes amongst participants for the content analysis. Systematic coding contributes to the validity and reliability of a grounded theory approach such as this one (Babbie 2001). An initial set of categories was developed manually for each interview question, whereby phrases were used as the unit of analysis, grouped into common themes and labeled based on their conceptual meanings (Berg 2004; Charmaz 2006). Codes were then entered and applied to responses using a qualitative analysis software program (AtlasTI 6.2-6.2.13). From here, a refined second set of codes was created which would serve as the final categorical theme for analysis. Iteratively, metadata tables were created for each question to both inform and confirm the application and assignment of codes and categorical labels. These tables served to delineate boundaries between categories and to *operationalize* concepts (Berg 2004: 274). They may also serve as a map for replication of this study as well. Categories, or themes, were grounded in the data and for many categories, further supported by relevant subjects addressed in the review of literature, thereby using both inductive and deductive approaches to analysis (Berg 2004, Charmaz 2006, Diamond 1999).

Limitations

Limitations to these methods include participant bias and limitation to conducting interviews by telephone as well as other limitations like those on resources, i.e. time. Multiple sequential interviews are best to gain depth and detail over time with the same subjects (Holstein and Gubrum 2003). Due to restrictions on researcher and subject time, only one interview per museum occurred. Additional time to complete the study would have allowed for more interviews to be conducted. Participant bias may be prevalent in studies such as this where participants are recruited based on successful projects; subjects' responses may lean towards the positive side in order to represent their organization and project in a positive light (Botes & Van Rensburg 2000; Laws 2003). The transcription method used here was limited to the extent of my typing skills and ability to transcribe during interview responses. This method would have been stronger had I access to a computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) device or program which records respondent's answers (Babbie 2001, Berg 2004). Telephone interviewing is also limited by means of inability to observe the subject. Non-verbal or visual cues are often very informative to a person's emotions and attitude toward a subject, but are unseen by phone (Berg 2004).

RESULTS

A descriptive analysis was conducted on the 13 interviews in order to draw conclusions from the purposive sample. This chapter provides an overview of the results and consists of the following sections: Sample Description, Participatory Planning, Project Details, and Obstacles and Successes. Each section represents the different topics addressed by the interview and describes the results pertaining to each topic. The majority of interview questions were open-ended and were analyzed qualitatively, using content analysis (see Appendix A for Interview Questions).

Sample Description

This section provides a description of the sample used in this study. Of the 13 key-informants, six (46.2%) were identified as potential study participants by experts in the museum field while the remaining 7 subjects (53.8%) were identified by using a snowball sampling technique. Key-informants were representing community organizations in the museum field; twelve (92.3%) were children's museums and one (7.7%) was a science center. The organizations were located across the country in the following states: Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Illinois, Arizona, California, Washington D.C., Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Maine, and Vermont. Since each key-informant represents an organization in their interview, two sets of demographics and

details were collected: those describing the participants and those describing the community and organization the participants represented.

Study Participants

Ten (76.9%) out of the 13 key-informants were female. The majority (61.5%, n = 8) of respondents described their ethnicity as “Caucasian,” “White” or “White European” while the next most common response was “African-American” (15.4%, n = 2) (Figure 2). Other responses included “Chinese-American,” “Guatemalan-American,” and “American Jewish.”

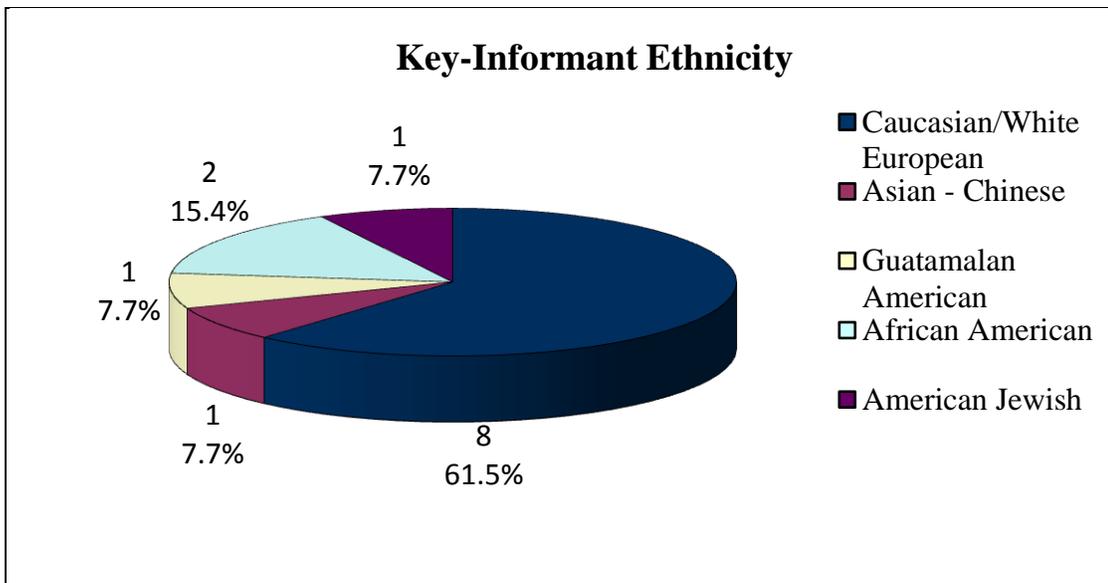


Figure 2. "How would you describe your ethnicity?"

All participants have received their bachelor’s degree, but most (69.2%, n = 9) have achieved their master’s degree; one participant identified ‘Master’s plus 30’ as the highest level of education received (Figure 3).

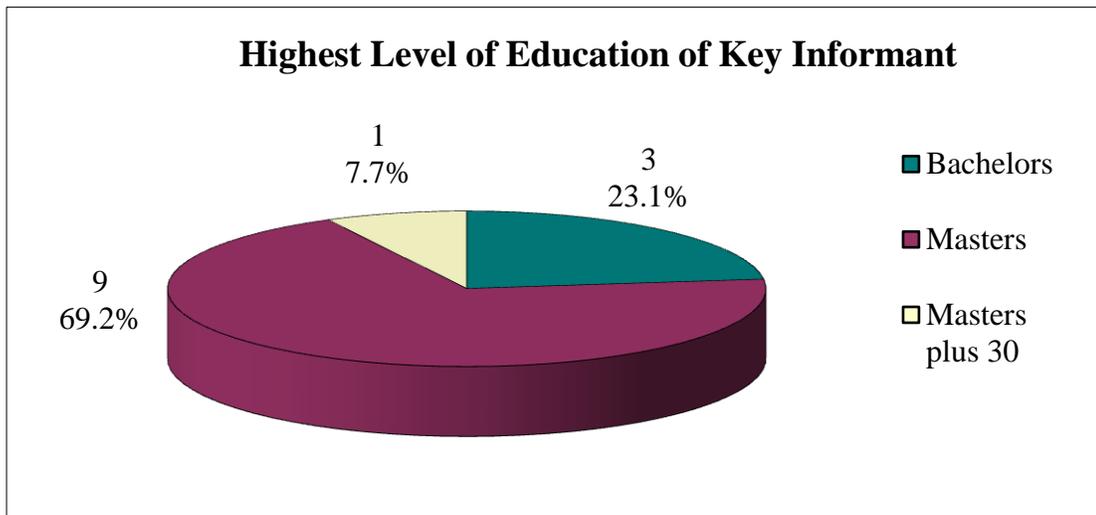


Figure 3. Highest Level of Education Received by Key-informant.

When participants were asked ‘What is your current position?’ responses were distributed amongst six different areas of work (Table 1). Some responses identified a combination of these areas. The two most frequent areas were “Director” (46.2%, n = 6) and “Exhibits” (30.8%, n = 4).

Table 1. Metadata: "What is Your Current Position?"

Themes	Coded Description
Education	Education, Family Learning
Exhibits	Exhibits, Exhibit Development and Design
Director	Museum Director, Executive Director, Deputy Director
Research	Research, Evaluation, Visitor Studies
Community Relations	Community Programs, Outreach, Partnerships
Board Member	Board Member

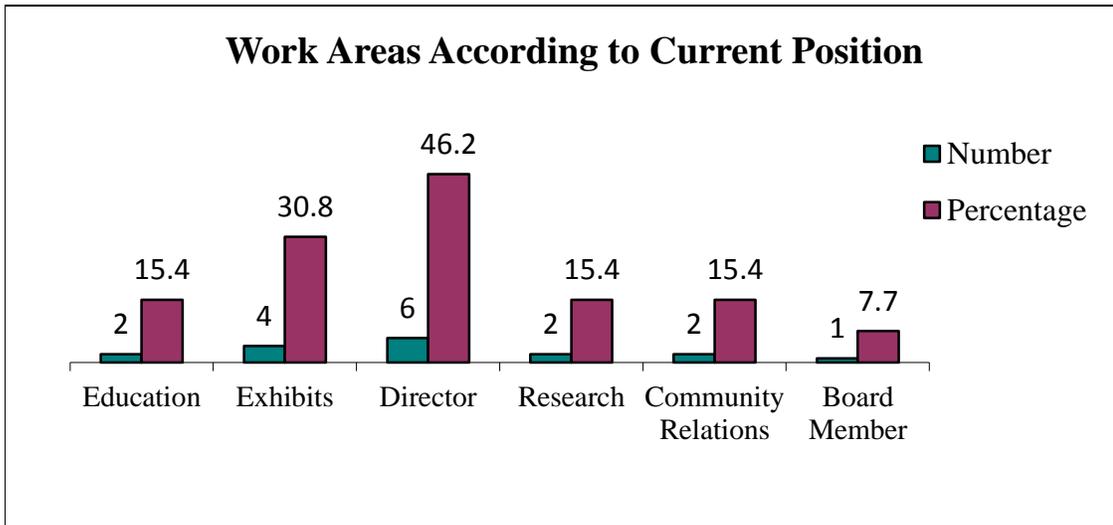


Figure 4. Work Area Themes According Responses for Current Position.

Figure 5 shows the number of years in participants' current position. Only one respondent (7.7%) had worked in that position for less than a year, but the most common response was that the respondents worked in their position for 1 to 3 years (38.5%, n = 5). Two participants (15.4%) had worked for over 10 years in their position. When asked if their job involved public outreach, 92.3% (n = 12) said "yes" and only one informant (7.7%) said "no."

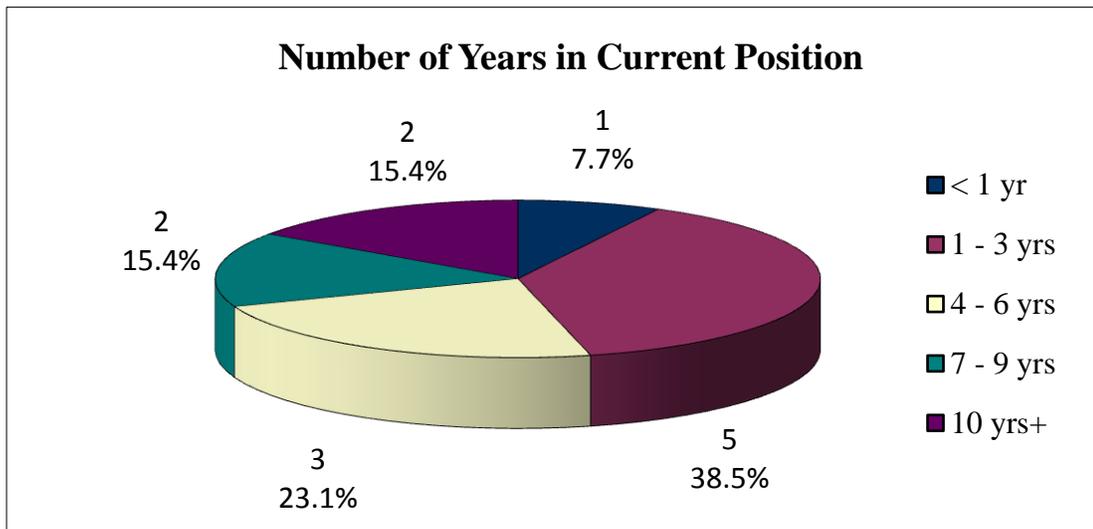


Figure 5. Number of Years in Current Position

Organizations

Informants were asked to identify the type of neighborhood in which their organization is located: urban, suburban or rural. Ninety-two point three percent (n = 12) responded “urban,” one person responded “suburban” (7.7%) and there were no responses for “rural” (Figure 6).

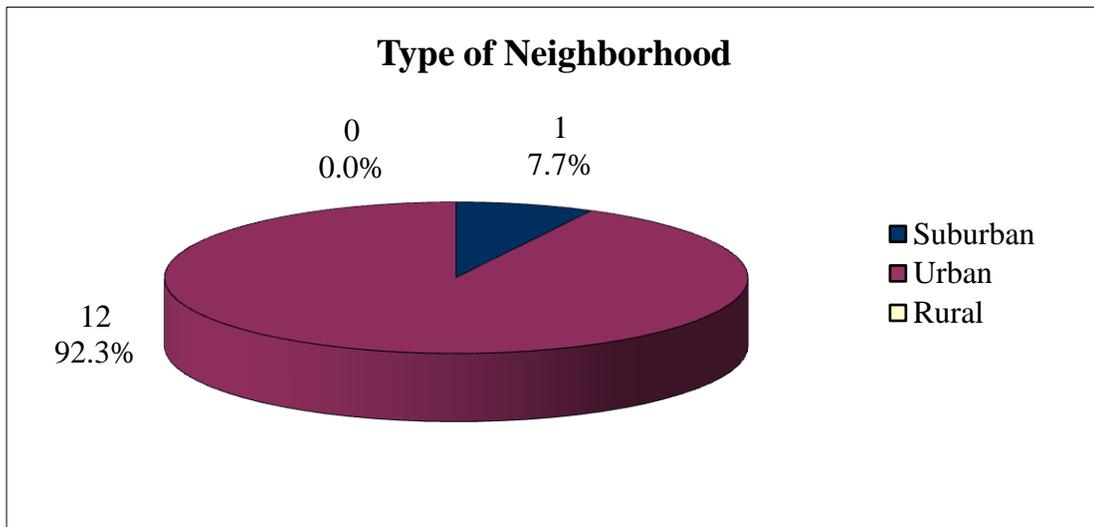


Figure 6. Type of Neighborhood

In order to determine the socioeconomic demographics of the populations which these organizations worked with, the informants were asked to describe the racial makeup of the organization community and to give a range of income for that community. Table 2 shows how the responses were categorized into three groups: “Mostly White,” “Multiple Ethnicities,” and “Unknown.” Forty-six point two percent (n = 6) identified their museum communities as “Multiple Ethnicities,” thirty-eight point five percent (n = 5) as “Mostly White,” and fifteen point four percent (n = 2) as ‘Unknown’ (Figure 7).

Table 2. Metadata: "Please describe the racial makeup of the museum community."

Themes	Coded Description
Mostly White	80% White, 90% Caucasian, 6% non-Caucasian, 58% European American, mostly Caucasian
Multiple Ethnicities	Diverse, well-mixed, 35-40% Hispanic, varied, Caucasian and African-American
Unknown	Unable to provide information, unknown

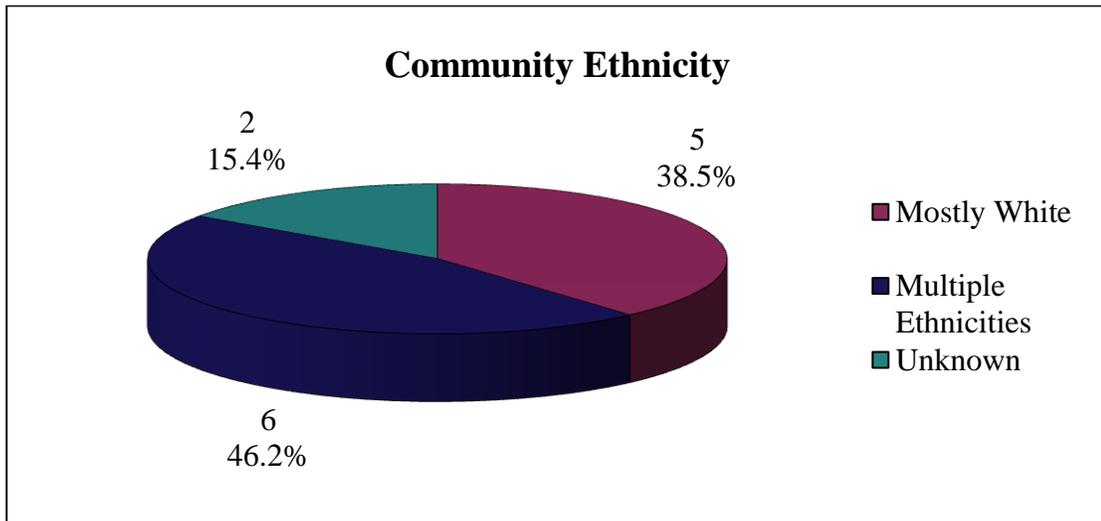


Figure 7. Themes for Ethnicities of Museum Communities as Described by Informants.

Various responses were given for the question ‘How would you describe the income range of the museum community?’ Table 3 provides the themes found from the responses and their corresponding codes while Figure 8 presents the results.

Table 3. Metadata: "How would you describe the income range of the museum community?"

Themes	Coded Description
Low	Low-income, household median below national level, low
Middle	Middle, average
Diverse	Diverse, varied, full range, gives an even distribution
Unknown	Unable to provide info, no response

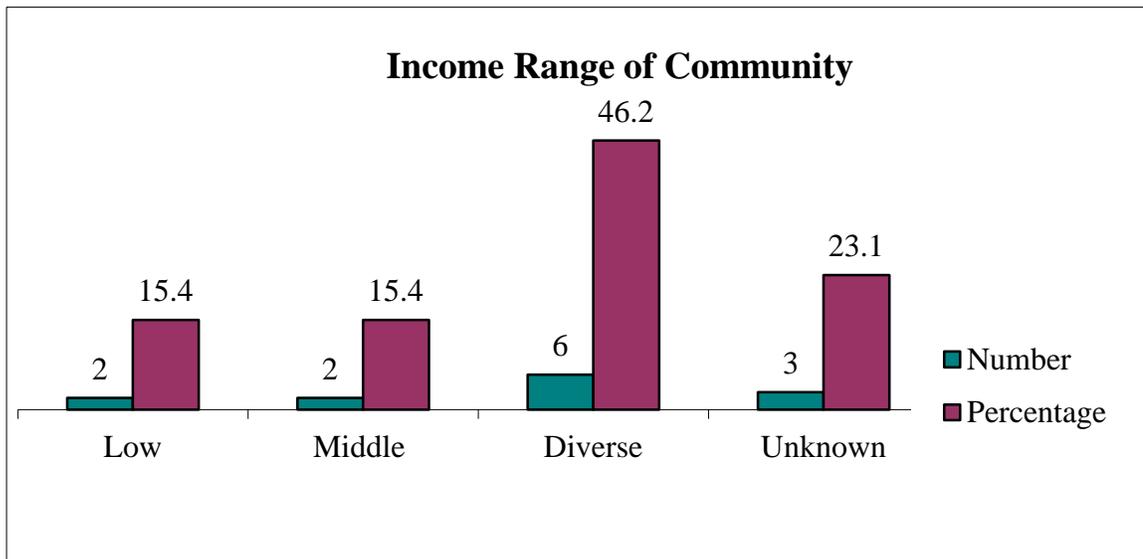


Figure 8. Themes For Descriptions of Income Ranges For Museum Communities.

Study participants were given a choice of three responses: less than 20,000 square feet, between 20,000 and 50,000 square feet, and over 50,000 square feet in order to determine the size of their organization’s building before the project was constructed. The size of most buildings (53.8%, n = 7) before undergoing construction was less than 20,000 square feet and 38.5% (n = 5) were over 50,000 square feet (Figure).

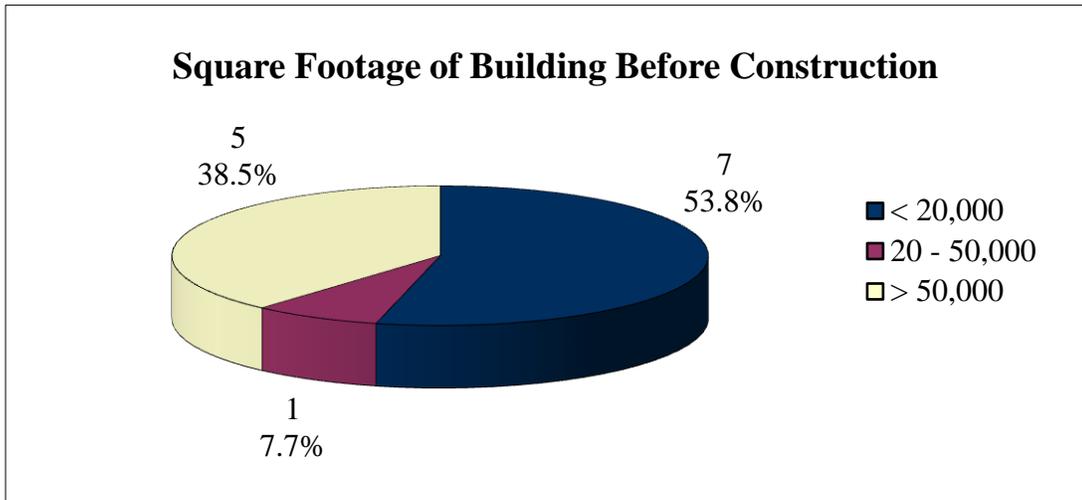


Figure 9. Square Footage of Building Before Construction Project

Key-informants were asked to provide an estimated annual visitation rate to their organization during the time of the project. The most common responses were “less than 200,000 visitors per year” (30.8%, n = 4) and “unknown” (30.8%, n = 4).

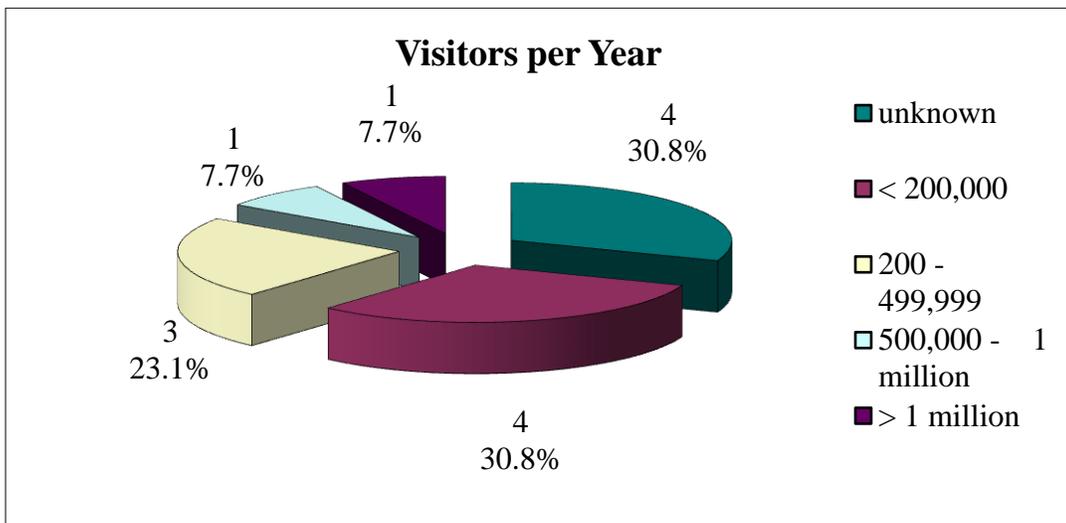


Figure 10. Estimated Annual Visitation

Participatory Planning

In order to evaluate their perspectives towards participatory planning, interview subjects were asked a number of questions about participatory planning in general, its motivators and value. One question was “What comes to mind when you hear phrases such as ‘participatory planning,’ ‘collaborative planning,’ or ‘community action planning’?” Responses were grouped and coded by theme (Table 4) and the results were synthesized in Figure 11.

Table 4. Metadata: "What comes to mind when you hear phrases such as 'participatory planning,' 'collaborative planning,' or 'community action planning'?"

Themes	Coded Description
Relationships	Partners, how to select partners, establish relationships before project, existing relationships
Engaging Community	Engaging community, involves/includes partners/stakeholders/neighbors, how do we access partners, facilitate dialogue, bring children in collaboration with adults, variety of stakeholders
Trust	Fundamental value of trust, trusting relationships, trust
Going outside of Organization	Focuses on external audience, planning goes outside museum, rooted in community first
Elicits positive emotion/ideas	Excitement, paradigm shift, meaningful, good idea
Other	How can partners help us accomplish our mission, open process, institution-led process, don't like to consult for my own advantage

‘Engaging Community’ (38.5%, n = 5), ‘Relationships’ (30.8%, n = 4), and ‘Other’ (30.8%, n = 4) were the top three responses.

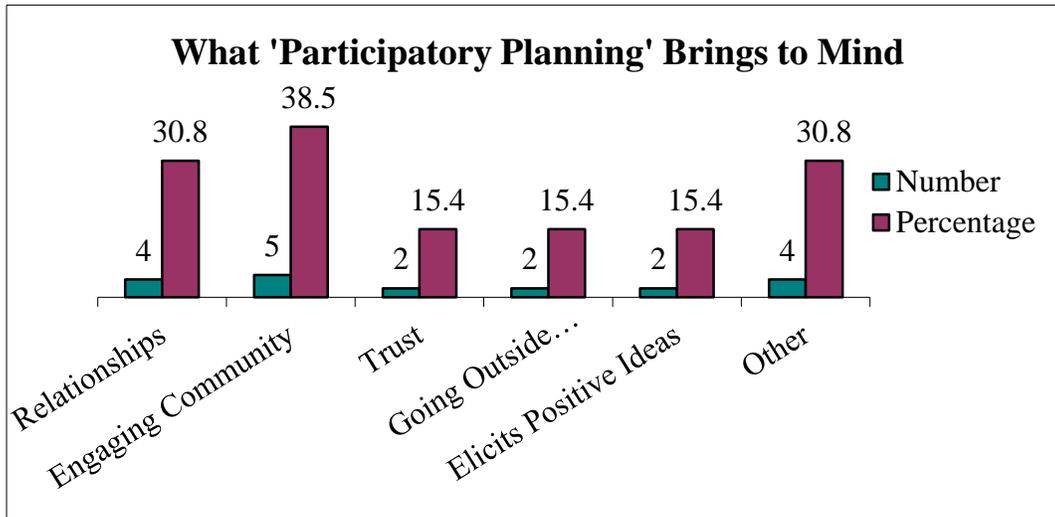


Figure 11. "What comes to mind when you hear phrases such as 'participatory planning,' 'collaborative planning,' or 'community action planning'?"

Participants were asked to identify the motivations for involving the community in a development project. Their responses were coded as follows (Table 5).

Table 5. Metadata: Motivations for Involving the Community in a Development Project.

Themes	Coded Description
Serving Community	Serve community, community resource, reflecting community, responsive
Sharing / Togetherness	Ownership, buy-in, partnership, can't afford to be independent from community, no longer exist in vacuum
Representation	Audience representation, demonstrating who we are
Organizational Learning	Understanding audience, they are smarter,
Community Awareness	Residents aware, lets them understand, letting them know what's going on
Museum Success	Better exhibits, make sure they will be consumers
Other	Respect, not in conflict with community, trend to involve them

The majority of respondents spoke of “Serving Community” (69.2%, n = 9) and “Sharing/Togetherness” (61.5%, n = 8) when identifying motivations. At least one third of informants identified “Organizational Learning” (38.5%, n = 5) and “Other” (30.8%, n = 4).

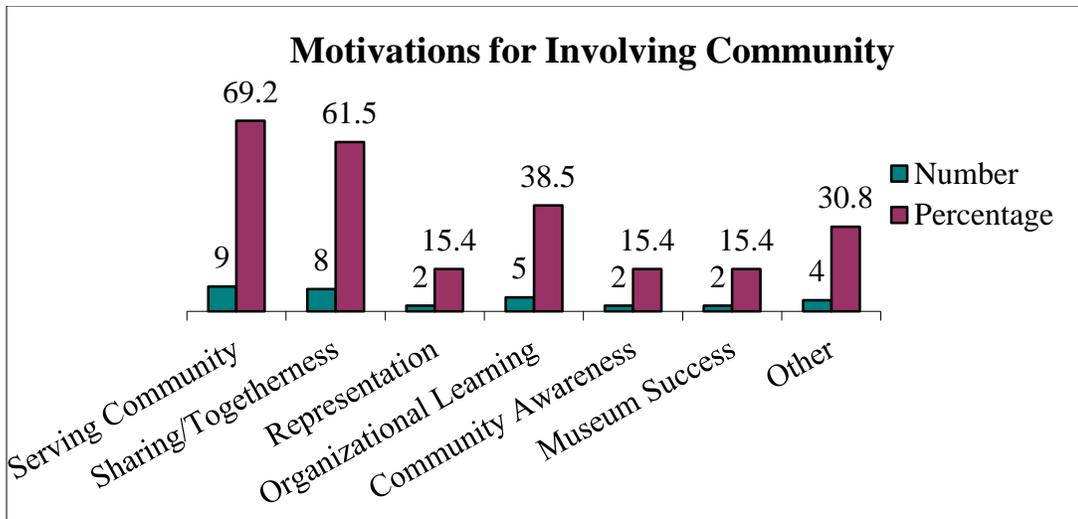


Figure 12. Motivations for Involving Community

Participants were then asked to identify the value for involving the community and describe why organizational leaders should care about using participatory planning. Responses were coded into the following themes (Table 6).

Table 6. Value and Reasons for Community Participation

Themes	Coded Description
Assess Value of Project	Value, determine motivation, need, value of project, to not waste resources
Collaboration	Collaboration, working with community
Funding	Funding
Learning	To learn more about audience/users/segment of the community, community learning
Serve & Create Community	Serve community, community projects, reflective of community, develop community, relevance to community
Museum & Mission Success	Mission success, align with mission, to make successful, help gauge success
Other	Great moral, keep leaders honest, avoid local politics, communication

Over one-half of the participants (53.8%, n = 7) described “Learning” in their responses (Figure 13). “Assess Project Value” and “Museum Success” were the next most frequently used themes (30.8%, n = 4).

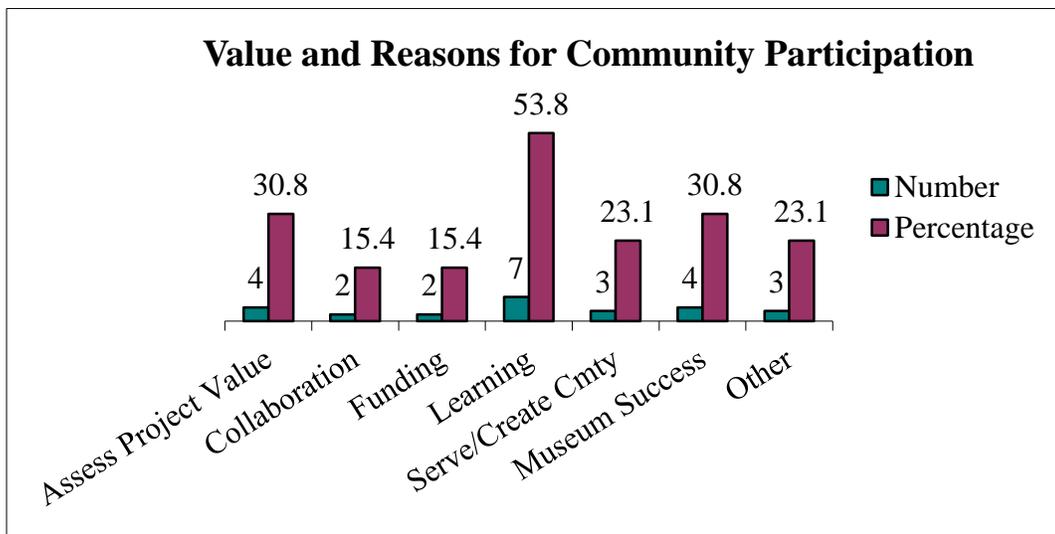


Figure 13. Value and Reasons for Community Participation

Key-informants were asked to identify which groups needed to buy-in to the process in order for it to work. Themes were coded into various groups of people (Table 7). The theme “Institutionalized” speaks to integrating the ideas of participation into the organizational culture. Although “Institutionalized” does not describe a particular group of people, it still emerged as a theme from the responses nonetheless.

Table 7. Metadata: Groups Needing to Buy-in.

Themes	Coded Description
Everyone	Everyone, everybody involved, all
Community	Community, neighbors, residents, community voice is equal, members, visitors, kids, particular demographic
Museum Affiliates	Staff, Director, Board
Funders	Funders, foundation community, donors
Partners	Partners, community groups, schools
Institutionalized	Establish acceptance in museum conduct, mission, incorporate into project goals, part of strategic planning
Other	Designers, children, local government

The top four responses for “Groups Needing to Buy In” include “Everyone,” “Community,” and “Museum Affiliates,” each with 46.2% (n = 6) of participants addressing those groups (Figure 14).

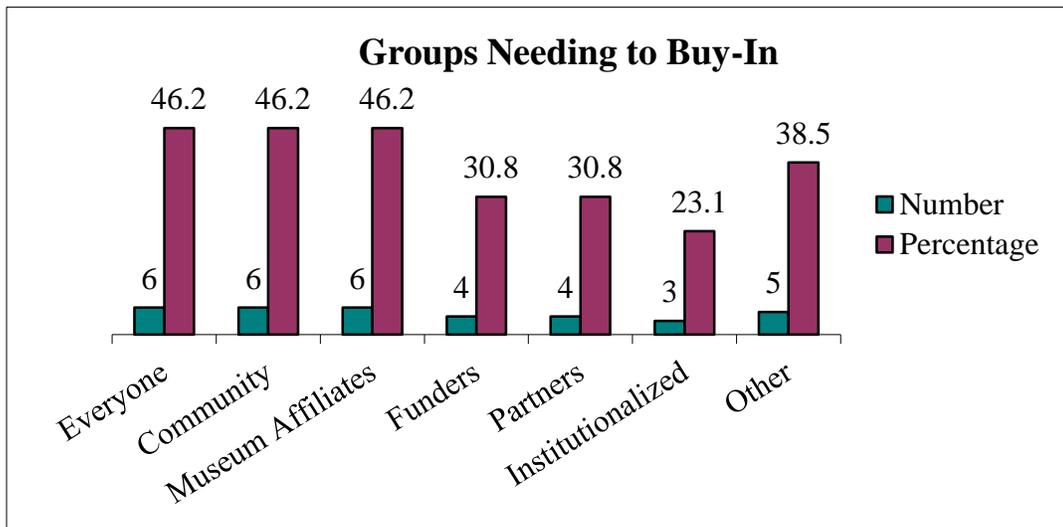


Figure 14. Groups Needing to Buy-In

Project Details

In order to evaluate the practices of these key organizations, I sought to establish the context and background in which the participatory planning projects took place. Additionally, it was crucial to examine the steps, methods, and tools which were used to execute the participatory projects. This section addresses those details. Additionally, it highlights the ways in which the key-informant's projects did or did not involve children in the planning process and the challenges and recommendations for doing so in the future.

Project Background

The participatory planning projects key-informants reported on in this study were of three different types: 1) the creation of a new exhibit; 2) the remodeling of an existing building in which the organization was located or 3) the construction of a new building in

which the organization would be later located. Figure 15 shows the percentage of responses for each of the three types.

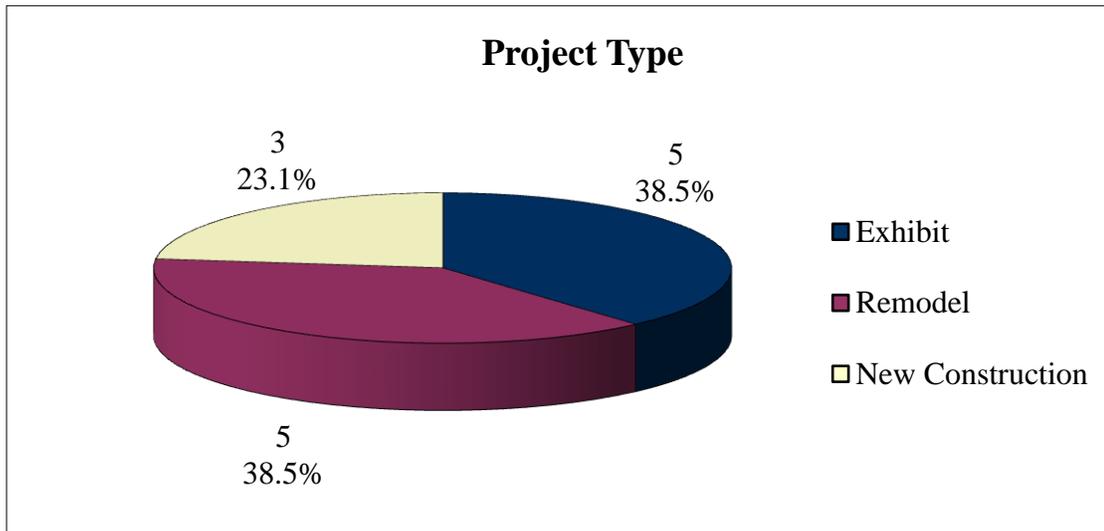


Figure 15. Planning and Development Project Type.

Interview subjects were asked, “Generally, what was the budget range for the development project?” Responses varied from “\$15,000” to “\$88 million” (Figure 14). The most common response, indicated by four respondents (30.8%) said their budgets were between \$1 million and \$6 million.

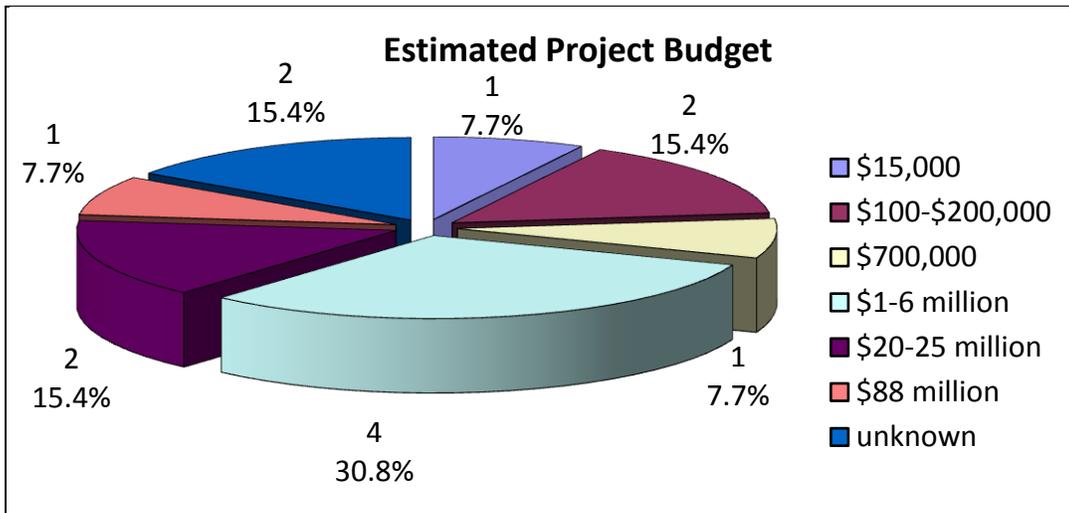


Figure 16. Estimated Project Budget

Projects took place between 1999 and 2009. Forty-six point two (n = 6) percent of respondents reported that their projects were “on-going” and twenty-three point one percent (n = 3) reported that their project lasted “between five and six years” (Figure 17).

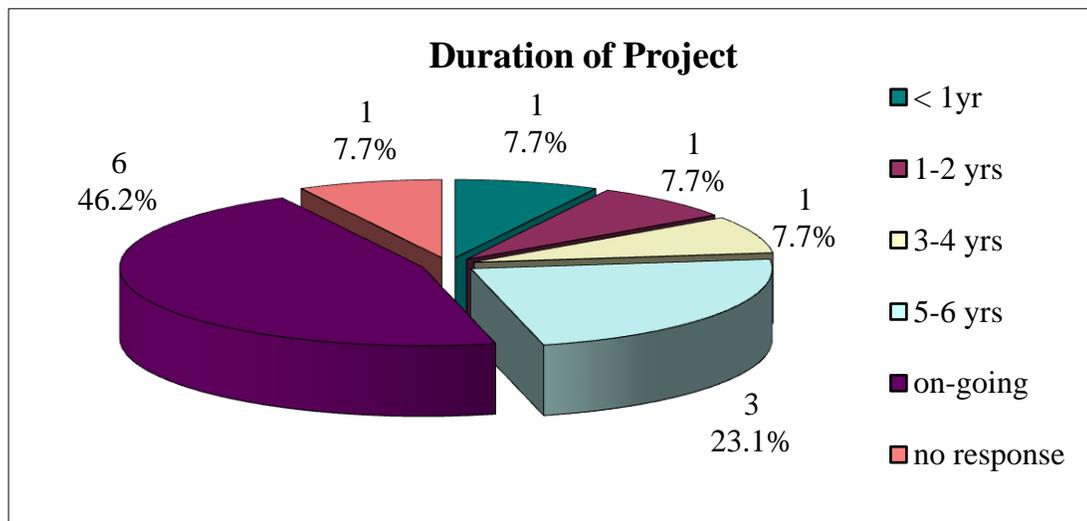


Figure 17. Duration of Participatory Project at the Time of Interview.

The goals of the project were also reported. Responses were coded into the following categories: “Exhibit-specific goals,” “Building-specific goals,” “Community Building,” “Responsiveness,” “Service Goals,” “Business Goals,” and “Other” (Table 8).

Table 8. Metadata: Goals of Project

Themes	Coded Description
Exhibit-specific goals	Exhibit, educational goals of exhibit,
Building-specific goals	Improved functionality, green, sustainability,
Community Building	Strengthen community, community involvement, downtown/city revitalization, bring together racially diverse groups, embed roots with community, strong partnership, civic engagement
Service Goals	Expand early childhood offerings, school readiness, learning opportunities, parent engagement in play
Business goals	Increased visitorship, museum success
Other	Authenticity, process goals, partner group’s goals

The most common goals, relevant to the theme “Community Building” were named by 61.5 % (n = 8) of key informants (Figure 18). “Service Goals” (46.2%, n = 6) were the next most frequently addressed theme.

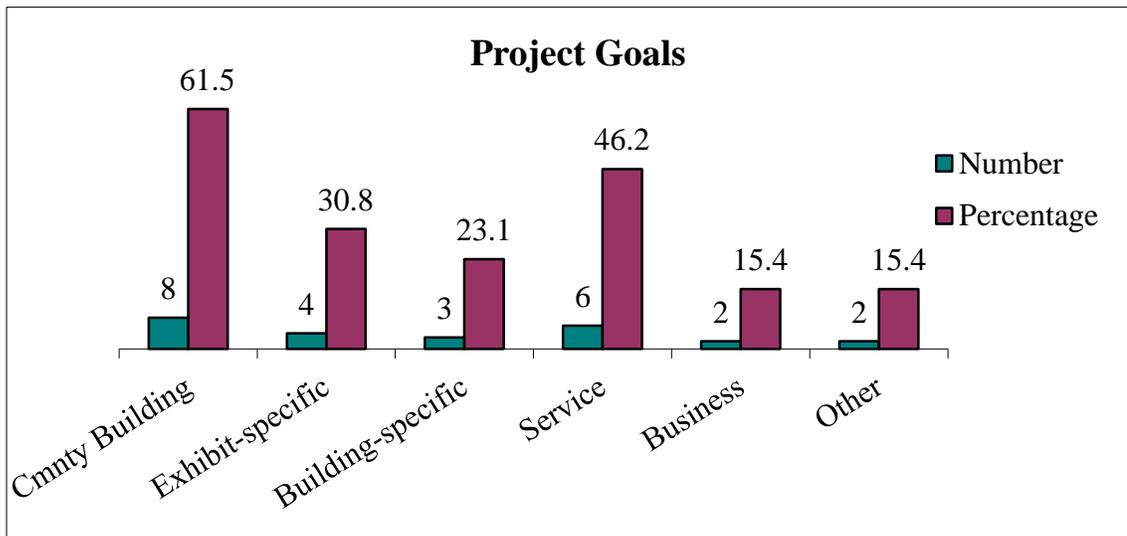


Figure 18. Project Goals

Practices

This section addresses the implementation and execution of participatory projects. Topics include steps, methods and tools the key-informants described in their accounts of their projects and ways in which they increased access to participation. Additionally, the products which resulted from community participation and the degree of community participation will also be examined.

Key-informants were asked to “describe what steps [their] organization took to incorporate the community into the planning of [their] museum project.” A probe was used to encourage subjects to elaborate which asked “What methods and tools did you use?” Responses from both questions were aggregated and coded into the following six themes: “Research Methods,” “Partners,” “Processes,” “Access and Incentives,” “Communication,” and “Funding” (Table 9).

Table 9: Steps Taken and Methods/Tools used to Incorporate Community into Planning.

Themes	Coded Description
Research Methods	Advisory boards, focus groups, brainstorming sessions, evaluations, interviews, surveys, prototyping
Partners	Schools, community organizations, city officials, consultants, videographers, kids and families, key community contact
Processes	Collaboration, cultural learning, trust-building, relationship building, institutionalize participation, staff development
Access and Incentives	Payment for participation, transportation, reduced admission, varied meeting times, celebratory event
Communication	Meetings, listening, responsiveness, phone, newsletters, dialogue
Funding	Funding, grant, money

Eighty-four point six percent (n = 11) of key-informants named at least one type of “Research Method” and the same amount identified a “Partner” (84.6%, n = 11) with whom they worked. “Communication” was also a very popular theme with 10 out of 13 responses (76.9%). “Processes” and “Funding” were each mentioned by almost one-half (46.2%, n = 6) of the study participants.

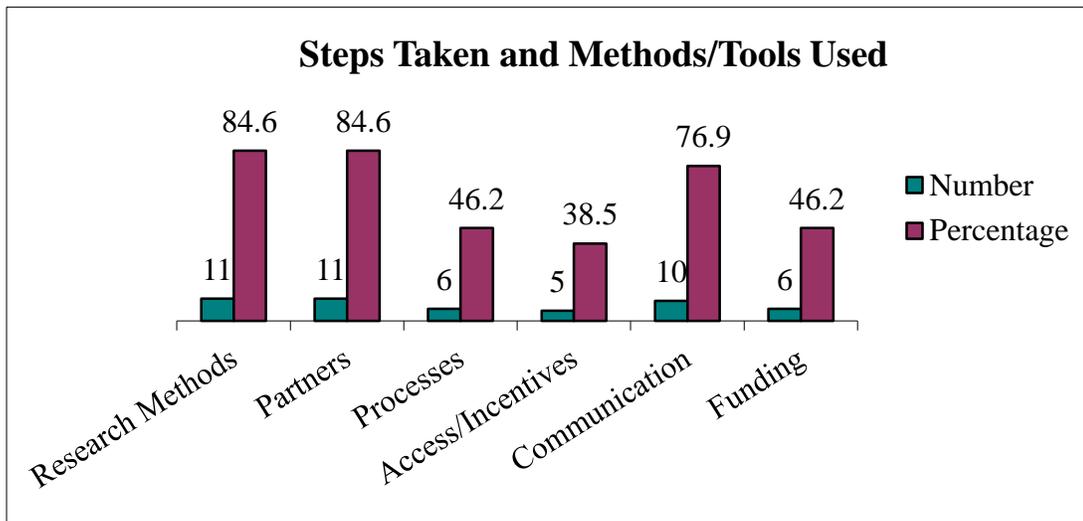


Figure 19. Steps Taken and Methods and Tools Used

As an extension of examining the practices during their planning projects, another question was posed to subjects that addressed strategies used to increase access to participation. Responses were coded into the six categories shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Metadata: Strategies Used to Increase Access

Themes	Coded Description
Remote Meeting	Went out to schools, libraries, go out to where people are, meetings off site
Accommodations	Food, Transportation, accommodating times, childcare
Event	Celebration, field trip, Parkside day, festival, events, community days
Communication	Online assignments, website, press conferences, mail, created a map to get here
Rewards / Incentives	Free passes, thank you gifts, paid them, incentives, free, reduced admission, scholarship
Negative response	No - get a sample of regular visitors, phone calls and emails are useless,

The majority of responses mentioned a “Reward or Incentive” (69.2%, n = 9) (Figure 20). Over half of informants (53.8%, n = 7) spoke about “Remote Meetings” and “Accommodations” respectively.

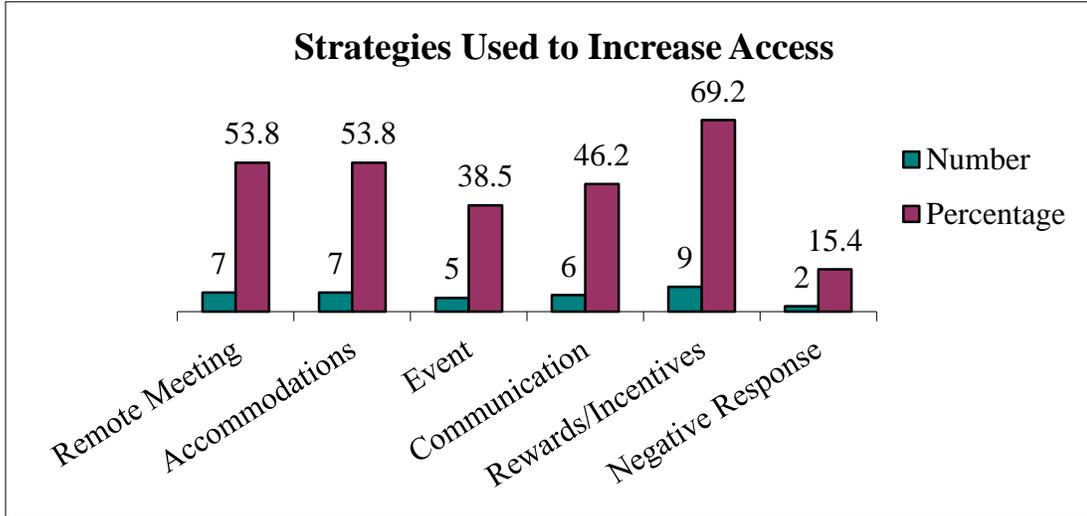


Figure 20. Strategies Used to Increase Access

Participation levels were assessed by asking respondents to “assign a number, 1 through 5, as to how much the community was involved’ at four different stages in the planning and development process as shown in Table 11. The scale assignments are as follows: number 1 = no involvement, 2 = not very involved, 3 = somewhat involved, 4 = very involved, and 5 = completely involved.

Table 11. Metadata: Stages of Planning and Development

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Visioning/ Initiation	Planning/ Design	Implementation	Evaluation/ Maintenance

The data obtained is displayed in Figure 21, where the number of responses are shown for each level of participation at the four stages of planning and development. The most

common level of participation reported for “Visioning/Initiating” stage was “Somewhat Involved” at 38.5% (n = 5). The same number of respondents (38.5%, n = 5) said their community was “Very Involved” at the “Planning/Design” stage. The most popular response for the “Implementation” stage was “Very Involved” (30.8%, n = 4). The “Evaluation/Maintenance” stage solicited the most evenly distributed answers with “Somewhat Involved,” “Very Involved,” and “Unknown” all receiving three responses each (23.1%). Some key-informants also gave projections for how involved they thought the community would be in the future (7.7%, n = 1 for “Planning/Design” and “Implementation” and 15.4%, n = 2 for Evaluation/Maintenance). At least one informant (7.7%) said that the community was “Completely Involved” for each stage. “No Involvement rendered one response (7.7%) in both the “Visioning/Initiating” stage and the “Implementation” stage.

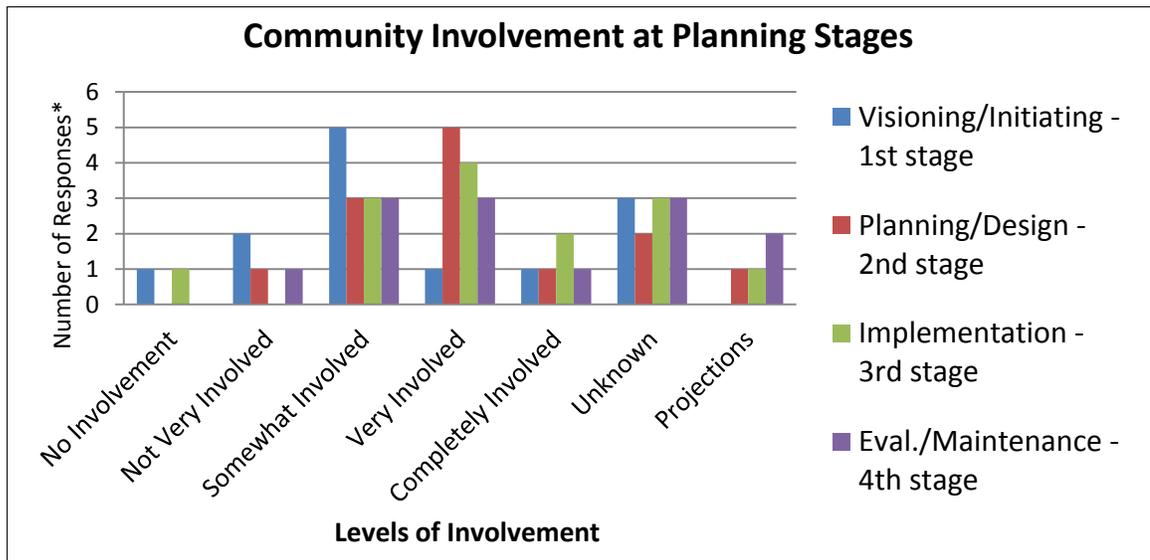


Figure 21. Levels of Community Involvement at Various Planning Stages. *Note the number here represents the number of responses, not respondents; Total does not equal 13.

Children's Participation

As this study's secondary focus, the practices of children's participation were also examined. Along with identifying ways in which children were involved, questions were asked about the challenges of involving children and recommendations for the future.

The responses for how children were involved were coded into six categories (Table 12).

Table 12. Metadata: How Children Were Involved

Themes	Coded Description
Dialogue	Advisory boards, meetings, brainstorming sessions, workshops, visits to schools, interviews, reactions
Artistic Rendering	Writing/drawing, sand castle models, paintings
Prototyping	Prototyping, students test them
Observation	Observed the children
Unsuccessful / Not in Planning	Didn't do as much, Difficult, but we intend to do it
Other	Talk to children at the end

As Figure 22 shows, "Dialogue" was the most popular category (53.8%, n = 7) by an overwhelming majority when compared to other categories, which received at most two responses (15.4%).

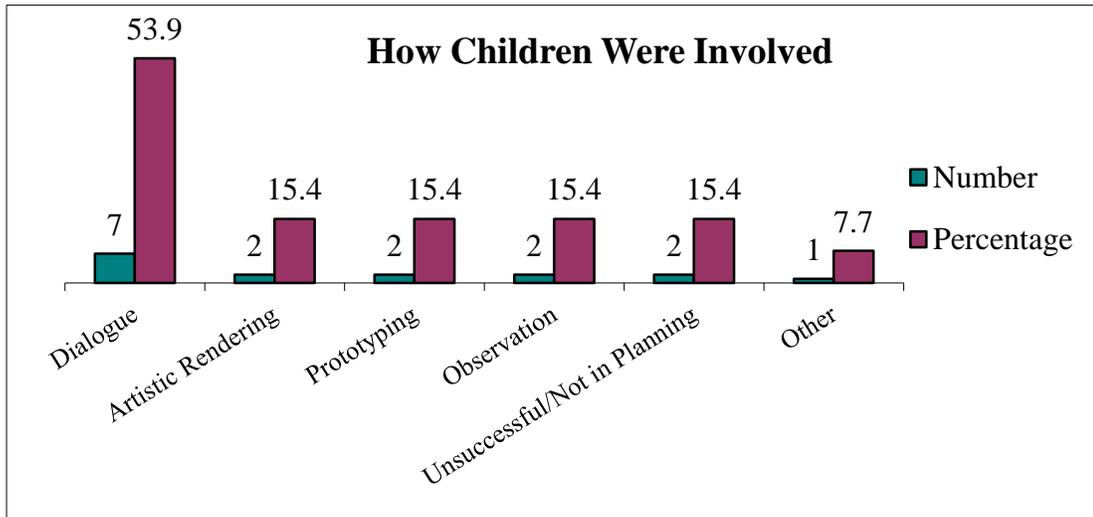


Figure 22. How Children Were Involved.

The challenges to involving children in the planning project were coded into the following categories (Table 13).

Table 13. Challenges to Involving Children

Themes	Coded Description
No Challenges	Don't think we had any
Children	Not very articulate or focused, need hands-on activities, keeping them interested
Research Challenges	Figuring out strategies for kids to talk, attrition, useful question design, consent issues
Practicality	Time, money, space, tremendous amount of work
Other	Comfortable enough environment, keeping teachers (partners) involved

“Research Challenges” was the most popular response with over one third of respondents (38.5%, n = 5) mentioning it. With 30.1% (n = 4) of interview subjects referring to “Practicality,” it was the second most common response as a challenge to involve children.

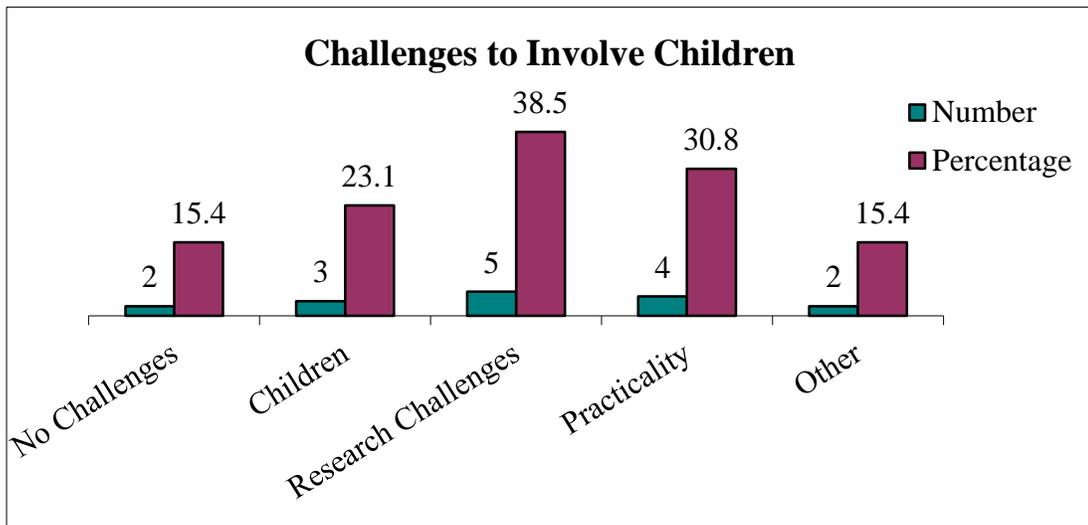


Figure 23. Challenges to Involving Children

Recommendations on how to best involve children in participatory planning projects were elicited by asking, “Do you have any recommendations for making [child participation] work better?” Responses were coded by themes shown in Table 14.

Table 14. Metadata: Recommendation for Children Involvement

Themes	Coded Description
Attitudes/Behaviors	Honesty, respect, awareness, flexibility, compassion, excitement, cultural awareness
Research Considerations	Regular contact, work closely, understand measurement, practicality, prototyping, more break-out sessions
Work with Others	Enroll an expert, work with other groups, parent involvement
Not Necessary	I don’t know if you need to ask
None/No Response	No Recommendations
Other	Right staff, keep redirecting the kids

Almost one-half (46.2%, n = 6) of key-informants’ suggestions addressed “Research Considerations” when responding to this question (Figure 24). “Attitudes/Behaviors,”

“Work with Others,” and “None/No Response” each received three responses, twenty-three point one percent of total responses.

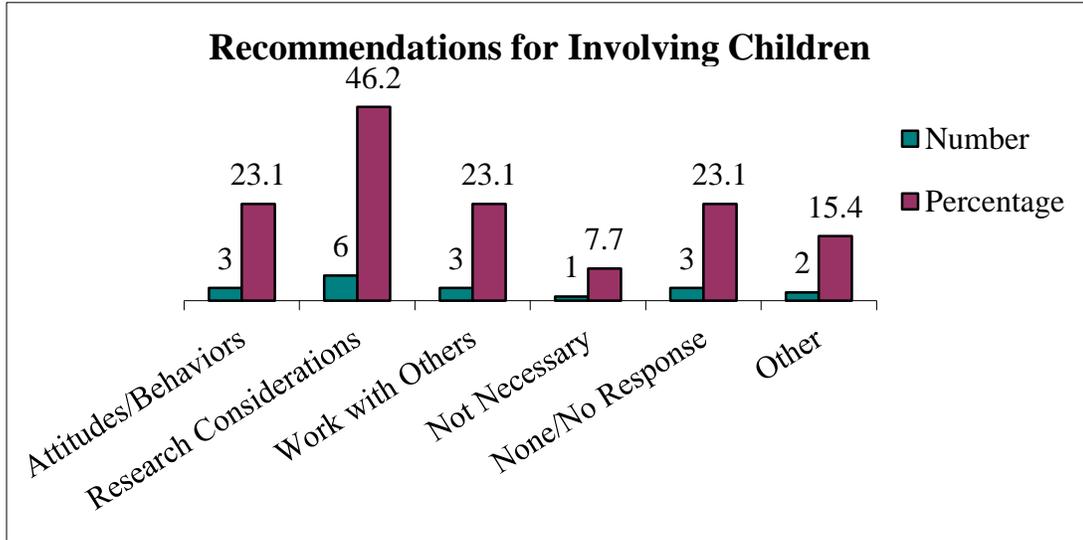


Figure 24. Recommendations for Involving Children.

Obstacles and Successes

This section expounds upon the successes of the participatory projects and the obstacles encountered along the way to achievement. Recommendations for overcoming obstacles are covered and elements of success are also identified.

Ineffectiveness and Obstacles

Shortly after the participants described the steps, methods and tools used in their projects, two questions were asked as a follow-up: “How were [the methods/tools used] effective?” and “How were they ineffective?” These questions were important to determine the perceptions and attitudes of the key-informants in regards to the practices

that their organization used for participatory planning. Their responses were coded into the following categories (Table 15).

Table 15. Metadata: Ways Practices Were Ineffective

Themes	Coded Description
Culture/Language Barriers	Hard to speak in English, cultural discomfort
Limited Resources	Database was limiting, budget restraint
Low Attendance	Low attendance, wish for more people
Needed more criticism	People be more critical, not comfortable giving negative feedback
Time Consuming	Time-consuming
Other	More network between participants, didn't access part of population

As Figure 25 shows, responses were very evenly distributed amongst categories. All categories received two responses (15.4%) with exception of “Time-consuming,” with only a single response (7.7%).

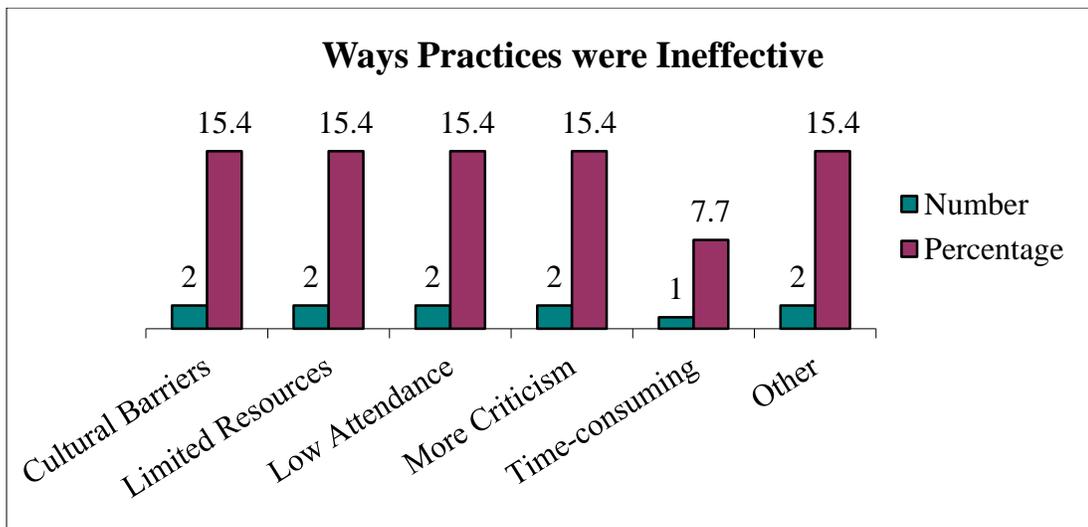


Figure 25. Ways Practices Were Ineffective

Interview subjects were asked to “please describe what has been the most challenging obstacle to successfully integrating the community into development projects in your experience.” Table 16 shows responses and category themes for this question.

Table 16. Metadata: Obstacles to Successful Integration of Community.

Themes	Coded Description
Time	Time
Money	Money
Balance of Needs	How to balance, striking a balance
Getting Right People	Getting right people, obtain diverse group
Clarity of Limitations	Understanding/Being clear of limitations
Other	Comfortable environment, buy-in, lack of information, clashing personalities

“Time” was the most common response (38.5%, n = 5) with “Getting the Right People” and “Other” being the second most frequently referred categories each (30.8%, n = 4).

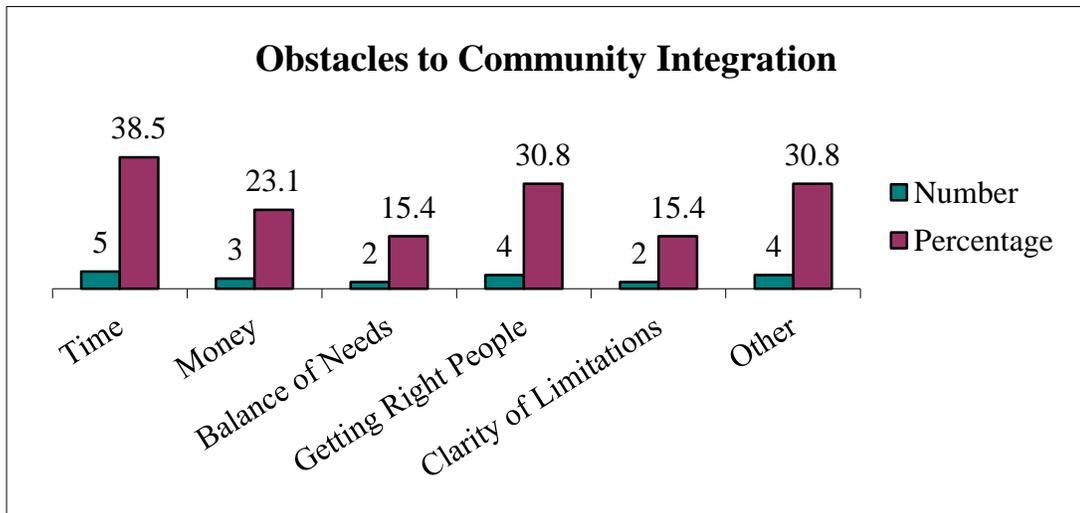


Figure 26. Obstacles to Successful Integration of Community.

Along with identifying obstacles, it was important to know how to overcome them. Study participants were asked, “How did you or how might have you and the organization overcome it?” Answers were coded into five categories (Table 17).

Table 17. Metadata: Overcoming Obstacles

Themes	Coded Description
Communication	Phone calls, be honest about limitations, listening, community board, emails
Set Goals	Mission alignment, focus on the project, hold onto things we do right
Work with Others	Community advisors, consultant, volunteers
Commitment	Perseverance, believe so fiercely, persistence
Relationship Building	Relationship building, participate in community meetings
Research	Gather enough feedback, shortened reporting
Other	Trust-building, resources

Thirty-eight point five percent (n = 5) of interview subjects responded with ‘Communication.’ ‘Set Goals’ was the next most common answer, thirty point eight percent (n = 4).

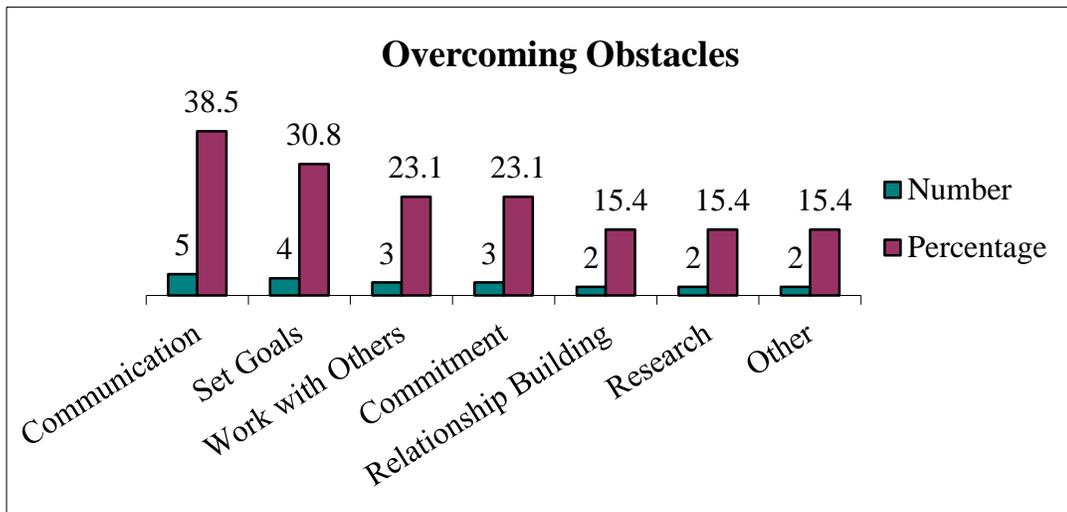


Figure 27. Overcoming Obstacles

Effectiveness and Successes

As this study focuses on best practices, it was pertinent to examine the successes of each of the key-informant’s participatory planning projects. As aforementioned, one question asked to study participants was “How were [the methods used] effective?” The responses for this question were coded into the following five categories (Table 18).

Table 18. Metadata: Ways Practices Were Effective.

Themes	Coded Description
Good Information	Good information, useful information
Positive Feedback	Positive feedback, enthusiasm
Learning	We were learners not experts, strengthen institutional cultural competency, more skills as we went along, community awareness
Partnerships	Community group, community connection, consultant, kids, building trusting relationships
Other	No way to make a mistake, genuinely listen, help with future funding

Study participants (38.5%, n = 5) reported that they received “Good Information” by using their methods. “Learning” and “Partnerships” were also more commonly mentioned (30.8%, n = 4).

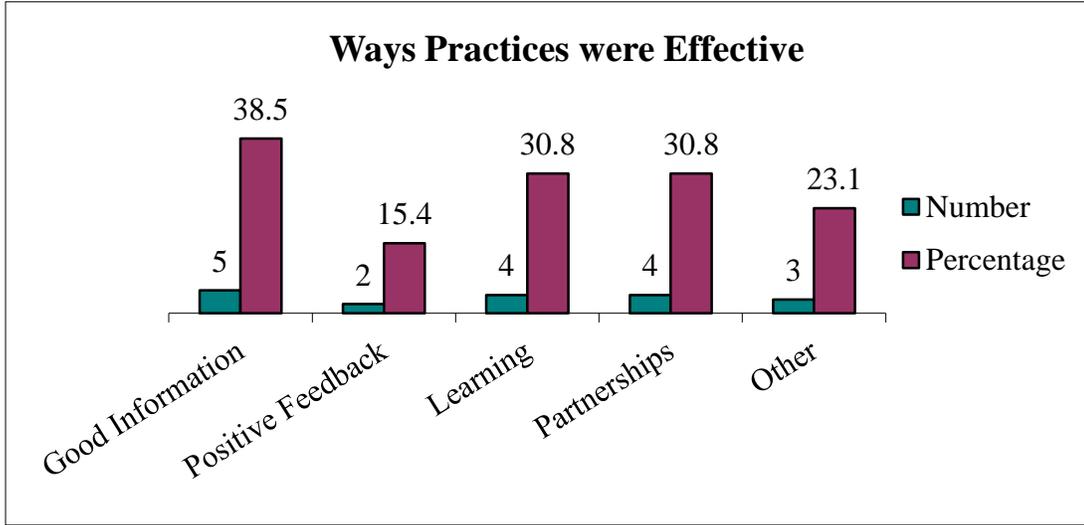


Figure 28. Ways Practices Were Effective

Responses to the question, “In what ways was your project successful?” were varied. The eight themes below were used to categorize the responses (Table 19).

Table 19. Metadata: Successes of Project

Themes	Coded Description
All Goals Met	All goals met, every single way
Buy In / Support	Supporters, true buy-in, community interest
Strengthened Community	Strengthened relationships, bring people together, civic engagement, making trusting relationships
Future Plans	It will be easier to get funding , research will lead to design, having master plans
Project Design	Design of project, exhibit, we have a building
Children Involved	Children were involved, incorporated kids
Staff Development	Staff development, staff was increased
Other	Solving the language challenge, we all were very equal, learning experience, no response

The number one response for this question was “Project Design” (Figure 29). Sixty-one point five percent (n = 8) alluded to this category. “Strengthen Community” was included in 38.5% (n = 5) of responses.

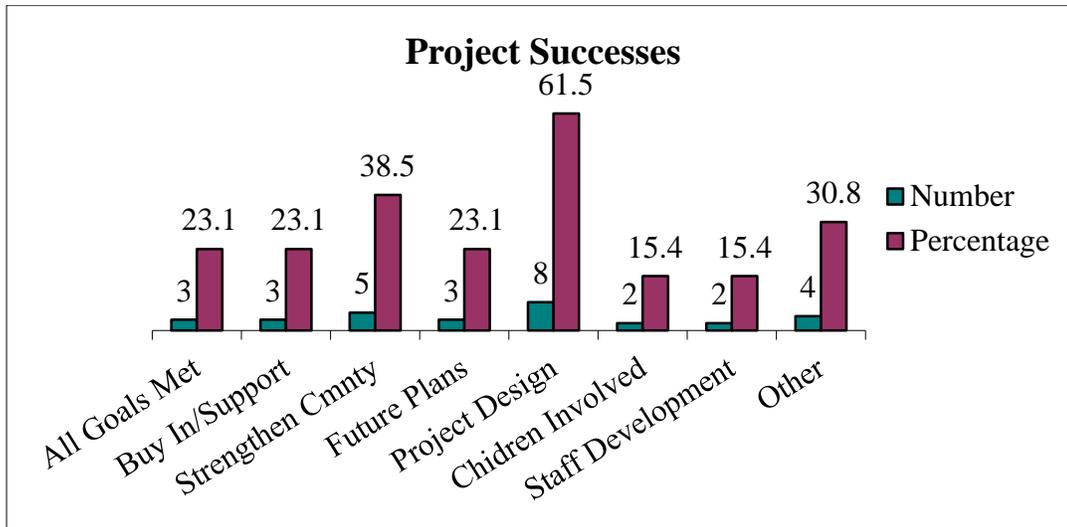


Figure 29. Project Successes.

Key-informants were asked, “In your opinion, what are the three most important elements to successfully executing a project which aims to integrate community participation?” Responses to this question were coded into seven categories (Table 20).

Table 20. Three Most Important Elements to Success.

Themes	Coded Description
Attitudes	Determination, respect, trust, learning, openness, honesty, sincerity, deliberate, empathy, buy-in
Actions	Collaboration, keep board involved, staff call public, staff representation, find community leaders, get city officials involved, be a good steward of information, gather and celebrate,
Organizational Knowledge	Museum knows what's right, having all info
Research	Asking the right questions, advisory group, evaluation throughout, prototyping
Timeliness	Work with community at onset, asking them before design, the right time
Time Investment	Investment of time, time, commitment of time
Other	Budget

Because this question seeks to elicit at least three responses (successful elements) from each key-informant, it was the only question to allow for multiple applications of any one code to a single response. For example if a key-informant, mentioned two attitudes and an action when answering this question, the response was coded twice for “Attitudes” and once for “Action.” As a result, the “Number” presented in Figure 30 indicates the number of responses, rather than informants and “Percentage” represents percentages of the total number of responses for this question (n = 31). Nine responses (29.0%) spoke to “Attitudes” (Figure 30). Almost one quarter of them (n = 7) spoke of various “Actions.” “Time Investment” was the third most common response (16.3%, n = 5) for elements of success.

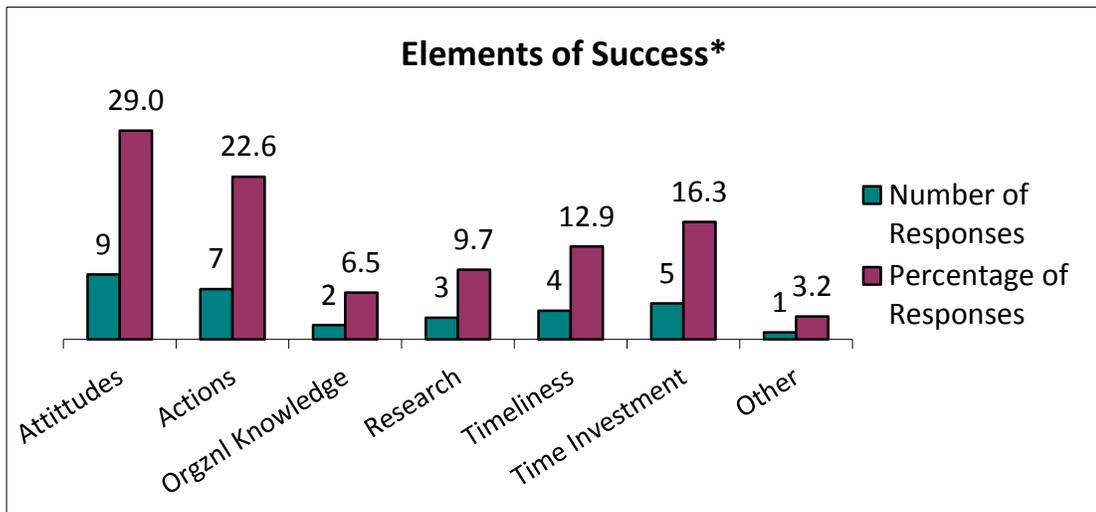


Figure 30. Elements of Success. Three most important elements to successfully executing a project which aims to integrate community participation. *Number and percentages calculated here for responses, rather respondents (N = 13 total responses).

DISCUSSION

This discussion addresses the results and findings of this study. Themes that emerged from the content analysis of key informant interviews and participant observation will be highlighted. Results will be compared to assertions found in the literature review and relevance of the conceptual framework will be discussed. Observations and relevant findings discussed here will serve as the underpinnings for a best practices guide to participatory planning in the museum context.

The Process of Learning

Learning is a theme that emerged throughout this analysis and was also briefly discussed in the literature, especially in regards to child participation (Frank 2006). “Learning” in my analysis refers to both organizational learning and learning by the community. These learning themes arose in response to the questions of motivations for using participatory planning (Table 5), reasons organizational leaders should care about using participatory planning (Table 6), and also in responses to the question of ways the practices were effective (Table 18). Learning was discussed by over one-half (53.9%, n = 7) of the informants in their responses to the value and reasons for community participation (Figure 13). Responses to the question of motivations also yielded the theme, ‘Community Awareness’ (15.4%, n = 2) which is parallel to community learning (Figure 12). Similarly, the theme of ‘Good Information,’ (38.5%, n = 5) is related to organizational learning, found in Figure 28: Ways Practices were Effective. The

quotations below demonstrate both organizational learning and community learning, respectively. The following quote is in response to the question, “What do you think is the value in community participation in development projects and why should organizational leaders care about utilizing it?”

“Working with a segment of the community that we just don’t know. The only way to know [them] is to develop communication. They educated us. It inspired great morale.”

The next quotation is from the question, “In your opinion, what are the motivations for involving the community in a museum development project?”

“Having more community partners participate in the planning helps them to understand how the process works. Being involved in whatever committee or group, they can have a better understanding that there are certain things that are more feasible.”

The literature discusses learning as a byproduct of participatory planning, i.e. participants learning new skills (Frank 2006; Hart 1992), but my analysis in this study points to learning as a primary value and motivator for conducting participatory projects. Two-way learning will occur in effective projects; the initiating organization will learn from community members and community members will learn from the organization. In this light, the concept of “learning” or “two-way learning” may well be integrated into the conceptual framework, perhaps included in a new module which speaks to the motivations, intent, or goals for conducting a participatory project.

The Subject of Time

Time was also a recurring theme throughout the analysis. Time was the most frequently named obstacle to participatory planning (see Figure 26). Five of the 13 key informants spoke of the limitation of time which is 38.5% of the study participants. Time was also discussed by many informants when they were asked to identify the three most important elements to successfully execute a participatory planning project (see Figure 30). Both issues of “Timeliness” (12.9%, n = 4) and “Time Investment” (16.3%, n = 5) emerged as themes. The latter speaks to the time commitment that successful projects require and the former refers to involving the community at the right time in the process, which according to informants and literature is at the onset of the planning process (Kreps 2009; Petts & Leach 2000; Potter 2006; Tufte & Mefalopulos 2009). The following are responses from the question of the three most important elements to success:

“Time and money. It really comes down to time. We have a lot of projects on our plates and don’t always have time to do it.”

“Timeliness – asking [the community] before the design even starts.”

Generally, participatory planning projects are lengthy and involved processes, which require the commitment of time and resolve. Collaboration between numerous stakeholders will be time-consuming (Botes & Van Rensburg 2000). According to the literature and the results of this study, the issue of time should be a major consideration upon the undertaking of participatory projects and therefore should also be addressed in

the conceptual framework. “Invest Time” should be included in “Organizational Attitudes and Behaviors.”

The Issue of Ethnicity and Culture

A few of the participatory projects examined in this study were focused on the involvement of a particular segment of the community, in some cases a specific ethnic group. While this study did not use ethnicity as a focus, I would like to note that it deserves further examination in future studies, for museums are cultural stewards that exist to serve and reflect their communities (Gates 2003, Kreps 2009). The issue of cultural learning and the development of cultural competency arose periodically throughout the interviews. The concept can be found in this study in themes such as “Learning” from the question “Ways in which Practices were Effective” (see Table 18) and also in “Culture/Language Barriers,” a theme from “Ways in which Practices were Ineffective” (see Table 15).

The primary observation I made as a participant observer was that representation and access are two important goals concerning the involvement of cultural groups. Familiarity is an important part in extending trust (Fukuyama 1999), therefore when soliciting the participation of a particular cultural group, it is wise for an organization to enlist the help of a liaison who belongs to that group. Ideally, the staff is culturally representative of the community which it serves, so that the museum is able to enlist a staff member to act as liaison. Representation is especially crucial when the target

community is non-English-speaking or whose primary language is one other than English. Language barriers are likely to impede participation. If the liaison is able to communicate with members of the cultural group, access to participation is increased for that group. The following key informant talks about the process of creating a museum exhibit that integrated narratives of families from 20 different countries:

“It really helped to have a connection – someone who was a part of that particular [cultural] group - someone who was respected. We had more skills as we went along. It’s really hard [for non-English speakers] to speak in English.”

As noted in the literature review, it is of utmost importance to go to great lengths to extend the opportunity and provide access to participation for ethnic minority groups and other minorities, lest a participatory project contribute to the marginalization of such groups (Cornwall 2006; Kreps 2009; Petts & Leach 2000). One key-informant discussed their experience with cultural learning and how it affected the research process:

“All of [our practices] helped to strengthen the institutional cultural competence [of the museum]. The learnings from the original prototyping session were that we tried to do what we usually do with families to discuss critical feedback, but we found out that it was a cultural thing that people might not be comfortable giving negative feedback in public.”

A number of different issues concerning culture are illuminated in this section, including access, representation, language barriers, cultural liaisons, and building cultural competence. These topics alone are substantive enough to develop into an entirely new research endeavor concerning participatory planning. Although the issue of culture is a valid and relevant research focus, much as the issue of involving children, the conceptual

framework developed for this particular study is meant to be used for a broader application. Although communities are not homogenous, this study examines participatory planning and community as a whole. Perhaps this is a weakness, but it is also emphasized that every organization must conduct a participatory project by first examining their specific contexts, motivations, and biases. Additionally, I believe all of the attitudes and behaviors suggested in the conceptual framework (openness, trust, respect, provide access, be inclusive, listen, be responsive, communicate, and share power) will lend themselves to effectively incorporating various cultural groups as well. In the least, cultural sensitivity should also be included in the “Attitudes and Behaviors.” Section of the framework.

Social Capital

Participatory projects will bestow a number of positive social developments in the community when properly conducted. According to the literature, increased social capital will result from the practice of a participatory project (Frank 2006; Gates 2003; Shier 2001). This is also reflected in the conceptual framework and further supported by this study. Various elements of community building and social capital emerged as themes throughout the study. Some of these elements include relationship-building, communication, and trust (Grootaert 2003; Putnam 1995; Veenstra 2003). “Community-building” was named as one of the goals in 61.5% (n = 8) of the key informant’s participatory projects, demonstrating the interweaving between participatory projects,

community building and social capital. One informant speaks to the participatory project goals:

“The ultimate goal was to bring people together - to know each other.”

When key informants hear phrases such as “participatory planning,” they most commonly think of “Engaging the Community” (38.5%, n = 5). “Relationships” (30.8%, n = 4) and “Trust” (15.4%, n = 2), to a lesser degree, were also associated with participatory planning. Along similar lines, “Sharing/Togetherness” was considered to be a motivation for involving the community by 61.5% (n = 8) of informants (Figure 12). As these findings suggest, in congruence with the literature and conceptual framework, participatory planning projects facilitate interactions between organization and public, which then increase and become more meaningful throughout the process, thus building relationships, trust and community. The above findings also suggest that social capital may be a motivator or goal for conducting a participatory project, which might contribute well to the conceptual framework as such.

Communication is paramount to successful participation and for building trust and social capital. In order for the public to build trust in a community organization such as a museum they must engage in meaningful dialogue with others at or from that organization (Veenstra 2003). These ideas are also represented in the conceptual framework, where “Community Trust,” informs “Social Capital” and “Community Participation” is simultaneously, reciprocally related to both “Social Capital” and “Community Trust.” Throughout the results of this study the theme of “Communication” can be found at areas including “Steps and Methods” used to incorporate community

(Table 9) and ‘Strategies Used to Increase Access’ (Table 10). While communication should be a priority from the onset of a project it can also be helpful when encountering challenges during the project. According to 38.5% (n = 5) of informants ‘Communication’ is an effective tool in overcoming obstacles associated with participatory planning. This was the most commonly named tool for overcoming obstacles.

“Trust” emerged only once as a theme in regards to key informant responses (Table 4: “What comes to mind when you hear phrases such as ‘participatory planning?’”). Although trust did not emerge as a theme as frequently as the conceptual framework might suggest, it was still present throughout the interviews. “Trust” and “trust-building” were responses that were coded for themes such as “Attitudes” for the question of “Elements of Success” (Table 20) and the theme “Processes” for the question “Steps/Methods” used for participation (Table 9). The following quotes are in response to how the practices were effective:

“They were effective because we were building trusting relationships.”

“After two months of talking [with the community group], the dialogue was very open – then came incredible series of personal narratives, once we achieved that level of trust.”

While the literature discusses the relationship between trust and participation (Covey 2006, Gates 2003, Veenstra 2003), especially in regard to the production of social capital (Gates 2003, Putnam 1995), the analysis of the key-informant interviews does not point to trust as such an instrumental requisition for participation. It does emerge intermittently throughout the interviews, but not to the extent as it is represented in the

conceptual framework. Perhaps the element of “Community Trust” should not have such a prominent role as it does in the conceptual framework model. Tenets of social capital, especially relationship-building, are found consistently throughout this study and warrant the inclusion of the social capital module in the conceptual framework.

The Voice of the Child

Three questions concerning child participation will be examined here. The first question addressed the ways in which children were involved in the participatory projects. According to the literature (Iltus & Hart1995), artistic renderings are the most commonly used method in research with children. Categories generated from the key informant responses included “Dialogue,” “Artistic Rendering,” “Prototyping,” “Observation,” “Unsuccessful/Not in Planning,” and “Other” (Table 12). The number one theme for this question was ‘Dialogue,’ described by seven out of 13 informants (53.9%) (Figure 22). Responses in this theme included “advisory boards,” “meetings,” “interviews,” and “brainstorming sessions,” among others (see Table 12).

“Kids were key – they were the focus. They were very involved. In every case the adults had a part to share, but the stories came from the voices of the children.”

“I try to facilitate dialogue. If I do it well, I’ll bring children into collaboration and communication with adults.”

The subsequent question addressed the challenges to child participation. “Research Challenges” (38.5%, n = 5) and “Practicality” (30.8%, n = 4) were the two

most popular themes. “Practicality” includes issues of limited resources such as time, money, and space. “Research Challenges” speaks to the hurdles one faces when conducting research with children such as asking effective questions and figuring out strategies to get children to talk. The theme “Research Challenges” is echoed in the literature primarily because of consent issues and the concept of the child as a sensitive research subjects (Diamond 1999; Frank 2006; Sinclair 2004). The following quote elaborates:

“The challenges with children are often just consent issues. You have to be cautious. You need to protect their identity and make sure you have parental consent...The secondary challenge is being able to interview children – that’s a skill.”

The next question posed to key informants was “Do you have any recommendations for making [child participation] work better?” Themes derived from responses included “Attitudes/Behaviors” (23.1%, n = 3), “Work with Others” (23.1%, n = 3) and “Research Considerations.” This last theme was created from the responses of 46.2% (n = 6) of key informants that dealt with research consideration like research design and methods. The following quotations demonstrate:

“You learn a lot by watching them. Make the prototypes and let [the children] play with them. Watch what questions you ask to get good information.”

“Young children need hands-on activities. I think it helps when youth [pre-teens and teens] are involved because young children react well to them.”

Examples that made up the category “Attitudes and Behavior” include honesty, respect, compassion, and excitement (Table 14). The first two, honesty and respect go

hand in hand and are also referred to in the literature: honesty and respect can help an organization demonstrate transparency, an important part of genuine participation (Hart 1992; Iltus & Hart 1995; Shier 2001). As recommended for making child participation work:

“Be truthful to yourself. Are you really there to listen? Think of your own motivation.

How would you want to be treated? Don’t do it just because you think you should.”

“I have a fundamental respect for the great creative capacity of the people I work with and for, the children.”

These quotations speak greatly to the attitudes an organization must embrace when conducting child participation.

Common Practices: “Methods and Steps Used to Incorporate the Community”

The goal of this study is to identify common practices amongst key informants. In order to meet the goal, the following essential questions were asked of the informants: “Please describe what steps your organization took to incorporate the community into the planning of your museum project” and as a follow-up: “What methods and tools did you use?” Answers from both of these questions were coded together.

Research Methods

The most commonly discussed theme in response to these questions was “Research Methods.” Eleven out of the 13 (84.6%) informants talked about at least one research method which was used during their participatory planning project. Found

commonly in the museum world, the use of research methods as a means to develop services is referred to as “visitor studies” (Diamond 1999; Fakatseli 2010; Falk and Dierking 1998). Specific research methods discussed by key informants include advisory boards, focus groups, brainstorming sessions, interviews, surveys, modeling and prototyping (Table 9). Many informants named several research methods, as illustrated in the following quotation:

Prior to proposal, we used focus groups to find out what we might do differently. We wanted to find out what kinds of exhibits and signs we needed to make it more welcome. We weren't serving the Vietnamese population well enough. We went through a prototyping process, we set up an advisory group. [The advisory group members] were involved in idea generation. We brought in Vietnamese families. We conducted a summative evaluation with families.

Although the use of research methods is suggested in the literature, it is also suggested that no specific research methods are appropriate for every project (CYPU 2001). Each museum and community provides a very different context in which the project will take place. Specific methods should be determined from that context. Generally, the use of multiple methods is best (Berg 2003, Babbie 2001; CYPU 2001).

Processes

Almost one-half (46.15%, n = 6) of key informants talked about different processes that occurred during the participatory project. Responses associated with this theme include collaboration, cultural learning, trust-building, relationship-building, and institutionalize the concept of participation. The following quote elaborates on the importance of relationship-building:

If I'm going to send something out, it goes out to at least 30 different voices. If a subgroup doesn't respond, I'll get on the phone. You can only do that if you've established a relationship over the years. They have to trust you, you have to trust them. You really want people to push back hard to make sure that the outcome meets their needs. You can't just bring them in at the beginning and at the end. You'll need to check back in with them during the process. Issues come up that will change things, you must check in with them.

Some of these processes have already been discussed here (cultural learning, relationship-building, trust-building), but these types of responses demonstrate that participatory planning is itself a process, rather than an event.

Partners

Having partners throughout the process seemed to be an important topic amongst informants. Eighty-four point six percent (n = 11) of them spoke of a partner in their account. Partners were identified as schools, community organizations, city officials, consultants, and key community contact along with others (see Table 9). One particular type of partner which seemed to hold special importance was the key community contact.

The following quotes further explain:

“There was one person who was key - the early childhood education coordinator for the district. She oversees all the schools. She was completely sold on the project and very supportive. It gave us easy access [to the schools].”

“You make your inroads with a community you're not familiar with by finding the right person to get you into that community.”

Partners, as aids in the participatory planning process, were not necessarily discussed in the literature review. Perhaps this points to the nature of the sample population, museum

organizations, that maybe tend to enlist partner organizations and other community partners, like schools and professionals in their regular operations as a matter of practice. Perhaps not, but with 84.6% (n = 11) agreement between key-informants in may serve as value in the conceptual framework model.

Communication

Communication was a prevalent concept throughout the analysis, emerging as a theme for multiple questions. Communication was mentioned by 76.9% (n = 10) of the key-informants and was the third most common theme in response to the “Methods and Steps” question behind “Research Methods” and “Partners.” Some ideas included in this “Communication” theme were meetings, listening, responsiveness, phone and newsletters. Listening and being responsive are important behaviors in participatory projects (Petts & Leach 2000); they both contribute to trust in the organization (Covey 2006). These two quotes speak to how communication was used:

“What made [the project] so interesting was the essential depth of the dialogue.”

“You have to genuinely listen. If you really don’t want to listen, don’t invite them. Don’t patronize them.”

Communication and dialogue are an essential component to achieving genuine participation, for ongoing interactions are necessary to maintain collaborative relationships (Kreps 2009; Tufte & Mefalopulos 2009). A museum must be communicative, being able to effectively convey information and to be able to openly receive it.

Common Practices: “Ways Access was Increased”

The literature (Cornwall 2008; Hart 1997) speaks to the importance of inclusion and access for inviting to public to participate in a planning project. As part of the examination of practices used by key-informants, they were asked, “In what ways did you increase community access for the public to participate in the project?”

Remote Meetings

“Remote Meetings” was discussed by seven out of the 13 (53.9%) informants. Remote meetings refer to museum representatives conducting or attending meetings that are off-site or otherwise located at an alternate community venue. These remote meetings can be crucial to providing access to some members of the community who may not otherwise be able to participate, due to lack of transportation or other resources. Additionally, community members are more likely to participate in a meeting when it is held in a more familiar and comfortable space (Cornwall 2008).

Accommodations and Rewards/Incentives

Over one-half (53.9%, n = 7) of informants spoke about how their organizations provided various types of accommodations for their project participants. Museums provided food, transportation, and childcare in order to increase the opportunities for the public to be involved. Some of these ideas may also be related to the idea of incentives. “Rewards/Incentives” was remarked upon by 69.2% of key-informants (n =9). Some rewards and incentives that were provided included free passes, thank you gifts, stipends,

reduced admission, scholarships, etc. One informant spoke of a combination of accommodations and incentives:

“We had community workshops where we bussed families, comped admission, set up memberships, and provided snacks.”

Though the idea of providing rewards and incentives for participation was not located in the literature, over two-thirds of this population of key-informants used this method and so could warrant a place in the conceptual framework model.

Elements of Success

As discussed above, “Timeliness” and “Time Investment” were two of the more common themes when key informants identified the three most important elements to success. The two themes this question elicited the most frequently were “Attitudes” and “Actions.” “Actions” or what might otherwise be referred to as “Behaviors,” was referred to by 53.9% (n = 7) of the informants. These included concepts and phrases such as “collaboration,” and “staff representation.” Nine of the 13 key informants (69.2%) spoke of attitudes such as “determination,” “respect,” “trust,” “openness,” “honesty,” “sincerity,” and “deliberateness,” among others (see Table 20). Some of these attitudes are echoed in both this study (Attitudes in response to Recommendations for Involving Children, see Table 14) and in the literature, namely respect, honesty, and openness (Hart 1992; Iltus & Hart 1995; Kreps 2003; Petts & Leach 2000). Some quotations demonstrate:

“Having a learning attitude, an openness and willingness to hear from and learn from the community.”

“I think a vibrant community center shares power. You have to involve them...Respect. Sharing - I'd like to think this is a place that says - what should we do here together?”

As aforementioned the attitudes mentioned above point to the concept of transparency, a crucial element to genuine participation in participatory projects (Botes & Van Rensburg 2000; Petts & Leach 2000; Kreps 2009; Tufte & Mefalopulos 2009). Transparency involves honesty and furthermore encourages the active sharing of information with the public. When information is shared and transparency is practiced it results in a more open process which can allow for increased participation. The public should understand the details of the project: Who will benefit from the project? How will participants be involved? How will the museum utilize and apply their participation, opinions and perspectives? In what ways will a community member be able to influence decisions? Transparency can be accomplished through open and honest communication during the participatory process, an important goal because genuine participation is marked by shared decision-making and participant awareness (Hart 1992; Iltus & Hart1995).

Implications for Conceptual Framework Model

Overall, the original conceptual framework is an applicable theoretical model for this study, but based on the results from in-depth interviews, can be modified to better

reflect some discrepancies between the literature and the results. One of these modifications is the incorporation of “Communication” as a major component in the model. As the results depicted, the role of communication is prevalent throughout participatory projects and deserves a more prominent position in the conceptual framework. Conversely, the module of “Community Trust” can be relocated to a less central position. Though still an important part, especially in relation to “Social Capital” and “Community Participation,” results did not support it as a central theme. Also, the details addressed in the “Organizational Attitudes and Behaviors” can be improved with the adding of “Invest Time,” “Be Culturally Sensitive,” and “Enlist the aid of Partners.”

This study elucidated the need for another component to the model:

“Organizational Intent.” Determining goals and intent before involving the community is also supported by the literature, stressed as important when conducting a successful participatory project (Cornwall 2008; Petts & Leach 2000; Sinclair 2004). The results of this study suggest that “Learning” or “Two-way Learning” fall under this category. Additionally, analysis of key-informant interviews found that “Social Capital” or “Building Community” were goals for successful participatory projects. Thus, the “Social Capital” module can be repositioned in the conceptual framework model to feed back into the “Organizational Intent” module. The model below reflects the modifications to the conceptual framework as informed by this research. The revised title reflects the expanded scope of study.

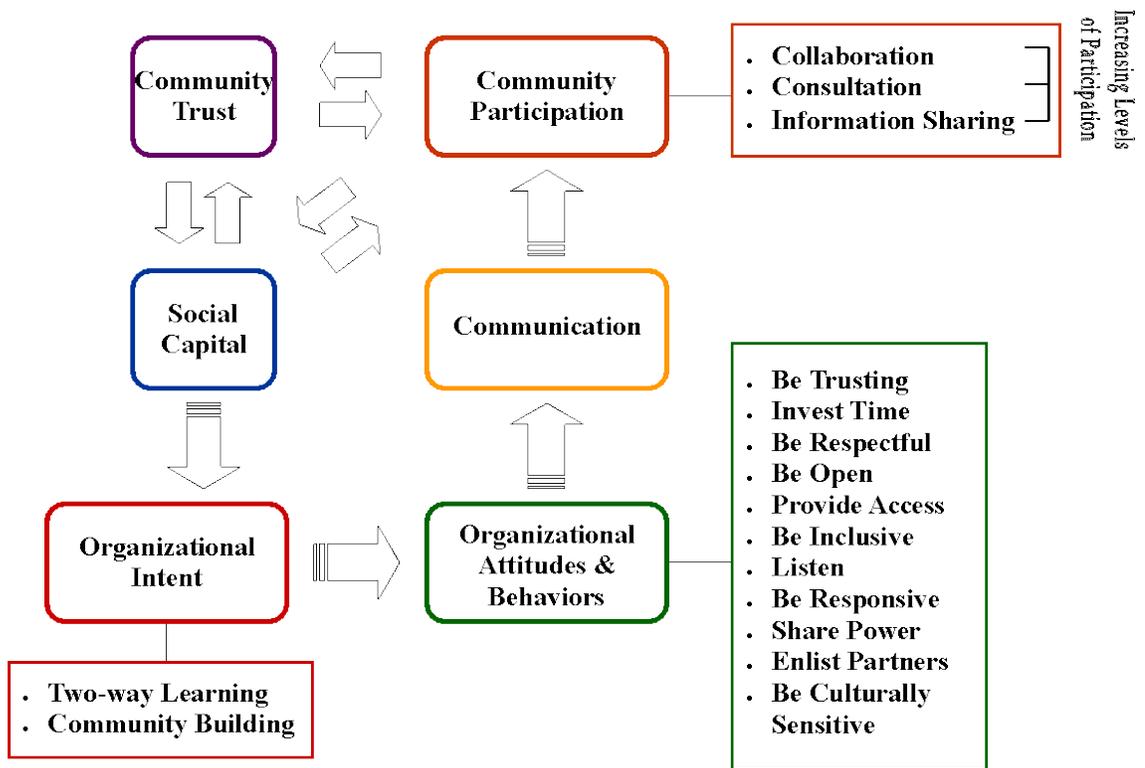


Figure 31. Conceptual Framework Revised: Participatory Planning in Action.

CONCLUSION

By conducting a participatory planning project, community-based organizations like museums may effectively engage the public so that the community members have a voice and are able to influence decision-making. The findings of this study are widely in accordance with the literature reviewed. There are a number of commonalities between the experiences of the key-informants studied here and the recommended practices for successful participatory projects as indicated in the literature. These include the following: participatory planning projects will serve to build relationships through trust and transparency. Organizations have to be open, listen and be responsive to the community. Participatory projects are time-consuming processes where learning and collaboration take place, which lead to shared decision-making between organization and community participants.

Some discrepancies exist between the literature and the findings of this study. While the literature only cursorily touched on the following ideas, this study identified them as emergent themes. They include learning as a primary motivator for organizations to conduct participatory projects, time and timeliness, enlisting partners to help carry out the involvement of the community, and increasing access specifically by providing accommodations and incentive to participate. Cultural sensitivity by the organization was missing from the literature, yet was emergent in both interview analysis and participant observation. Modifications to the conceptual framework were applied to better reflect the findings of this research.

Supported by the literature review and founded in the results of this study, the following actions are set forth as recommendations for museums and other community organizations to successfully enact a participatory planning project in conjunction with their communities. First, recognize the individual and unique context in which the project will be taking place. Examine biases and limitations. Establish intentions: Is learning or building community one of the project goals? Next, understand communication is imperative; a successful project depends on it. From there, I recommend a community organization embrace the following ten attitudes and behaviors in order to conduct a successful participatory planning project: 1) Be open to learning; 2) Trust and respect community members and their knowledge; 3) Practice cultural sensitivity; 4) Enlist partners for aid; 5) Invest time and involve community early; 6) Practice transparency through openness and honesty; 7) Utilize appropriate research methods rooted in context, 8) Increase access by providing accommodations and incentives; 9) Listen and be responsive; 10) Share decision-making power through collaboration.

This study found that much of the same practices used for community participation were also used for involving children in the planning process. Other observations relevant to involving young people were that special considerations need to be taken when conducting research with them. It is important to engage children in dialogue, but issues of consent are a challenge for child participation. The research suggests that people who work with the involvement of children in planning should be

skilled or otherwise effective at doing so. Children, perhaps more so than adults, must be engaged with openness, honesty, and respect.

Considerations for future research include expanding the study to include new technological strategies for participation, varying the sample population, and focusing on the issue of culture or ethnicity. During the course of this study, the use of social networking internet sites experienced a revolutionary boom in popular culture, altering and expanding the domain of participation and the concept of interactions and relationships. Organizations are increasingly incorporating electronic social networking into their methods for soliciting participation. This may be a topic of interest for future studies regarding participatory planning in community organizations.

As noted earlier, ethnicity and culture may serve as a relevant and interesting research lens through which to examine the question of participatory planning in museum organizations. A number of different issues concerning culture may be examined, including access, representation, language barriers, cultural liaisons, and building cultural competence.

Because this study originated from a children's museum, the majority of the key-informants in this study were representing children's museums. This narrowly focused sample may yield different results than a more varied sample that may include different types of museums or other types of community organizations. The secondary focus of this study, the voice of the child in participatory planning, called for the sample to represent organizations where the child is a main part of their target population. Other

community organizations that serve youth, such as YMCA, may be considered as possible research participants in later studies.

Lastly, future studies would do well to expand on this research question by examining the perceptions of other key players in participatory planning projects, specifically the community participants and possibly other partner organizations as well. These types of investigations would provide an alternate and perhaps more appropriate perspective to the participatory process and its effects on the relationship between museum organization and community. Furthermore, I encourage researchers to engage children in their studies on participatory projects; I am confident the results of such an exploration are well worth the research challenges one might encounter. Children's perspectives on participation may prove to be the most significant of all.

Participatory planning projects are beneficial to the community and to the greater society as a whole. With the guidance of the recommendations above, the future of museum organizations creating powerful change in their communities is bright. Museum organizations may effectively engage with their communities in a mutual learning experience that benefits everyone involved. The museum has the power to inspire the creation of identity within their communities, by providing the unique opportunity for such a transformative experience for children and adults alike. Museums can advance genuine participation, and by enacting a participatory project, promote democracy, build social capital and increase civic capacity (Frank 2006; Hart 1992). Beginning to understand the value of child-as-citizen, adults engaged meaningfully with youth, can ultimately contribute to a socio-cultural paradigm shift in views towards children. This

newfound perspective will honor children as whole individuals and credit them their due respect.

EPILOGUE

The purpose of this study was to identify a set of practices that were common to successful participatory projects in order to inform a best practices guide for participatory planning in museum development. The results discussed in this study have been synthesized and now serve as content for the guide. The best practices guide will be designed and published in the weeks following the completion of this thesis. The children's museum in Arizona with which I collaborated on this project, will produce the document. Together, the museum and I will propose that an Association of Children's Museum (ACM) affiliate contribute to this work by writing a foreword to the guide.

The Arizona children's museum will distribute the guide accordingly. All interview participants from this study will receive a copy of the best practices guide so that they may observe the results of their participation. The children's museum leaders who requested a copy during the presentation of this study at the ACM conference will also receive a guide.

The Arizona children's museum will upload the document to their website so that others may use it as a reference. The guide will also be submitted to the Association of Children's Museums website, significantly broadening access to it. Additionally, I may propose to submit an abbreviated version of the best practices guide to *Hand to Hand*, a publication of the Association of Children's Museums. May this work contribute to the field by inspiring organizational leaders to practice participation, to empower their communities, and to create space for the voice of the child to ring loud and true.

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APPENDIX A HART'S MODEL

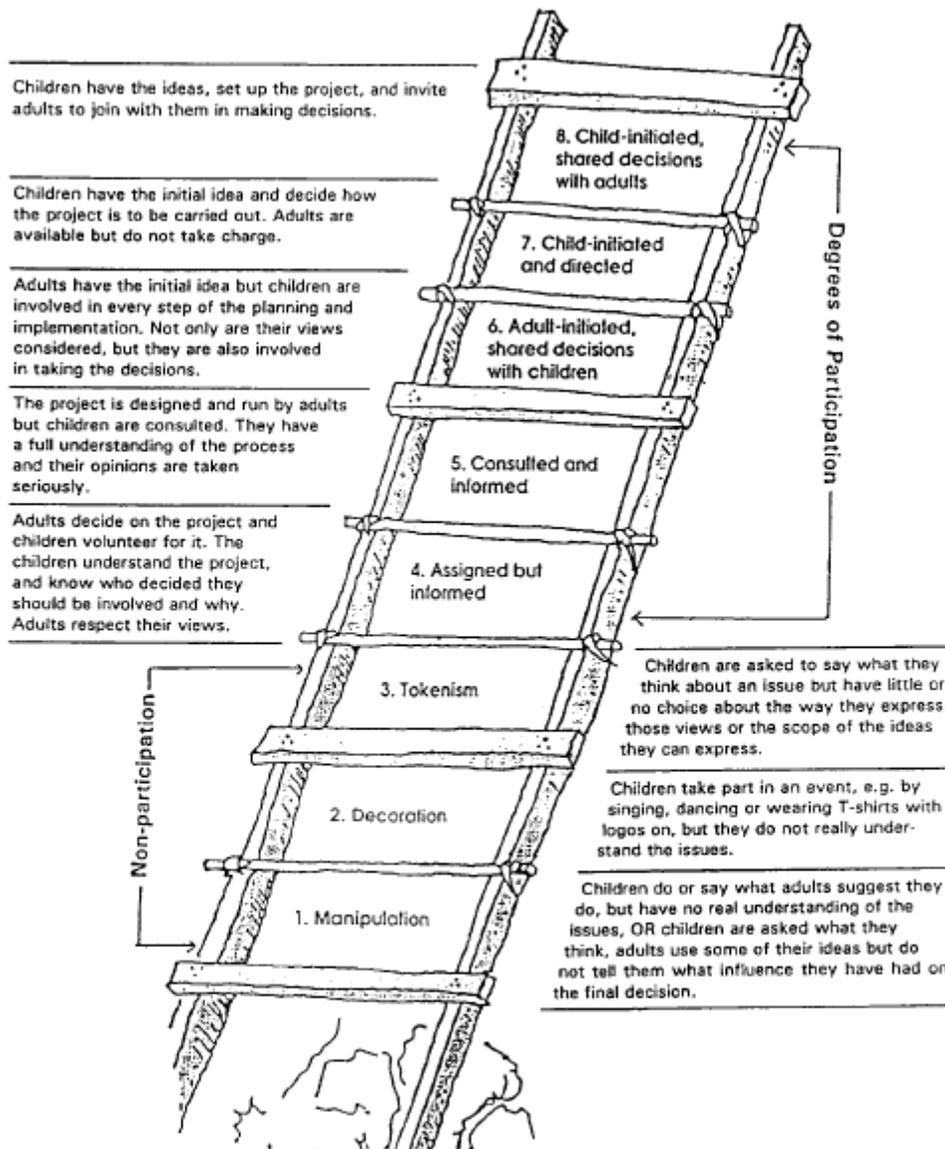
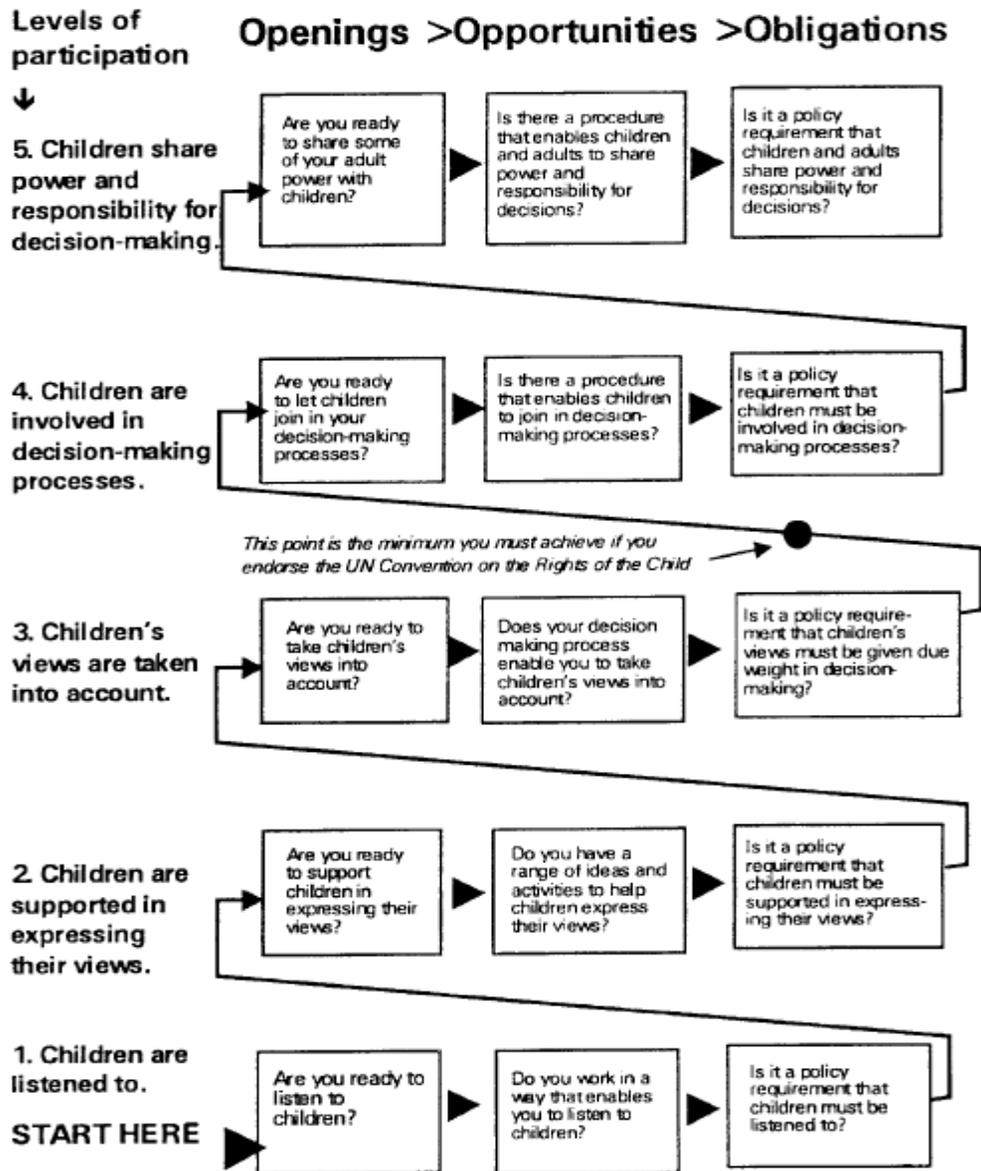


Figure 1: The ladder of participation. (Taken from 'The right to play and children's participation' by Roger Hart, in The Article 31 Action Pack, published by PLAY · TRAIN, 1995).

Depiction taken from "Pathways to Participation: Openings, Opportunities and Obligations" by Harry Shier in *Children & Society* 15: 107-117, 2001.

APPENDIX B
SHIER'S MODEL



Depiction taken from "Pathways to Participation: Openings, Opportunities and Obligations" by Harry Shier in *Children & Society* 15: 107-117, 2001.

APPENDIX C
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview Schedule

I appreciate your participation in this study. The purpose of this study is to investigate patterns and synthesize practices of community involvement in the development of museums and museum projects, especially children's museums. The information gathered from this interview will be used to develop a best practices manual for participatory planning in museums. Thank you for your time.

1. What is your current position?
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. Does your job involve public outreach? (y/n)
4. What comes to mind when you hear phrases such as "participatory planning," "collaborative planning," or "community action planning"?
5. In your opinion, what are the motivations for involving the community in a museum development project?
6. What do you think is the value in community participation in development projects and why should organizational leaders care about utilizing it?
7. Please identify what groups (board of directors, staff, community, designers) need to "buy-in" to this process in order for it to work and why?
8. What museum projects have you worked on where the community participated in the planning and/or development of the project?
 - a. When did they take place and for how long?
9. What were the goals of the development projects in which you involved the community?
10. Please describe what steps your organization took to incorporate the community into the planning of your museum project.
 - a. What methods and tools did you use?
 - i. How were they effective? How were they ineffective?

Now, I'm going to ask you a little more about how much the community was involved in the project. I am about to describe some general steps in a typical development project. Please assign a number, 1 through 5, as to how much the community was involved at each step, where

1 = no involvement

2 = not very involved – an example of this would be that they were given information through brochures or the media

3 = somewhat involved - this includes consultation from the community, such as through surveys, focus groups or other

4 = very involved – this is where the community served as “partner,” with shared decision-making and collaboration with authorities

5 = completely involved - where the community makes the final decisions

Please ask me to repeat these at any time.

Stage	Visioning/Initiation	Planning/Design	Implementation	Evaluation/Maintenance
Response (1-5)				

11. How involved was the community in the *Visioning and Initiation* stage of the project, where the big ideas came about to create something new?
12. How involved was the community in the *Planning and Design* stage, where the details were developed for the execution of the project?
13. How involved was the community in the *Implementation* stage, where constructing buildings and implementing programs occurred?
14. How involved was/is the community in the *Evaluation and Maintenance* stage, where the project was/is assessed and maintained?

Thank you. Continuing on to further details of your project...

15. Please tell me about any evaluations your organization used to assess the level of community participation in your project.
16. In what ways did you increase community access in order for the public to participate in the project?
17. How did you include children and/or those with disabilities into the planning process?
 - a. What were the challenges to do doing this?
 - i. Do you have any recommendations for making it work better?
 - ii. What specific products or project elements resulted directly from their participation?
18. What products or project elements, small or large, resulted directly from the input of the community?

19. Please tell me, in what ways was the project successful?
 - a. What project goals were met?
20. In your opinion, what are the three most important elements to successfully executing a project which aims to integrate community participation?
21. Please describe what has been the most challenging obstacle to successfully integrating the community into development projects in your experience.
 - a. How did you or how might have you and the organization overcome it?
22. What was the location of the museum project (city/town, state)?
23. What type of neighborhood was it in: suburban, urban, rural?
24. Regarding the museum, what was the estimated annual visitation at the time of the project?
25. Please choose one the following: The size of the museum before construction was: <20,000 sq. ft., 20-50,000 sq. ft, or >50,000 sq. ft
26. How would you describe the size and scale of the project?
 - a. Was it a new construction, a remodeling, an exhibit or other?
27. Generally, what was the budget range for the development project?
28. How would you describe the racial makeup of the museum community?
29. How would you describe the income range of the museum community?

Please tell me a little about yourself...

30. In what year were you born?
31. How would you describe your ethnicity?
32. What is the highest level of education you have received?

Thank you. Before I ask my final question, is there anything else you would like to add that we might not have covered during the interview?

33. Can you identify one other organization that has successfully integrated community participation into their development project, which may be interested in participating in this study?

Thank you very much for your participation.

APPENDIX D
CONSENT FORM

HUMBOLDT STATE UNIVERSITY
COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS IN RESEARCH

The following interview is part of a graduate research project for the Environment & Community program at Humboldt State University. The researcher is conducting this study in conjunction with the Tucson Children's Museum.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and synthesize practices of participatory planning in the development of museums and museum projects, especially children's museums. Information obtained from this interview will be used to develop a best practices manual for participatory planning in museums. The manual may be distributed to museum professionals.

The procedure used is a key-informant interview, whereby the researcher will ask the subject a series of questions face-to-face or over the telephone. Completion of this interview shall take no longer than 60 minutes. Key-informants for this study will include those who have worked with participatory planning, especially on museum projects and children's museums; this study seeks to obtain 15-20 interviews from this population.

Confidentiality will be maintained by coding the interviews. Your name, title, gender, duration or dates of your association to your organization will not be disclosed for this study. Tabulation and coding of the interviews will be kept secure in a locked cabinet during the course of the study, then destroyed after the study is completed.

Potential benefits resulting from this study include access to research results in the form of a best practices manual, which may provide guidance for organizations such as museums to execute a more inclusive development project at their site; involving the community may lead to numerous potential benefits. There are no known potential risks.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study or the researcher, please contact the researcher, Vanessa Rae Gomes at vrgomes@childrensmuseum.org OR the Graduate Advisor of this study, Dr. Sheila Steinberg, at 707-826-3402 or ss51@humboldt.edu.

I understand that the researcher or Advisor will answer any questions I may have concerning the investigation or the procedures at any time. I also understand that my participation in any study is entirely voluntary and that I may decline to enter this study or may withdraw from it at any time without jeopardy. I understand that the investigator may terminate my participation in the study at any time. I understand and agree to participate in the study described above.

Compensation:

X *I am not receiving any compensation for participating in this study.*

Subject's Signature

Date

Thank you for your participation.

APPENDIX E
SUBJECT EMAIL

Dear _____,

Hello my name is Vanessa Rae Gomes. I am a graduate researcher working to complete my Masters degree with Humboldt State University. My research focuses on community participation in museum planning and development, especially in children's museums across the United States. I am working in conjunction with the _____ Children's Museum in Arizona. **I am examining patterns among the experiences of museum organizations and their relationships to the community during the development of a new building, new edition, new exhibit, etc.**

Throughout my research I have learned of a number of organizations which have effectively incorporated the community into their building projects; these are the organizations with which I am interested in speaking. You are receiving this email because of the _____ project.

I will only be interviewing 15-20 people and I am very interested in hearing about your project. **Please consider participating in this study and contributing to the subject.**

If you have any questions before you make your decision, I can be reached through email at vgomes@achildreismuseum.org.

Please expect a phone call from me later this week regarding your participation. Is there an optimal time or number at which to contact you?

Thank very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Rae Gomes