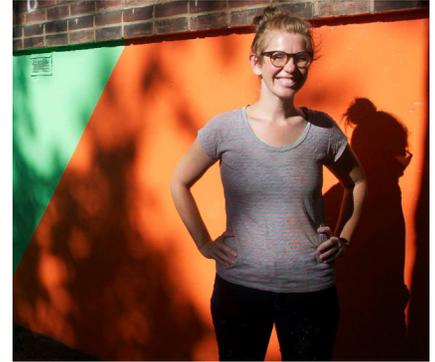


# Creative Transformation: Arts, Culture, and Public Housing Communities



Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts NY (NOCD-NY)  
Roundtable Report

by Nayantara Sen



top left: Dance workshop for Red Hook NYCHA Seniors with Dance Theatre Etcetera artist in residence; top right: Through MoCADA, artist Shantell Martin works with a young student at Ingersoll Community Center; middle right: Artist Elizabeth Hamby collaborated with Casita Maria on *Alphabet City*, which included painting murals on Patterson Houses in the Bronx; bottom: Taylor-Wythe Houses Field Day performance through El Puente's Leadership Center.

cover, upper left: Elizabeth Hamby print from *Alphabet City* collaboration; upper right: Park Hill African Market, a collaboration between SLCA, Napela Inc and Staten Island Arts; bottom left: Students in Dance Theatre Etcetera's *In Transition*: Media program, bottom right: With support from Bronx Health Reach, Casita Maria, NYCHA, East Side Houses Settlement and BronxWorks helped develop a mural in Mott Haven entitled "Adeleine" by Aranda Nahu and Izolag Arneideah, photo: Christian Rivera

# Executive Summary

On July 27, 2015, Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts New York (NOCD-NY) convened a half-day roundtable, “Creative Transformation: Arts, Culture, and Public Housing Communities,” at the Rockefeller Foundation.

This gathering brought together a diverse group of tenant leaders, residents, elected officials, artists, advocates, funders, representatives of cultural institutions, city agencies, and community organizations. Together, they discussed successes, challenges, and opportunities for using arts and culture to heal and transform New York City’s public housing communities.

Fifty-four participants attended the roundtable. Through presentations, storytelling, questions, and dialogue, they explored the history and inequities of New York City’s public housing and identified salient challenges, barriers, recommendations, and next steps for deeper integration of arts and culture. The gathering showcased exemplary local partnerships in three areas: Cultural Engagement on NYCHA Sites, Community Revitalization Strategies in the Bronx, and Arts-Initiated Models. These stories were followed by presentations from four perspectives: Arts and Culture, Residents and Activists, National, and New York City Policy.

Presenting groups and individuals included El Puente, University Settlement, Napela’s Park Hill Market, Casita Maria, Elizabeth Hamby, Betances Community Center, Groundswell, MoCADA, Dance Theatre Etcetera, Purelements: An Evolution in Dance, The Chocolate Factory Theater, ArtPlace, PolicyLink, Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES), Community Voices Heard, and Campos Plaza Tenant Association. Among participating city officials were representatives from New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), New York City Council, and the Manhattan Borough President’s Office.

**The goals of the roundtable were the following:**

- *Showcase exemplary partnerships that illustrate equitable, long-term approaches*
- *Identify systemic and social barriers as they relate to public housing, community resilience, and arts integration*
- *Develop recommendations and discuss how to move them into action*
- *Identify pilot project(s) that could be supported*
- *Build and strengthen cross-sector relationships among participants*

The roundtable was successful in meeting these goals, as well as in providing an accessible entry point for the interrogation of complex and nuanced relationships between cultural vitality, community resilience, urban policy, community organizing, economic stability, public housing, and arts and culture.

Participants learned about the history of public housing in New York City from the 1930s to the present and collectively explored the impacts of structural factors, social isolation, trauma, and cultural disruption. They identified arts and culture as catalytic forces for social, political, relational, spatial, and liberatory transformation and named the ways in which they can instigate innovative responses to complex problems.

They identified the following strategic functions of arts and culture: interrupting and healing effects of intergenerational trauma; building healthy, resilient communities; providing actionable pathways for skills development and service provision; spurring civic engagement and democracy; and serving as a liberatory tool for social transformation and systemic change. Participants corroborated the key premise of the gathering: that arts and culture can be a lever to transform public housing into a more just and equitable system.

Challenges were identified in the broad areas of funding, finance and disinvestment, isolation and segregation of public housing residents, and citywide gentrification and displacement. The following factors were

named as barriers: overreliance on short-term, project-based funding; NYCHA's financial insolvency; lack of investment in resident-led efforts; dearth of activated community hubs and public spaces; racist and classist stigma against residents; lack of suitable facilities for cultural programs; and gentrifying effects of art, especially when artistic interventions are not developed in collaboration with residents.

**The following six themes emerged as central, shared considerations:**

1. *Public housing is a complex system that relates holistically to the larger ecology of communities.*
2. *Isolation and trauma are deeply embedded in the fabric of public housing.*
3. *Resident voices and experiences are inadequately represented in cultural programs, community development, and urban planning efforts.*
4. *Cultural programs should reflect the diversity of people in public housing.*
5. *The relationship between arts, culture, gentrification, and displacement needs to be acknowledged.*
6. *Cross-sector collaborations and partnerships greatly increase the reach, impact, scalability, and public value of the arts and culture in public housing.*

**Based on participants' requests, the roundtable generated the following recommendations to further the strategic inclusion of arts and culture in public housing:**

- *Creation of new, collaborative funding streams*
- *Advancement of simultaneous efforts for service delivery, systems-level interventions, and visionary change*
- *Integration of a holistic understanding of public housing to change efforts*
- *Amplification of cross-sector conversations and partnerships*
- *Meaningful inclusion and engagement of residents*
- *Increase in access to facilities and space*

Many concrete next steps for collaborations and action were identified, including in the city's cultural planning and participatory budgeting processes, in community board and borough cabinet meetings, and in town halls on NYCHA's NextGeneration Plan. There was shared analysis on the importance of centralizing both cultural healing and repair from trauma and the creation of new opportunities for resident-led efforts. NOCD-NY committed to keep the conversations going with roundtable participants and others and to continue developing strategic cross-sector relationships for integration of arts and culture in the public housing system. NOCD-NY has followed up on this roundtable through a series of conversations with residents, advocates, artists, and policymakers, supported by The New York City Cultural Agenda Fund in The New York Community Trust.

For up-to-date information about NOCD-NY's work on arts, culture and public housing, visit their website at <http://nocdny.org>, or reach out to [nocdny@gmail.com](mailto:nocdny@gmail.com). To contact the author, Nayantara Sen, email her at [nayantara.sen@gmail.com](mailto:nayantara.sen@gmail.com).



University Settlement programming includes *The Performance Project* at Atlantic Terminal Community Center

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# Introduction

On July 27, 2015, Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts New York (NOCD-NY) convened a half-day roundtable, “Creative Transformation: Arts, Culture, and Public Housing Communities,” at the Rockefeller Foundation.

This gathering brought together a diverse group of tenant leaders, residents, elected officials, artists, advocates, funders, representatives of cultural institutions, city agencies, and community organizations. Together, they discussed successes, challenges, and opportunities for using arts and culture to heal and transform New York City’s public housing communities.

NOCD-NY is a citywide alliance of artists, activists, creative manufacturers, and policymakers committed to revitalizing New York City “from the neighborhood up.” NOCD-NY emerged in 2010 through two similar roundtables and since then has worked steadily

to integrate neighborhood arts into community development, nourish cultural vibrancy, and coordinate and support efforts for self-determination, social justice, and equity.

Fifty-four participants attended the roundtable. Through presentations, storytelling, questions, and dialogue, they explored the historical legacy of New York City’s public housing and its current inequities. They also identified possibilities for deeper integration and amplification of arts and culture in public housing. Roundtable attendees reflected a wide swath of the cultural and political landscape and included representatives from key advocacy and grassroots-organizing groups, arts-presenting organizations, and arts service agencies. Among participating city officials were representatives from New York City Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA), New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), New York City Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), New York City Council, and the Office of the Manhattan Borough President.

This gathering grew out of a landscape scan commissioned by NOCD-NY in summer 2015. Through a consulting partnership with NOCD-NY, researchers Claudie Mabry and Andrew King interviewed and surveyed local leaders of arts and cultural organizations, advocacy groups, and city agencies. Through conversations and interviews, Mabry and King mapped ongoing cultural projects and interventions in public housing, identified stakeholders and their priorities, and shaped the convening agenda.

The event opened to the striking backdrop of projections of Rico Washington’s photojournalism exhibit *We the People: The Citizens of NYCHA*, a curated show of documentary photographs of black and Latino NYCHA residents—images of children, grandparents, homemakers, laborers, and community members who have sustained long-term homes and families inside public housing. Rico, an artist who grew up in NYCHA housing himself, spoke briefly about how the *We the People* exhibit interrupts stigma, disdain, and racialized stereotyping against public housing residents.

## Goals of the Roundtable

- Showcase exemplary partnerships that illustrate equitable, long-term approaches
- Identify systemic and social barriers as they relate to public housing, community resilience, and arts integration
- Develop recommendations and discuss how to move them into action
- Identify pilot project(s) that could be supported
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*We the People: The Citizens of NYCHA in Photos + Words*, a photojournalism project by Rico Washington and Shino Yanagawa

In keeping with NOCD-NY's core value of honoring the wisdom and creativity that exists in all our neighborhoods, the roundtable was grounded in stories from local communities. El Puente, University Settlement, Napela's Park Hill Market, Casita Maria, Elizabeth Hamby, Betances Community Center, Groundswell, MoCADA, and Dance Theatre Etcetera presented nine examples representing diverse approaches to the engagement of arts and culture in public housing communities. These examples included [Cornerstone centers](#)<sup>1</sup> on public housing sites led by community cultural organizations, a resident-organized marketplace, artist-led programs that engage public housing residents in training and creation, and an arts-presenting program at NYCHA sites for the community at large.

Among the public partners in these programs were New York City Council Member Ritchie Torres, DYCD, NYCHA, Department of Transportation, the Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, and the New York Empowerment Zone. Nonprofit partners included the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Red Hook Initiative, Good Shepherd Services, BRIC Arts Media, Staten Island Arts, the Rotary Club, and Dancing in the Streets.

The roundtable was a successful entry point for interrogating the complex and nuanced relationships between cultural vitality, community resilience, urban

policy, community organizing, economic stability, public housing, and arts and culture. Through the stories of the featured organizations as well as questions from participants, multilayered dimensions of our public housing system emerged.

**Collectively, the group examined many complex questions, such as:**

- *What are the origins of problems in New York City's public housing system?*
- *How have the arts helped build a sense of home and community?*
- *How has the history and design of public housing contributed to the isolation, segregation, and stigma experienced by tenants and residents?*
- *Can arts and culture contribute to more cohesive, resilient communities?*
- *What strategies have been locally successful?*
- *Where have we been operating in silos that could benefit from cross-sector collaboration?*
- *How can we strengthen networks in order to encourage creative partnerships between city agencies, nonprofits, community-based organizations (CBOs) and residents?*

# Historical Context of Public Housing in New York City

Public housing in New York City is a complex system with a vast, proliferous, and controversial history. NOCD-NY understood that in order to clearly locate current inequities and identify new possibilities for meaningfully engaging arts and culture in public housing, roundtable participants had to learn about the legacy of our public housing system. Together, the group had to address the question: What structural and historical factors are still influencing our experiences with public housing today?

Nicholas Dagen Bloom, author of *Public Housing That Worked*<sup>2</sup> and professor at the New York Institute of Technology, was invited as a respondent to the roundtable to share his research on the history of New York City's public housing. Bloom explained that public housing began in the 1930s as a totalizing project. Neighborhoods were plowed under, or in the case of Staten Island, built on green fields. The clearing of entire neighborhoods meant more than tearing down physical structures such as tenement buildings. It also meant that "accessory spaces" such as churches, small businesses, community hubs, and informal gathering areas for community work were knocked down as well. Before the citywide public housing program was instituted, cultural life was more localized, diffused, and integrated in neighborhoods, and residents had access to more spaces that supported cultural, ritual, and artistic practices and knitted the community together socially and relationally.

Bloom said that public housing originally had an integrationist purpose—it was all about "moving everyone into the American mainstream." The underlying assumption was that standardized homes that were affordable for low-income residents would support this integration, and the most effective way to bring about integration was to build dense, homogeneous housing structures. Most of these structures had only one community center, which was a paltry substitute for the many, vibrant spaces that were there previously. "In the 1950s and '60s," said Bloom, "they tried to

fill this absence with things like talent shows, camps, and stand-alone events in the community centers. But in many ways, the remedy was worse than the disease. By clearing the vibrant neighborhoods, they had created a kind of multidecade challenge for people doing community work."

The social and cultural fallout of this "razing" of the city is still being felt today. Despite the original integrationist and assimilationist goals of public housing in the 1930s, the gutting of locally rooted cultural sites means that diverse, ethnic communities can now live near each other in high concentrations, but still experience high degrees of isolation and disconnection. As gentrification intensifies, public housing residents experience many barriers to participation in culturally relevant arts programs in their neighborhoods and are relegated to community centers within their housing complexes. Race- and class-based stigma about public housing compounds these dynamics of social isolation and cultural disruption. Low-income communities of color continue to live in a landscape that squeezes out cultural spaces, segre-

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You're dealing with trauma here that extends for generations. All the planning assumptions that created public housing in the 1930s are still influencing barriers today, and those challenges have been around for eight decades. Public housing razed city neighborhoods and substituted all the myriad spaces for community arts and culture with a singular "community center." How do you work your way towards rich community life when all those spaces have been lost?

– Nicholas Dagen Bloom

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gates their homes, polices and surveils them disproportionately, limits affordable housing options, and promulgates housing policies that don't account for their right to have a rich cultural and artistic life.

Akrm Ahmed, a longtime member of [Community Voices Heard](#) and a roundtable participant, shared his experience with social and cultural isolation within public housing. "I'm still a resident in NYCHA," he said. "Some of the isolation comes from reaching out to people and not getting anything in return, or from being used and exploited. For example, schools were opened in our areas and NYCHA residents weren't allowed to enroll students. Loitering in the hallways of your own home is a crime. Repairs don't get completed for years at a time. We were pushed into stacked communities and we're still learning to navigate them," he added. "The language barriers and prejudices are serious. How can we engage residents who are actively being alienated, blamed for everything by society, and now being looked at as solutions for problems that were created outside our walls?"

There are real dynamics of social trauma that emerge from the erasure of a neighborhood's cultural assets, physical spaces, and social character and identity. Community members risk the loss of their own identity and their sense of what constitutes their home. Adding social stigmatization to this picture produces additional shame and isolation for residents. While gentrification in New York City is now reproducing this kind of forced homogenization, physical displacement, and cultural disruption, roundtable participants learned that in public housing communities, these dynamics are exacerbated, because they were set in motion by urban policy eight decades ago.

The story of public housing in New York City is also a story of generational trauma. Dr. Mindy Fullilove, a public health psychiatrist and author of [Root Shock](#) and [Urban Alchemy](#), has written about the phenomenon of "root shock."<sup>3</sup> This term describes the social and psychological impacts of repeated displacement of low-income communities of color. Public housing communities may not always experience repeated displacements, but in many ways, their legacy is tied to the deliberate uprooting of their neighborhoods and cultural spaces—a kind of root shock that destroyed social capital, fractured social networks, and frayed cultural identity. As communities were

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- Nayantara Sen

torn apart in order to build dense physical structures for public housing, the diversity of cultural spaces was systematically eroded, and community cohesion faltered. These impacts of isolation and cultural shock continue to carry across generations—to new residents and tenants and to new eras of urban planning.

The examination of the history of public housing made it clear that repair, restoration, and healing must be part of the solution. Roundtable participants identified the arts as being especially well equipped to reknit social networks and to support healing from emotional and cultural trauma. Bloom also explained that there are some encouraging aspects of what we see in public housing today. He said that now that the "mainstream integration" goals of previous decades have been abandoned, there is more emphasis on cultural diversity and relevancy. There is also more traction around intersectional analysis of public housing; for instance, there is interest in housing as it relates to matters of public health, mental health, immigrant integration, community resilience, economic stability, cultural vitality, and more.

These are changes in ideology that create major leverage for artists, community organizers, residents, and policymakers. Bloom encouraged roundtable participants to ensure that they join the table to discuss Mayor Bill de Blasio's [NextGeneration NYCHA](#)<sup>4</sup> and its infill

plan, which will privatize select NYCHA properties over the next ten years in order to help NYCHA achieve financial solvency and will dramatically affect the physical and economic ramifications of public housing in the city. “In the next ten to twenty years, we will see a major transformation of our physical landscape,” said Bloom. “As the NextGeneration plan develops, there must be spaces for community engagement in public housing. Arts and cultural leaders and community organizers must be at the table, so you can weigh in on how infill happens. When these spaces are privately run, who will get access to the space? You must be there to fight for community-centric spaces for the arts.”

## What Can the Arts Do?

Public housing in New York presents a slew of intertwined, complex, systems-level problems. These challenges include things like: shrinking resources for affordable housing, sky-rocketing rents, and aggressive gentrification that culturally disrupts neighborhoods and displaces long-term residents, social isolation, class-based and racial segregation, and more. Within NYCHA, massive backlogs on infrastructure maintenance and repairs affect residents’ quality of life, and the agency is experiencing its worst financial crisis in more than 80 years. Even though activists, tenant leaders, policymakers and organizers are mobilizing all across the city in order to address these intimidating problems, there are still major gaps in the integration of artistic and cultural interventions.

A central challenge here is that arts and culture are most often considered supplementary or ancillary tactics for community development and revitalization efforts. Policymakers and organizers often think about art only when it comes to popularizing or disseminating their advocacy platforms, and so artistic practice becomes integrated only in communications and outreach, instead of being embedded throughout all areas of social change-making. NOCD-NY understands arts and culture to be a catalytic force for social, political, relational and spatial transformation, and believes that arts and culture can seed and

instigate innovative, creative and strategic responses to complex social problems. Through the roundtable, many unique capacities of arts and culture to transform public housing were identified.

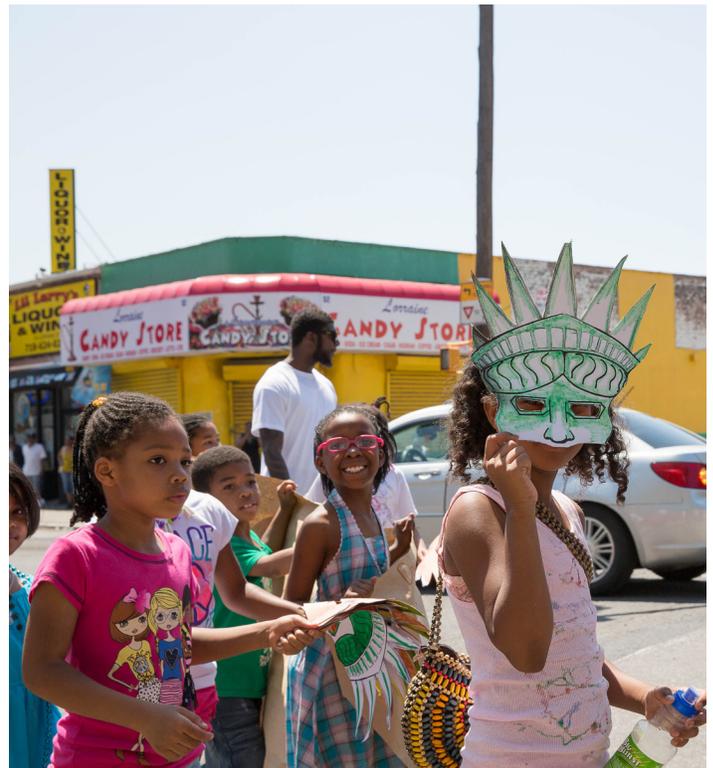
Vibrant artistic and cultural life provides scaffolding structures for social transformation. Creating opportunities for artistic and cultural engagement also creates new spaces for stories and experiences of impacted communities to surface and be heard. These stories have tremendous power — they spur critical inquiry and dialogue and supply the social and ethical standards for communities to live by.

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Red Hook is an isolated pressure cooker. It’s growing on the outside, and condensing on the inside.

– Nahisha McCoy Freeman,  
Dance Theatre Etcetera

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Public housing residents join in the Red Hook Fest Parade, produced by Dance Theatre Etcetera.

# Arts and culture can

## Interrupt and heal effects of intergenerational trauma by

- Creating space for understanding, processing, and healing from trauma produced by the history and legacy of public housing
- Providing necessary outlets for aesthetic expression and organizing that responds to the stressors and oppression in the lives of public housing residents

## Build healthy and resilient communities by

- Knitting denser, stronger, and more tensile social networks that are capable of mobilizing and bouncing back in the face of adversity (for instance, after disasters like Hurricane Sandy)
- Building community engagement through transformative experiences that break down isolation and disconnection
- Humanizing residents by acknowledging and celebrating their cultures and traditions
- Generating intertwined, cross-sector, and cross-community relationships between those living inside and outside public housing

## Provide actionable pathways for skills development and service provision by

- Offering opportunities for education, training, and career trajectories for gainful employment
- Connecting residents to critical social services that may not otherwise be easily accessible

## Spur civic engagement and democracy by

- Cultivating experiential, organic spaces for social and political engagement
- Generating relationships and analysis that interrupt deep-seated prejudices and foster informal social bridging across individual and community differences
- Producing new avenues for visibility (such as murals and other place-based art) for public housing residents so the whole community can see and experience their presence
- Encouraging freedom of expression and creativity and helping people see themselves as part of something larger
- Producing social cohesion and sense-making so that communities can better understand their role, place, and responsibilities within civic life
- Creating more inclusive spaces for families and children to plug into community activism

## Serve as a liberatory tool for social transformation and systemic change by

- Empowering historically marginalized communities, particularly low-income people of color, as creators, artists, change makers, and community builders, so they are not seen simply as victims of systemic inequities
- Drawing attention to routinely neglected issues and conversations within public housing policy, such as lack of appropriate language access or of aging services
- Strategically reframing mainstream conversations on public housing to disrupt racist and classist stereotypes, stigma, scapegoating, and exploitation of residents
- Supporting existing and burgeoning base-building and community-organizing efforts
- Protecting and maintaining an integral construction of place-based identity that contributes to rich cultural life

# Partnerships and Successes:

The roundtable featured stories and models of exemplary local partnerships that integrated artistic practices to transform public housing. Stories were lifted up in three areas: Cultural Engagement on NYCHA Sites, Community Revitalization Strategies in the Bronx, and Arts-Initiated Models. Groups shared rich and detailed information about their programs, experiments, and artistic and organizing interventions and lessons they learned along the way. The stories were followed by presentations from four perspectives: Arts and Culture, Residents and Activists, National, and New York City Policy.

## Nine Featured Stories

### Cultural Engagement on NYCHA Sites

Roundtable participants first heard from El Puente, University Settlement, and Napela's Park Hill Market, all of which run programs for cultural engagement for public housing residents.

**El Puente** is a thirty-four-year-old community human rights organization that promotes leadership for peace and justice through the engagement of members in arts, education, scientific research, wellness,

and environmental action. Frances Lucerna, executive director of El Puente, explained the cultural and historical context of South Williamsburg, where El Puente is based. "Southside of Williamsburg is ground zero for gentrification and change," she said.

El Puente has been with DYCD's Cornerstone program since the initiative's inception, and they now operate [Leadership Centers](#) in three NYCHA properties: Taylor-Wythe Houses, Independence Towers, and Jonathan Williams Plaza. Lucerna explained that in each center, the primary focus is on holistic, integrated wellness and care that is rooted in nurturance and community. Their Cornerstone centers provide comprehensive youth programs with culturally appropriate, targeted workshops, seminars, and activities. Their youth services include homework help, percussion classes, health and wellness support, basketball, fitness, visual arts, leadership training, and community action projects.

El Puente's Cornerstone centers introduce community members to social service referrals and facilitate a forum for diverse people to come together to celebrate their cultures. "One of the most powerful things about El Puente's programs is that we bring together people who otherwise would feel like the 'other,' and help them build connections towards transformational community change," said Lucerna. "For instance, our programming at Taylor-Wythe Center, which is typically a recreation center, actually creates bridges and bonds between the Latino/Latina



Left: El Puente's Leadership Center at Taylor-Wythe Houses performs their end of year show, *Bring in Da Justice*. Right: The Performance Project's *SHARE!* series presented at University Settlement's Atlantic Terminal Cornerstone in collaboration with JACK.

and Hasidic Jewish populations, who have often been at odds with each other.”

Laura Timme and Samantha Johnson spoke on behalf of [University Settlement](#), which was the first settlement house in the country and continues to uphold its legacy for improved quality of life and access to services for low-income families and immigrants. With deep roots in the Lower East Side, University Settlement strengthens families through comprehensive services like adult literacy classes, early childhood and youth programs, community centers, and a wide range of arts and cultural programs. They integrate arts programs into the Cornerstone Community Centers that they operate at [Ingersoll](#), [Atlantic Terminal](#), and [Campos Plaza](#), which serve NYCHA residents as well as residents of the surrounding neighborhood. Free programming includes after-school and summer camp sessions, as well as sports, fitness, and mentoring. They also run two NYCHA-based [Neighborhood Centers](#) for older adults, 189 Allen and Meltzer, as well as the Houston Street Center, a non-NYCHA community center based in the Lower East Side.

“We see ourselves as both an arts and community-building organization,” said Timme. Johnson and Timme explained that local partnerships are integral to University Settlement’s ethos and practice and that they have had considerable success in partnering with professional and community artists. For instance, they hosted their first performance of the Brooklyn Dance Theater at BRIC Arts Media and partnered with MoCADA to host film screenings inside their gym. At 189 Allen, they regularly turn their dining area into a giant ballroom dance floor for older adults. And [The Creative Center](#) at University Settlement is seeking funding to grow its creative aging program, which is based on research showing that access to artistic practice and self-expression provides measurable emotional and physical health benefits to seniors at all stages of the aging continuum.

University Settlement emphasizes the following core principles necessary to produce impact: a focus on culturally appropriate programming, buy-in from residents, engagement of artists already living in the community, and finding the right match. “We try to find the right match within our community and always seek to collaborate with artists and local partners who are equally committed to building

community,” said Timme. “We have a long history of facilitating such collaborations, and have found that the right partnerships can create a profound opportunity for community members to see things that are bigger than themselves.”

Adama Fassah, community organizer and executive director of [Napela Inc](#), in Staten Island, spoke about the [Park Hill African Market](#), which was established with lead support from the Staten Island Liberian Community Association (SILCA), Staten Island Arts, and a grant from the Rotary Club. Through Napela, Park Hill African Market vendors purchased tents and institutionalized the program Tents-for-Culture, which provided a space for immigrants living in Park Hill housing to sell traditional food, ingredients, handicrafts, and wares. “Napela means ‘togetherness,’” said Fassah. “Based on my work and interactions in North Shore in Staten Island, we’ve found that 65 percent of the population of Park Hill housing are immigrants. Ten percent don’t speak English, 35 percent are high school dropouts, and 20 percent haven’t been to school. Napela provides



Park Hill African Market, a collaboration between Staten Island Liberian Community Association (SILCA), Napela Inc and Staten Island Arts’ Folklife program.

educational services for these communities, including access to information about immigration for those who have never been to school.” Fassah explained that the Park Hill African Market helps to mitigate isolation, cultural disconnection, and the formidable barriers to community building that immigrant residents face. The market functions as a common ground to bring residents of different cultures together. It instills a sense of safety, belonging, and connection and revitalizes an otherwise neglected parking lot as a cultural gathering space for community. The market also exemplifies the fact that despite acute barriers to educational and language access within public housing, immigrant families have a right to active, vibrant cultural life.

These three organizations identified significant barriers related to facilities, space, and funding streams. Johnson said, “University Settlement has regular challenges around facility issues, especially in our sites located within NYCHA facilities. We have learned to be creative and innovative in presenting arts programs—for example, when all of the light-bulbs in our gym burned out and we couldn’t get anyone to come change them, we partnered with MoCADA and had a film screening! Because we are not exclusively an arts organization, accessing adequate funding for the work we do in the arts has been a barrier. While we are fortunate to receive funding from both the Department of Cultural Affairs and New York State Council on the Arts, we

are excluded from many of the private foundations and sources that typically fund traditional arts organizations. We keep looking for new ways to fund our work, so that we can ensure it maintains both consistency and quality.”

Fassah explained that inadequate access to space meant that it’s more difficult to create permanent and sustainable institutional programming. “Recreation space is a huge issue,” she said. “It’s shared space, which means we can’t ever ‘settle down.’ We also can’t afford insurance for the market because it’s too expensive. This year, we opened very late in the season because we had to have insurance, which meant that women have to volunteer to raise money.” Small, grassroots programs that are resident led like Park Hill Market find it extremely difficult to get funding support, which means they can’t hire staff and have to constantly navigate financial and logistical challenges and struggle to create a reliable, long-term presence in their communities. “We are teaching our older community members to support the operation so they can pass it on to the younger ones,” said Fassah. “Now we’re trying to work with farmers directly to get produce, instead of vendors that are buying and selling and absorbing the overhead.”



photo, left: Christian Rivera; photo right: Melissa Bunni Eilan

Left: Casita Maria works with East Side Houses Settlement, Bronx Health Reach and BronxWorks on “Healthy, Active, Vibrant Communities” programs like the Youth Community Activist Ambassador Group. Right: As part of the NYCHA Choice Neighborhood Initiative “Make Mott Haven,” Casita Maria collaborated with NYCHA, LISC, BronxWorks and Banana Kelly to create the *Cinemusica City!* projection onto Teatro Puerto Rico.

## Community Revitalization Strategies in the Bronx

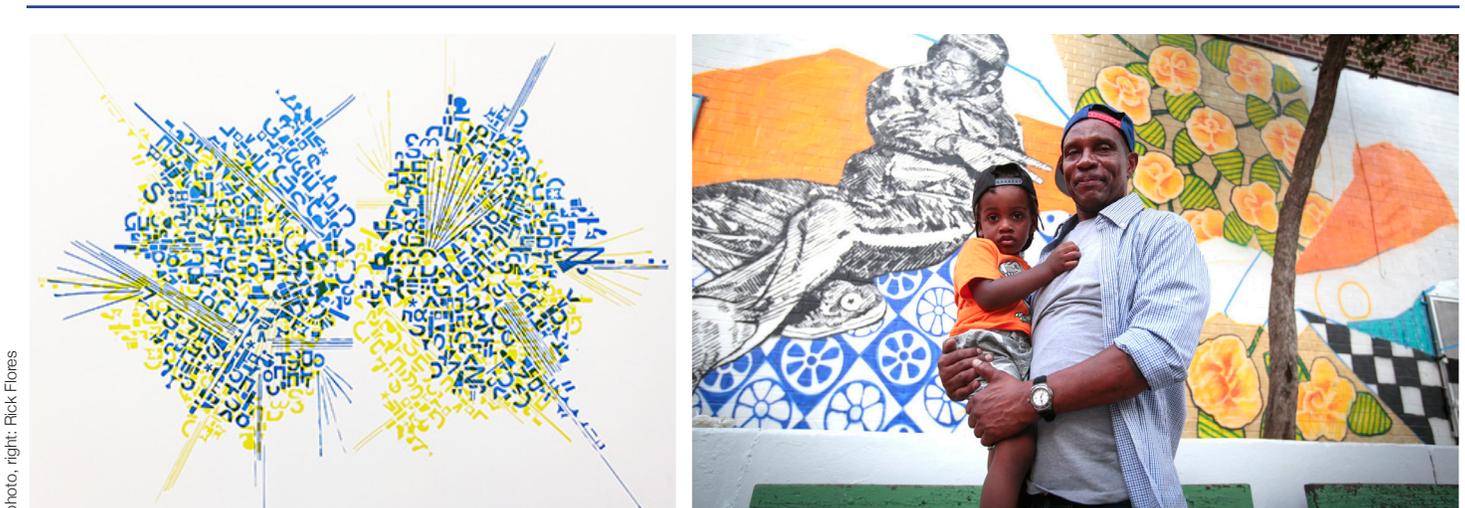
### Casita Maria Center for Arts and Education

is an eighty-year-old organization that provides cultural and educational programs and services to youth and family members in the South Bronx. David Dean and Christine Licata shared information about Casita Maria's arts and cultural programming and the center's emphasis on community engagement, artist-led programming, and local partnerships. Casita Maria's work is rooted in the desire to uplift and support their community through long-term, intergenerational approaches. Dean said that Casita Maria serves eleven hundred youth a year in after-school programs alone, and that the recent construction of their building has allowed them to ramp up their visual and performing arts programming. Licata shared that one of the most important programs at Casita Maria is their South Bronx Culture Trail.

Launched in 2011 with Casita's then company in residence, *Dancing in the Streets*, the South Bronx Culture Trail is designed to reclaim and celebrate the South Bronx community's cultural history, offer a motor for local economic development and cultural tourism, and create opportunities for emerging creative talents in the area. The South Bronx Culture Trail was created through extensive community consultations, including through close collaboration with Casita's community-led South Bronx Culture Trail Advisory Council. The

Trail supports and encourages community building in the Bronx; supports resident ownership, activation, and occupation of public spaces; and transforms local histories into contemporary collective memory. Casita believes that the negative consequences of gentrification, such as displacement and division, can be offset through a strong, active, and involved community. "We engage artists, scholars, and community leaders in all of our programs," said Licata. "Our success is due to Casita's commitment to artists, culture, education, outreach and partnership building, and above all, community engagement. The Trail engages an ever growing list of cultural, social service, and government agency partners that expand our depth of programming, outreach, and audience, including over twenty Bronx organizations, Lincoln Center, the New York Housing Authority (NYCHA), Bronx Works, and the New York City Department of Health and Hygiene, to name a few." Dean agreed that the focus on community building permeates all of Casita's work. "We're not just in the community; . . . we're part of the community. Almost everybody on our staff is from the community. Almost all of our staff were Casita kids. We're also committed to partnership and this has contributed to our deepening impact."

Elizabeth Hamby is an artist who works at the intersection of artistic practice, urban planning, and teaching. In 2014, Hamby, who lived in the Bronx at the time, collaborated with Casita Maria to present *Alphabet City*, a series of prints and sculptures that are



photo, right: Rick Flores

Left: Elizabeth Hamby collaborated with Casita Maria to produce the *Alphabet City* series, including this print comprised of layered footprints of public housing properties; Right: Residents on Betances Community Center grounds in front of a mural (then in progress) by Ananda Nahú and Izolag Armeidah based on an iconic photograph from the '80s by Ricky Flores.

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It's a tremendous opportunity to realize that these buildings make up a language that belongs to all of us, even if you don't live in public housing. Community building is difficult work no matter how many pretty colors you use. But what if we changed the grammar of how we talk about our city?

– Elizabeth Hamby

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created from the footprints of familiar buildings, including many public housing properties in New York. *Alphabet City* was used to engage local youth and community members and render their homes and landscape fixtures legible in a new kind of artistic language. The project was a powerful intervention in making NYCHA infrastructure visible through artistic practice, especially since public housing often remains invisible in many conversations and spaces. “The history of the last two hundred years of our city is written into the city’s buildings and inscribed into our architecture,” said Hamby. “If you look at our city from a distance, curious shapes emerge, and a lot of what’s popping out are NYCHA buildings.” For *Alphabet City*, Hamby created letterpress prints of building profiles, which could then be stenciled and transposed onto many different surfaces. “We combined layers upon layers,” she said, “just the same way that layers of history are playing out in our landscape. We developed a key that represented shapes, and the mural we painted of those shapes on Patterson Houses is still intact and undisturbed.” *Alphabet City* was appreciated by roundtable participants as an example of a successful collaboration between a community-based organization and an artist, and it also amplified the power inherent in the aesthetic translation of public housing—not just translating the buildings themselves but also translating the language and representation of what those buildings signify and mean to our city and its residents.

Suzette Walker-Camara, site director of **Betances Community Center**, said that they achieve major traction through the community’s recognition and appreciation that programs are accessible and open to all. The Betances Center, part of BronxWorks, is open year round and provides programs for children, youth, adults, and the community at large. Activities are geared toward primarily NYCHA residents in the Bronx and range from summer camps, after-school programs, referrals to benefits assistance, leadership development programs, cooking classes, open mics, fitness classes, and more. “Our space is inviting, and we are constantly collaborating with other individuals and organizations,” said Walker-Camara. “*Betances Goes Broadway* theme inspired participants to create their own Broadway shows, and our hip-hop dance groups are highly requested. In June, we had our first LGBTQ group event and almost 350 people attended, which speaks to our reach and collaboration in our community.” Betances Center integrates arts and culture alongside service delivery and supports NYCHA community members in feeling proud of where they live. “Themes are important to us,” Walker-Camara added. “Thematic events help us get people engaged; for instance, we have talent showcases, health initiatives, and mural projects that open up wide engagement across the community.”

A major barrier identified in this section of presentations was access to physical space for artistic curation and programming. Presenters said that the community is engaged and community members are frequently surveyed to identify their needs, but space is a hard commodity to come by. Betances Community Center attempts to address this gap by making their space accessible to community partners and creating an open-door culture. For instance, they allow LGBTQ groups and the Bronx Writers Club to host events in their facilities. “It’s all about space,” said Walker-Camara. “Betances is a real hub for our community. We collaborate with organizations and individuals who can offer creative programming but who lack space.” CBOs like Casita Maria and Betances Community Center also have to maintain a close connection to the pulse of their communities, so that they can understand and anticipate shifting needs.

## Arts-Initiated Models

**Groundswell** is a nineteen-year-old organization that regularly collaborates with community-based groups and government agencies to use public art as a tool for social change. Amy Sananman spoke about Groundswell's work with underserved and economically disadvantaged youth and professional artists. Groundswell has produced over five hundred murals and **public art projects** that beautify neighborhoods, engage youth in personal and societal transformation, and give expression to social justice concerns that are often marginalized in public dialogue. Sananman expressed enthusiasm for the increasing value placed on the arts in public policy and lifted up participatory budgeting and policymaking as high-leverage areas of impact and hope. She also identified four areas that have helped Groundswell achieve wide impact in arts-based social change: strong participatory action processes, an emphasis on communities creating their own goals for projects, a focus on youth engagement, and an openness to collaboration. "There's a lot more recognition for the role of arts and culture in rethinking space in our city, and there are more opportunities emerging with NextGeneration NYCHA and Sandy recovery," she said. Sananman also identified complicated logistical processes for agency approval as a barrier to collaboration.

James Bartlett from the **Museum of Contemporary African Diasporic Arts (MoCADA)** shared stories about MoCADA's unique arts-based programming that crosses the boundaries of public housing in Brooklyn. Bartlett explained that MoCADA is a nontraditional museum, founded in 1999 in Bedford-Stuyvesant by a twenty-four-year old, Laurie Cumbo, who is now a New York City Council member. From its inception, MoCADA has always taken its practices outside the bounds of traditional museums to integrate arts and culture in the community. "As we grow, we're going in an opposite trajectory from most museums," said Bartlett. "We started as a museum without walls, and that ethos pervades our work. For us it's less about serving NYCHA housing exclusively than it is about serving the whole community." MoCADA understands public housing to be a deeply integrated aspect of Brooklyn neighborhoods, so their programs activate underused spaces through art to break down mental and physical barriers between communities.



Groundswell's *Brownsville Moving Forward* mural was produced with young Brownsville artists in partnership with the NYC Department of Probation and Pitkin Avenue BID.



For their annual *Dance on the Greenway* festival, Dance Theatre Etcetera commissions professional and emerging artists from Red Hook and presents their work at the IKEA waterfront each fall. Local choreographer Solomon Goodwin is pictured.



Artist Shantell Martin works with student attendees at the Ingersoll Community Center, MoCADA

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We are successful because we partner meaningfully with NYCHA residents, particularly tenant associations, and we find that sweet spot that serves residents and is a draw to the community as a whole. We're asking Fort Greene residents to come into NYCHA housing, instead of the other way around.

– James Bartlett, MoCADA

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Their [Public Exchange series](#) does this on a regular basis by using arts and performance to connect social divides between underrepresented public housing communities and the larger Brooklyn community. “For example, we brought Les Nubians and Randy Weston to perform music on the Walt Whitman [Houses] basketball courts,” he said. “Other museums are thinking about access and equity from a cost-based perspective, but we know that cost is not the only factor limiting access. Instead, we’re thinking about how to make sure that NYCHA residents are truly part of their surrounding community. Museums are limiting spaces that keep arts programming inside ivory towers, so how do we bring programming into places where it doesn’t exist?” Bartlett also recommended that instead of thinking about “how to fix public housing,” we should think about innovative ways to integrate communities.

Maria Soriano, education director, spoke on behalf of [Dance Theatre Etcetera \(DTE\)](#), in Red Hook, Brooklyn. “Through site-specific performances, festivals, parades, performing arts, and media education programs, DTE unites artists and community members and stimulates the social imagination to create a more just, joyful world.” It has operated for twenty years as a community-based organization that believes the arts should be accessible to everyone. “Red Hook can function as a little town on its own, and our roots in our community are really deep,” said Soriano.

“We rely on community to tell us what they want to see. We hire young, local, up-and-coming artists, and our events are all staffed by community members that we pay at or above minimum wage.” Soriano and Nahi-sha McCoy Freeman talked about [Dance on the Greenway](#), which happens every fall, and their In Transition: Media program, where students from ages sixteen to twenty-four get paid to learn filmmaking. A lot of people who participate in DTE’s programs and use their services are from Red Hook public housing. “Our assessment tells us that community members need jobs and money,” she said. “There is a lot of gentrification happening that is creating an invisible line between the front and back of Red Hook. We are here to take that line away. Our festivals happen because we are listening to the voices of our people and compensating them for their cultural work. We are a bridge in our community.”

## Four Perspectives

### Arts and Culture

Two leaders of arts organizations, Lakai Worrell from [Purelements: An Evolution in Dance](#) and Sheila Lewandowski from [The Chocolate Factory Theater](#), shared their experiences of growing up in public housing and working in arts-based organizations that seek to engage artists and community members.

Worrell shared that he grew up in Brookline Houses in East New York, where the only neighborhood options were a liquor store, a bodega, a supermarket, and a community center that nobody went to. Lewandowski grew up in Stapleton Houses and a lot of her artistic work at The Chocolate Factory is informed by her experiences as well as her mother’s organizing as a tenant leader. She identified funding barriers for arts organizations that are actively trying to leverage creative production and support communities. “We need access to rapid funds and in shorter time windows,” she said. “And we need community centers that are multipurpose to help meet the myriad of space needs that also change as communities change. For example, we need spaces where we can dance, eat food, and host community meetings at the same time.”

Worrell talked about the ethos of Purelements, which involves the intentional peeling back of layers so that

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Growing up in the projects produces a legacy of frustration, upset, and despair. When a child comes in upset, there are many layers of their true self that are covered up. Purelements dance training aims to peel back those layers and heal those traumas and distorted realities. We start with exposure to arts and education, expand it for those more interested through training and arts literacy, and then we create ripple effects through the understanding of culture and community. There are even greater possibilities for us.

– Lakai Worrel,  
Purelements: An Evolution in Dance

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their work can reach individuals on an authentic, intimate level. “There are two ways that art comes to people,” he said. “You either give it by exposure or by training. Most people and organizations do exposure. They come in, share something, give you a taste of something that’s out there. But it isn’t until we get into training that you see the transformation take place. Growing up in the projects produces a legacy of frustration, upset, and despair. When a child comes in upset, there are many layers of their true self that are covered up. Purelements dance training aims to peel back those layers and heal those traumas and distorted realities. We start with exposure to arts and education, expand it for those more interested through training and arts literacy, and then we create ripple effects through the understanding of culture and community. There are even greater possibilities for us.” [Purelements programs](#) include a junior dance company, summer dance intensives, the pre-professional training program

Center of Artistic Refinement, and Project AIRE, which trains students to use creative and critical thinking skills in academic endeavors.

## Residents and Activists

The roundtable featured the perspectives of activists and grassroots organizing groups who are directly working with public housing residents and also presented the voices of a few residents themselves. Representatives from [Community Voices Heard](#), the Campos Plaza Tenant Association, [CAAHV Organizing Asian Communities](#), and [Good Old Lower East Side \(GOLES\)](#) spoke during this section of the gathering.

Akrm Ahmed, a member of Community Voices Heard and a seventeen-year resident of Clinton, Dewitt Houses in Harlem, reminded everyone that it’s crucial to pay attention to which voices are being excluded from decision making. “We keep letting people slip through the cracks,” he said. “It’s frustrating to see residents of public housing who are motivated to play a part in the decision making of their communities be put down and neglected, while the decision makers sitting at the table don’t live in public housing, let alone understand what it means to live in public housing. In light of changes with infill and development on public land, it should be considered that we, the residents of public housing, are rich in culture, but we’ve been quieted down and have no avenues and outlets to show what we can do.” Dereese Huff, president of the Campos Plaza Tenant Association, shared her concerns about the lack of outreach and communications efforts for existing programs and services. She said that arts and culture can help strengthen promotional efforts about programs that are already being offered. “A lot of tenants don’t know about things happening in their community,” she said. “The turnout for all ages would be much better if people were exposed, like through TV.”

Damaris Reyes from GOLES and Cathy Dang from CAAHV are both community organizers who talked about the importance of local grassroots organizing for institutional and systemic change, as well as the imperative to make sure that resident-led efforts are seen and supported. Reyes explained that GOLES’ work in the Lower East Side provides support to a community with almost thirty thousand public housing residents from twenty-two developments. GOLES runs programs that assist public housing

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These conversations need to happen with the residents. This roundtable is a starting place. I have been a part of many conversations and everybody is always prescribing. We need to talk to residents and find out what works for them and what supports their artistic expression. Residents need to be at the forefront.

– Damaris Reyes, GOLES

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and other tenants, such as through eviction prevention and legal counseling. They try to integrate arts and culture into organizing work through innovative, interdisciplinary programming whenever possible. “We created *Summerfest*,” Reyes said, “and we partner for gardening, music, exhibits, open mics, and more. But it’s been challenging for us because that’s a separate job in and of itself, and we don’t have those resources.” Reyes also said that community organizers struggle to find spaces to host programs and inform the wider public about local community resources like the [Clemente Soto Vélez Cultural Center](#), which is a Puerto Rican/Latino cultural institution serving the Lower East Side, and Fourth Arts Block.

CAA AV is a thirty-year-old pan-Asian organizing group that fights gentrification and displacement for Asian immigrants and refugees. Cathy Dang, executive director, talked about CAA AV’s [NYCHA Organizing Project](#), which builds power and civic engagement for Bengali, Chinese, and Korean public housing residents living in Queensbridge. Through community organizing, CAA AV helps resident leaders fight for improved living conditions and language justice and helps protect affordable public housing and challenge isolation. Dang mentioned CAA AV’s new report, [No Access](#), which documents the experiences of low-income, limited-English-language-proficient Asian public housing residents and the barriers they face in receiving adequate language access services. CAA AV is the only organization

with a focus on mobilizing Asian and Asian American residents right now. “Within our Asian constituency, our base is multilingual and very diverse,” said Dang. “We know that there are twenty thousand Asian residents in public housing right now and the number is rapidly increasing. We conducted widespread surveys and found that Asian residents experience a lot of isolation. Engagement for us happens in different ways, through getting members together, food, tai chi, campaigning, and more. But in the end, it has to happen with language. We organize across languages through a volunteer network.”

“There are misconceptions about what public housing entails,” Carmen Piñero, from Community Voices Heard, added. “NYCHA is no longer a low-income property. There are people who make over 75K but pay twenty-five hundred dollars per month for rent. Then there are people who are worried about staying on the lease and surviving serious issues like eviction, push-out, gentrification, and problems in their health and environment. Arts and cultural programs are important because they give our people exposure to things they’ve never experienced before; for example, youth can now go to museums that they’ve never been to. But what happens behind the closed doors in their lives? That’s where community organizing comes in. Organizing addresses the root cause of these problems. Service providers are the Band-Aid solution. We need to collaborate and share resources in order to change root causes.”

## National

Jamie Bennett, executive director of [ArtPlace America](#), and Milly Hawk Daniel, vice president for communications at [PolicyLink](#), offered analysis from a national perspective. Bennett affirmed the recommendation that residents not only need to be at the table; they also need to frame the questions that artists, organizers, and policymakers consider together. He advocated for the inclusion of artists as a key diversity requirement for community development efforts. He also urged everyone to think about commonplace, yet unique, opportunities to bring people together across differences. “Hurricane Sandy was an example where a natural disaster brought our city together,” he said. “But we also need to create events in common that aren’t just tragedies. For instance, we all need to eat, so a marketplace becomes an unbelievably important connecting place.”

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Too often, the arts are ‘over there.’ People can cut them off and not even notice the absence. Integrating arts and culture into all areas of community life and providing resources equitably provide big opportunities for equity building, community engagement, and healing, and it’s important to think about this in the context of both people and place.

– Milly Hawk Daniel, PolicyLink

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Daniel from PolicyLink talked about the national policy research that they have been conducting about arts, culture, and equity. She explained that PolicyLink understands equity to be different from equality. Equality implies that everyone gets the same resource. Equity, which PolicyLink defines as “just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential,” recognizes that some will need more or different resources. “Too often, the arts are ‘over there,’” said Daniel. “People can cut them off and not even notice the absence. Integrating arts and culture into all areas of community life and providing resources equitably provide big opportunities for equity building, community engagement, and healing, and it’s important to think about this in the context of both people and place.” Daniel also encouraged us all to think about funding streams that feed from arts and cultural engagement to physical infrastructure and community development.

## New York City Policy

Key leaders from New York City Council and city agencies were participants in the roundtable and spoke about strategic considerations and ideas raised during discussions. Council Member Brad Lander affirmed the importance of gathering a diverse group of participants, so that challenges, opportunities, and cross-

sector dynamics were appropriately represented. He referenced some of his colleagues in the City Council as allies and resources for this conversation, noting, for instance, Council Member Richie Torres, who comes from public housing himself; Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer, who represents arts and cultural interests and is a longtime supporter of NOCD-NY; and Council Member Jumaane Williams, who is working around issues of policing and public housing. Lander mentioned the Cultural After School Adventures (CASA) program and the Immigrant Cultural Fund, both supported by the City Council to increase cultural access and equity.

Council Member Lander also acknowledged some daunting challenges that policymakers, artists, and activists alike need to contend with. “We come up against some hard problems for public housing,” he said. “The history of physical neglect and the decline of federal funding means that issues around livability of spaces are big. And in government, we can sometimes function in silos. A lot of us have development issues going on in our neighborhoods and we’re thinking hard about what it means for public housing to be centrally involved in those plans. What would it mean to have our planning and land use development policy take public housing seriously? Can we do inclusive placemaking that taps into people’s creative energy?”

Deputy Commissioner Edwin Torres from [New York City Department of Cultural Affairs \(DCLA\)](#) spoke next, about his own childhood experiences growing up in Mott Haven in Section 8 housing. “My childhood was strongly marked by the interplay between my neighborhood and the rest of the city,” he said. “It helped me imagine what I could be, but also made me proud of being from the South Bronx. Having come over to DCLA, it was impressed upon me how that which gets counted counts and that often involves money. If you look at all of the reports about arts and culture’s impact on the city, they’re actually economic development reports.” Torres shared that DCLA is working with [Social Impact of the Arts Project \(SIAP\)](#) to evaluate the social impacts of arts and culture in the city and examining ways to embed cultural components throughout several citywide processes, instead of focusing simply on output-oriented projects. (Susan Seifert of SIAP was a roundtable participant.) He also expressed enthusiasm for the city’s new cultural plan and DCLA’s focus on supporting increased capacity for neighborhood

cultural organizations and on partnerships between artists and arts organizations and city agencies.

Associate Commissioner Darryl Rattray from [New York City Department of Youth and Community Development \(DYCD\)](#) talked about DYCD's Cornerstone Program, which provides wide-ranging programs for adults, youth, and children in ninety-four NYCHA community centers. "The Cornerstone model is holistic, and the centers partner with local organizations that are rooted in the community," said Rattray. "We are committed to strengthening networks." Rattray agreed that limited space and facilities was a challenging constraint for DYCD. He also suggested that cultural work in public housing can have more impact if concerted efforts are made to connect funded local nonprofits with grassroots groups that are doing substantial community-building work within neighborhoods and public housing developments.

Rasmia Kirmani-Frye, director of [NYCHA's Office of Public/Private Partnerships](#), spoke about her experiences with community organizing in New York. She also shared information about ways that NYCHA is transforming its collaborations with residents and community groups and developing new methods and accountability measures for cross-sector partnerships. "I've worked for University Settlement, Community Voices Heard, and in Brownsville for ten years. When the opportunity came up to work for NYCHA, the people I consulted—and me, too—knew that Chair Olatoye was doing business differently at NYCHA, and I wanted to be a part of that. I'd been doing community work for years and I'm audacious and optimistic about transforming the system." Kirmani-Frye shared that NYCHA is trying to build new relationships around innovative and collaborative practices. She said that while there are real challenges around a history of divestment and neglect, and a lack of definitions for community engagement, NYCHA is looking into ways to make interagency and community partnering easier. "For example, we collaborated with Edwin Torres and Casita Maria and won a major NEA [National Endowment for the Arts] Our Town grant," she said. Through this collaboration, NYCHA and Casita Maria will be supporting [Make Mott Haven](#)<sup>6</sup>, a neighborhood-based effort to enrich the lives of South Bronx residents through local arts and cultural opportunities.

## Characteristics of successful arts-integrated programs:

- Programs bring people together in a safe, friendly, and culturally oriented space.
- World-class artists tap into and animate underutilized NYCHA spaces and draw audiences from across the neighborhood and city.
- Sustained, culturally appropriate work recognizes the talent, culture, expertise, and leadership within public housing communities. Artists are of the community, with some having participated in the cultural organization's programs themselves as children. Cultural traditions are shared inter-generationally.
- Cultural groups draw on a history of facilitating collaborations.
- Robust cultural funding ensures the consistency and quality of the work.
- Organizing groups are able to dedicate a staff member for cultural work.

Mott Haven Community Center mural *Adeline* by Aranda Nahu and Izolag Arneida, based on an iconic photograph from the 80s by Ricky Flores.



### Characteristics of successful arts-integrated programs (continued):

- A holistic approach connects arts and culture with other dimensions of people’s lives.
- Cultural hubs—inside and outside public housing developments—are connected across the community.
- There is a strong participatory process for cultural projects. Authentic community engagement is about people and place, programming and community context.
- The cultural component of a cross-agency partnership is integrated throughout the process.

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There is a legacy of racism in building design, siting, and segregation in public housing that sits heavily on the city. It expresses itself in unequal ways, and this is a real challenge of our moment despite the good energy and economic dynamism we’re seeing. Sometimes inequalities are pushed so far apart that you can’t see them, and sometimes it’s the opposite, where you can’t help but see it. Arts and culture gives us powerful ways to interrogate these issues.

– NYC Council Member Brad Lander

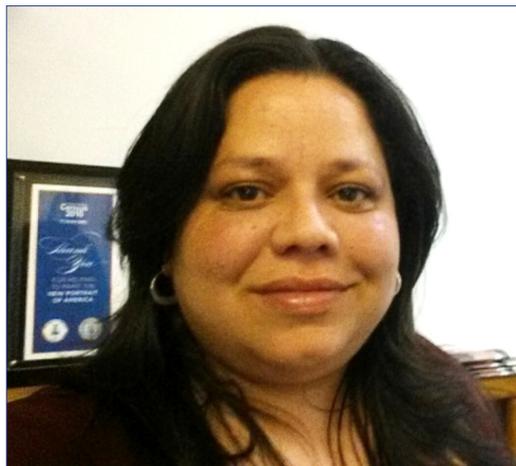
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## Challenges and Barriers

Through their presentations, questions, and discussions, roundtable participants identified several challenges and barriers for incorporating arts and culture within public housing. Barriers surfaced from a range of diverse perspectives and included challenges such as social isolation and physical segregation experienced by public housing residents; a lack of structural and historical analysis within urban planning efforts; the exclusion of community organizers, artists, and the voices of impacted residents in key decision-making spaces; difficulties navigating city agencies’ approval; difficulties finding access to funding; and the belief that investing in the arts can accelerate gentrification and displacement.

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I live in Baruch Houses, which is the largest development in Manhattan. Like most public housing, it's built on superblocks that are really isolated. The nearest subway station for me is thirteen blocks away and the closest laundromat is eight blocks away. The walk is isolating. It's so large, we are a community nested inside another community. We see ourselves as the Lower East Side, but we don't often get to interact with other groups. For example, other LES residents don't go through our premises; they go around our public housing to access the waterfront. The general public thinks that we suck up their tax dollars. Blaming us for everything under the sun. There's a fear to walk through our developments, even though most of the East River is lined with public housing. There's a real lack of street life and activity, which is a fundamental part of keeping our community vibrant. They've taken away our benches, so now our seniors coming home from stores can't sit down. Socializing spaces for residents have been taken away. I'm always telling people: When I'm out, it's really hard to go home. When I'm home, it's really hard to go out. Here we are—stuck between a rock and a hard place.



– Damaris Reyes, Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES)

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**Key challenges and barriers identified included the following:**

### **Finance and disinvestment**

NYCHA's worrisome status with financial insolvency and inefficient management emerged as a core concern. NYCHA's deteriorating buildings and unmet infrastructure repairs are a result of the agency's current financial position being the worst it's been in over eighty years, with a projected operating deficit of nearly \$2.5 billion.<sup>4</sup> Added to this daunting situation is the compounded history of disinvestment in public housing communities, decline in federal funding, and physical neglect. Organizations and artists also face the problem of project-focused funding sources that stretch time and capacity for stakeholders, and are hindered by lack of funding for resident-led efforts. Additionally, there is a persistent lack of appreciation for the role that public housing has played in keeping New York City diverse and affordable.

### **Isolation and segregation**

Residents deal with pervasive isolation, segregation, and exploitation within the public housing system, which makes it hard for cultural organizing and programming efforts to adequately reach, engage, and support residents. For instance, many residents live at inconvenient distances from public transportation and lack vibrant street life or accessible spaces for community building. The loss of benches near their homes means that there are fewer public spaces for socializing. The general community is reluctant to interact with public housing sites, which is often a result of racist, classist stereotypes and

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**The notion of treating boundaries of NYCHA as porous is hugely important. NYCHA needs to be seen as part of the city and public housing residents need to understand that it's their city as well. We're all entitled to spaces to do nothing together.**

– Jamie Bennett, ArtPlace

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**Newcomers in our neighborhoods need to be engaged so that they can support long-term residents. There is fear that when art comes in, residents get displaced. For instance, there was a Chinese elder in Chinatown who's been playing an instrument in the park for many years. We were told a newer resident called the cops on him for playing too loudly, and then the elder, who was a mainstay in our neighborhood, got beat up by the police because he didn't understand what the officer was saying and they got rough on him when he wasn't complying.**

– Cathy Dang, CAAAV

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ill-informed stigmas. Prejudices against public housing are frequently fueled by media coverage and public policies that target low-income communities of color in New York. Dynamics of isolation and segregation from the rest of the city cause social and cultural trauma, and disproportionate policing, surveillance, and scapegoating cause increased exploitation.

### **Gentrification and displacement**

There is reasonable fear within communities that art coming in means displacement for residents—a concern that is reified by aggressive gentrification in the city, which continuously pushes and prices out long-term residents. Cultural displacement also determines who feels welcome in public spaces. In addition, there is the problematic pattern of artist-led interventions that are not rooted in NYCHA communities but rather are run by artists from outside the community who parachute in to create projects without building alliances or trust.

## Other key challenges

Roundtable participants brought up a few other challenges, such as the difficulty in partnering with NYCHA, convoluted processes related to agency approval and logistics, and the prohibitive costliness of required insurance. They talked about lack of access to space and facilities that are in good condition, which creates impermanence and transience in arts programming, since artists and organizations can't store their supplies for sustained programs in shared spaces. In terms of public housing developments, they identified difficulties working with tenant associations that often do not adequately represent tenants or lack the tools or resources to represent them effectively, and challenges in navigating conflicts within and between housing developments.

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We need to start thinking about having arts from the inside out in NYCHA, not just from the outside in. We have lots of artists who live in these buildings. Some artists are challenged with the inability to organize and no access to money, process, or decision making. For instance, an outside artist brings a dance program to the lobby of my building. I'm a dancer, I live on the thirteenth floor, and I can't have a program in the lobby even though I've been wanting to bring a dance class to my building. I may not then be able to rally support for these programs. I recommend inviting NYCHA artists to the table.

– Evria Ince,  
Nia Theatrical Production Company

## Key Themes

**Six major themes surfaced from the roundtable conversations, questions, and storytelling. They are as follows:**

**Public housing is a complex system that relates holistically to the larger ecology of our communities.**

Contrary to what many people might think, public housing is not just an aggregate of planned developments, buildings, or affordable living units. Nicholas Dagen Bloom's historical research on New York City's public housing from the 1930s onward, mentioned earlier, demonstrates that communities were artificially fractured, fragmented, and dispersed through urban policy. The resultant loss in diversity of cultural spaces and community hubs has created the perception that public housing is separate from the communities in which it is situated. But roundtable participants stressed that such segregation and siloing prevents community-wide connection, perpetuates misconceptions and stigmas about residents, and produces unnatural social and cultural divisions. For instance, Cornerstone community centers don't typically serve members of the wider community, even though they are accessible to people who don't live in NYCHA housing.

The social and structural design of NYCHA developments further dislocates residents from their surroundings—even the simple act of removing benches from the neighborhood increases isolation and disrupts a holistic, integrated ecosystem of social and cultural life. Presenters from El Puente, University Settlement, and MoCADA as well as community organizers from Community Voices Heard, CAAAV, and GOLES all spoke to this issue of integrating public housing residents more deeply into their surrounding environments and making the “boundaries of NYCHA more porous.” There was the shared understanding that the community health, cultural life, social opportunities, economic well-being, and civic engagement of NYCHA residents were intimately connected to each other. There was agreement that artistic interventions need to be diverse and diffused throughout all these areas, so that they are not limited to singular projects or stand-alone organizations.

## **Isolation and trauma are deeply embedded in the fabric of the public housing system.**

Through the participants' stories and examples, the realities of generational trauma and acute isolation in public housing became visible. Roundtable participants learned that ongoing isolation and segregation are symptomatic results of the confluence of social and urban policy, physical design, and systemic oppression. Participants and presenters also talked about the impacts of mainstream narratives concerning public housing on the lives of residents. The social, cultural, and emotional impacts of racism and classism were contextualized—both through concrete examples (like CAAAV's work on documenting lack of language access and translation services for Asian residents in NYCHA and Purelements's work to peel back layers of internalized harm and trauma for youth residents of public housing) and through questions about mitigating the impacts of long-term oppression.

Community organizers from Community Voices Heard and GOLES also named the fact that public housing residents are frequently blamed and scapegoated for social problems, including crime and safety issues, which then encourages further neglect and divestment. Trauma—emotional, mental, social, cultural, spiritual, and infrastructural—came to the fore in many of these conversations. There was a sense that healing and repair on all these levels needed to happen to transform public housing into a more just, equitable, and humane system and that arts and culture could play a key role in this process. Emphasis was also placed on healing that builds connectivity across generations—from children to seniors.

## **Resident voices and experiences are inadequately represented in cultural programs, community development, and urban planning efforts.**

Roundtable participants lifted up the need for more spaces where resident's voices could be heard and their expertise integrated. It is important that affected stakeholders be the primary designers and creators or co-creators of arts and cultural programming in, and about, public housing. When not part of public housing, the artists and cultural centers involved should have a long-term commitment to the community. The cultural community and NYCHA residents should also be engaged in larger neighborhood planning efforts.

Participants identified that opportunities (such as community board and borough cabinet meetings) do exist to create more sustainable and inclusive spaces, and more options for participatory process continue to become available. But the overall feeling was that resident artists and art-making needed to be amplified and supported to a much greater extent and that future roundtables and community conversations needed to include more residents. This recommendation aligns with NOCD-NY's core belief that impacted communities should be the drivers of neighborhood change.

## **Cultural programs should reflect the diversity of people in public housing.**

This includes immigrants from many countries who speak many languages and might be limited-English-language proficient and have varying levels of access to education and social services. They should also recognize the multiplicity of needs of public housing communities, including language translation and interpretation, relief from social isolation, security, and access to basic repairs and amenities. Participants and residents raised questions about the fact that public housing is full of artists who want to lead cultural programs in their developments, but instead of their expertise being leveraged,

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**I want to stress that resident associations are very diverse. Sometimes residents are adversarial with their tenant associations, sometimes they are complicit. Some represent NYCHA residents, and in others, you could ask members and they'd say 'this RA does not represent us; it's actually more of a fiefdom.' Non-profit CBO's struggle with resident associations as well, and that's something to keep in mind.**

– Christopher Hanway, Jacob A. Riis  
Neighborhood Settlement

focus is continually directed toward bringing “outside” artists and organizations in. Resident-artists are of the community, having participated in the cultural organizations’ programs themselves as children. Participants wanted to see more sustained, culturally appropriate work that recognizes the talent, traditions, expertise, and leadership of public housing residents.

## **The relationship between arts, culture, gentrification, and displacement needs to be acknowledged.**

Often, new residents to neighborhoods spur efforts for revitalization and beautification, and public housing residents who have been living in the community for many years are not adequately consulted, integrated, or kept informed. As the character and identity of neighborhoods change rapidly through gentrification, more and more long-term residents are getting pushed out of their homes. The severe lack of affordable housing options also creates undue strain, and there are many situations where residents are unfairly targeted, blamed, and displaced. CAAAV’s example of an elderly musician and long-term resident in Chinatown who was beaten up by the police after a complaint from a new resident about the volume of noise is an illustration of this complex, conflicted relationship. Arts and cultural programming that feeds into neighborhood change efforts needs to be mindful of how gentrification is accelerating adverse impacts for public housing residents, particularly low-income residents of color, and ally itself with community efforts to prevent displacement.

## **Cross-sector collaborations and partnerships greatly increase the reach, impact, scalability, and public value of the arts and culture in public housing.**

Presenters at the roundtable shared several stories of programs that were developed in collaboration with city agencies, grassroots organizations, tenant associations, residents, and citywide cultural organizations. Projects and programs that reached across silos to partner meaningfully were successful in a wide range of ways. Strategic partnerships and collaborations helped connect programs to impacted stakeholders, created new streams and channels of access to funds, developed useful feedback loops between residents and arts programmers, strengthened community-building efforts, and created more cohesion, connection, and cultural engagement. Examples of

partnerships and collaborations included *Alphabet City*, produced through Casita Maria and Elizabeth Hamby; the NEA Our Town grant secured in collaboration with NYCHA for [Make Mott Haven](#)<sup>6</sup>; Groundswell’s Public Art/Public Housing program done in collaboration with NYCHA with support from Council Member Richie Torres; evaluation of arts and culture in New York City by DCLA and Social Impact of the Arts Project; research on the relationships between social equity and the arts by ArtPlace America and PolicyLink; joint work by Staten Island Arts and Napela to support the Park Hill immigrants market; and partnerships between University Settlement, MoCADA, BRIC Arts Media, and other organizations.

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I was born and raised in public housing. I believe that we need community organizing about root causes while also advancing integrative approaches through the arts. We need multi-pronged approaches that are inter-generational and that reach young kids and seniors. Our challenge is to find streams of money that may not have been configured to address emerging needs and recommendations. NextGeneration NYCHA plans are about changing physical structures and I am excited about the opportunities. We recognize that everything will not happen immediately. We need to give ourselves space to envision all that is possible, even within the grey areas, and to experience the evolution.

– Athena Moore, Manhattan Borough  
President’s Office

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# Recommendations and Next Steps

The roundtable generated a number of rich recommendations to further the strategic inclusion of arts and culture within public housing. Wide-ranging dialogue and questions between participants also corroborated the key premise of the roundtable, which was the belief that arts and culture can be a lever, tool, and catalyst for the transformation of public housing into a more just and equitable system. The recommendations below from roundtable participants reflect the strategic importance of gathering diverse and representative perspectives from the public housing and arts and culture landscape. In addition to asking for more silo-busting conversations and exchanges that bring together stakeholders and power holders, roundtable participants recommended the following:

## Create new, collaborative funding streams.

Roundtable participants identified a pressing need for funding and resources that do the following:

- *Increase resources for resident-led projects and organizations*
- *Encourage cultural programming within community-organizing groups*
- *Provide rapid support for small community projects while also supporting long-term, sustainable arts programs*
- *Directly support artists working in community*
- *Allocate dedicated funds for naturally occurring cultural districts*
- *Encourage cross-sector partnerships across city agencies, community-organizing groups, arts organizations, and public and private funders in order to create more community-based cultural hubs*

- *Allow more avenues for fiscal sponsorship; for example, applying for DCLA funding through a sponsor*
- *Bring together synergistic funding sources to address the intersections of public health, disaster recovery, urban planning, community development, and arts and culture*

## Advance service delivery, systems-level interventions, and visionary change.

Participants brought up the importance of providing training, skills-building, and community engagement opportunities through the arts, while simultaneously transforming the system through cultural organizing and creative practices that re-imagine the future of public housing. They clarified the need to distinguish between service delivery and provision that meets immediate or short-term needs and grassroots community organizing for systems change, and reminded us to fight the urge to continually come up with more service programming. For instance, they asked for specific training and collaboration opportunities for nonprofit CBOs on arts integration, but they also asked for artistic interventions that interrupt stereotyping, stigma, and segregation associated with public housing. They also acknowledged the power of arts to simultaneously support transformation at individual, community, and systemic levels. By making connections, facilitating opportunities for creative liberation and popular education, and integrating culture into organizing and movement building, arts and culture are uniquely positioned to improve the

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In academia they call them drive-by researchers. We have artists like that. Whatever arts happen, it needs to support community needs. We work on protecting public housing for immigrants and interrupting police brutality. Artistic activism needs to plug into that.

– Cathy Dang, CAAAV

current public housing system while also imagining, experimenting, and creating a new, liberatory system that produces equity, justice, and healing.

### **Integrate a holistic understanding of public housing into change efforts.**

Participants asked for more opportunities for public housing to be considered as a part of the larger ecology of community development, arts programming, and urban planning. They identified the need to interrupt the myth that community health, vitality, and urban development is separate from public housing. They recognized that the built environment, urban landscape, and legacy and history of public housing in New York often perpetuate intergenerational trauma and actively deter possibilities for cultural engagement. So they called for strategies and change efforts that mitigate these realities.

### **Encourage and amplify cross-sector conversations and partnerships.**

Stories and models of exemplary programs shared during the roundtable demonstrated that cross-sector partnerships greatly increased the impact, reach, scale, and relevancy of arts and culture interventions within public housing. Participants asked for opportunities to map local resources, people, and partners; technical support for increased cross-sector communication; and dedicated resources to support cross-sector partnerships in the long term. They specifically asked for sustained support, so that funding and resources are not focused on just single projects, and asked for capacity building and training so that all involved people can learn how to do this intersectional work well. There was also a lot of appreciation for the roundtable itself, and participants asked for ongoing opportunities to attend similar roundtables and convenings that can help people connect across silos and sectors.

### **Increase access to space.**

Cultural organizations need more access to space, including city-owned property, as well as access to space through public-private partnerships. Participants asked for written policies on how to use public spaces and joint use agreements and stressed that cultural and community partners be at the table for decision making related to physical space.

### **Include and engage residents more meaningfully.**

There was broad support for increased inclusion of residents and resident-led efforts at the roundtable. Participations asked for more opportunities and spaces for residents to frame the questions and name their priorities, so that the voices of impacted community members are centralized. They recommended that public housing residents lead cultural organizations and that more opportunities be created to bring out art from the “inside” instead of bringing outside art into public housing. They advocated for artists having a long-term presence in the community, alongside appropriate training for them to engage democratically and equitably in neighborhood planning processes.

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By making connections, facilitating opportunities for creative liberation and popular education, and integrating culture into organizing and movement building, arts and culture can support change on individual, community, and systemic levels. They are uniquely positioned to improve public housing while also creating a new, liberatory system that produces equity, justice, and healing

- Caron Atlas  
Arts & Democracy and NOCD-NY

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# Conclusion

The roundtable produced a shared analysis of challenges, best practices, successful models and recommendations for transformative arts and cultural work in public housing. Participants also collaboratively identified concrete opportunities for collaborations and action, many of which may be actualized in the near future, as NOCD-NY moves this critical conversation forward. For instance, participants offered to partner with NOCD-NY to support resident centered and resident-led conversations. NYCHA identified priorities around building connectivity and cultural corridors within its communities, invited participants to upcoming tables and said if the right table did not exist, they would create one. Participatory budgeting processes, the city's cultural planning process, community board and borough cabinet meetings, and town halls on the NYCHA Plan offered through the Manhattan Borough President's office were all identified as crucial opportunities for amplifying stakeholder voices and advocating for the integration of arts and culture. NOCD-NY has made a commitment to keeping the conversation going in partnership with roundtable participants and others, and to continue developing strategic cross-sector relationships. NOCD-NY has followed up on this roundtable through a series of conversations with residents, advocates, artists, and policymakers, supported by The New York City Cultural Agenda Fund in The New York Community Trust.

For up-to-date information about NOCD-NY's work on arts, culture and public housing, visit their website at <http://nocdny.org>, or reach out to [nocdny@gmail.com](mailto:nocdny@gmail.com). To contact the author, Nayantara Sen, email her at [nayantara.sen@gmail.com](mailto:nayantara.sen@gmail.com).

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Creative Transformation: Arts, Culture, and Public Housing Communities

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# Appendices

## List of Roundtable Participants

(affiliations as of December 2015)

Akrm Ahmed, Clinton Dewitt Houses, Community Voices Heard (CVH)  
Cherine E. Anderson, NYC Housing Authority Office of Public/Private Partnerships  
Caron Atlas, Arts & Democracy, NOCD-NY  
James E. Bartlett, Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA)  
Jamie Bennett, ArtPlace America  
Nicholas Dagen Bloom, New York Institute of Technology  
Perian Carson, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs  
Gonzalo Casals, NOCD-NY  
Grace Chung, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) NYC  
Lyz Crane, ArtPlace America  
Cathy Dang, CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities  
Milly Hawk Daniel, PolicyLink  
David Dean, Casita Maria Center for Arts & Education  
Kadidja Diallo, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development  
Theresa Doherty, El Puente  
Patrick Dougher, Groundswell  
Pamela Epstein, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs  
Adama Fassah, Napela Inc  
Catherine A. Green, ARTs East New York  
Tamara Greenfield, NOCD-NY, Spaceworks  
Elizabeth Hamby, artist  
Christopher Hanway, Jacob A. Riis Neighborhood Settlement  
Dereese Huff, Campos Plaza Tenant Association  
Evria Ince, Nia Theatrical Production Company  
Samantha Johnson, Ingersoll Houses, University Settlement  
Andrew King, Researcher, consultant  
Rasmia Kirmani-Frye, NYC Housing Authority Office of Public/Private Partnerships  
Council Member Brad Lander, New York City Council  
Sheila Lewandowski, The Chocolate Factory Theater  
Christine Licata, Casita Maria Center for Arts & Education  
Frances Lucerna, El Puente  
Claudie Mabry, researcher, consultant  
Nahisha McCoy Freeman, Dance Theatre Etcetera and Red Hook Initiative  
Athena Moore, Office of the Manhattan Borough President  
Julian Morales, Office of City Council Member Carlos Menchaca  
Maria Mottola, New York Foundation  
Tom Oesau, NOCD-NY  
Carmen Piñeiro, Community Voices Heard (CVH)  
Associate Commissioner Darryl Rattray, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development,  
Community Centers and Strategic Partnerships  
Damaris Reyes, Good Old Lower East Side (GOLES)  
Amy Sananman, Groundswell

Susan Seifert, Social Impact of the Arts Project, University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice  
Nayantara Sen, New York University  
Maria Soriano, Dance Theatre Etcetera  
Laura Timme, University Settlement  
Deputy Commissioner Edwin Torres, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs  
Jessica Vides-Hernandez, NYC Department of Youth and Community Development  
Suzette Walker-Camara, Betances Community Center, BronxWorks  
Rico Washington, writer, artist  
Robbie Welch, Office of the Speaker, New York City Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito  
Lakai Worrell, Purelements: An Evolution in Dance

## **Roundtable Agenda**

Creative Transformation: Arts, Culture, and Public Housing Communities  
Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts New York Roundtable  
The Rockefeller Foundation, 420 Fifth Avenue, New York City  
July 27, 2015, 12:30 – 5:00pm

### **12:30 Lunch**

### **1:00 Welcome & Framing**

Caron Atlas, Co-director, NOCD-NY  
Gonzalo Casals, Roundtable Facilitator, NOCD-NY

### **1:20 Examples**

Presenters will share their examples, participants can ask clarifying questions, and a respondent will identify broader themes and issues.

### **Cultural Engagement on NYCHA Sites**

Frances Lucerna, El Puente (Brooklyn)  
Laura Timme and Samantha Johnson, University Settlement (Manhattan/Brooklyn)  
Adama Fassah & Adisatu Colandra-Kabba, Park Hill Market, and Naomi Sturm, Staten Island Arts (Staten Island)  
Response – Nicholas Dagen Bloom, New York Institute of Technology

### **Community Revitalization Strategies in the Bronx**

Christine Licata, Casita Maria Center for Arts & Education  
Elizabeth Hamby, artist  
Suzette Walker-Camara, Betances Center  
Response – Carmen Piñeiro, Community Voices Heard

### **Arts-Initiated Models**

Amy Sananman, Groundswell (Citywide)  
James Bartlett, MoCADA (Brooklyn)  
Maria Soriano and Nahisha McCoy Freeman, Dance Theatre Etcetera (Brooklyn)

## **2:50 Discussion**

## **3:10 Break**

## **3:20 Vision & Opportunities**

### **Arts & Culture**

Lakai Worrell, Purelements: An Evolution in Dance  
Sheila Lewandowski, The Chocolate Factory Theater

### **Residents & Activists**

Damaris Reyes, GOLES  
Akrm Ahmed, Community Voices Heard  
Dereese Huff, Tenant Association President, Campos Plaza  
Cathy Dang, CAAAV

### **National Perspective**

Jamie Bennett, ArtPlace America  
Milly Hawk Daniel, PolicyLink

### **NYC Policy Perspective**

New York City Council Member Brad Lander  
Deputy Commissioner Edwin Torres, NYC Department of Cultural Affairs  
Associate Commissioner Darryl Rattray, Community Centers and Strategic Partnerships, NYC Department  
of Youth & Community Development  
Rasmia Kirmani-Frye, Office of Public/Private Partnerships, NYC Housing Authority

## **4:20 Recommendations – Lightning Round – 1 minute each**

## **4:30 Recommendations Discussion**

## **4:55 Wrap Up**

## **5:00 Roundtable Ends**

NOCD-NY Co-directors: Caron Atlas and Tamara Greenfield, Coordinator: Thomas Oesau  
Roundtable Facilitator: Gonzalo Casals, Project Consultants: Andrew King and Claudie Mabry.

## Endnotes

1 For DYCD Cornerstone centers, see <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/html/afterschool/cornerstone.shtml>.

2 Nicholas Dagen Bloom, *Public Housing That Worked: New York City in the 20th Century*, <http://www.upenn.edu/pennpress/book/14435.html>.

3 Mindy Fullilove, *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, and What We Can Do About It*, <http://www.rootshock.org/>; *Urban Alchemy: Restoring Joy in America's Sorted-Out Cities*, <http://www.newvil-lagepress.net/book/?GCOI=97660100238970>.

4 “De Blasio Administration Unveils ‘NextGeneration NYCHA’: A Comprehensive Plan to Secure the Future of City Public Housing” (press release), <http://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/325-15/de-blasio-adminis-tration-nextgeneration-nycha--comprehensive-plan-secure-future#/0>.

5 For University Settlement’s Creative Center and creative aging programs, see [http://www.universitysettlement.org/us/programs/the\\_creative\\_center/](http://www.universitysettlement.org/us/programs/the_creative_center/).

6 “NYCHA & NYC Dept of Cultural Affairs Announce New Grant to Support ‘Make Mott Haven’” (press re-lease), <http://www1.nyc.gov/site/nycha/about/press/pr-2015/make-mott-haven-grant-20150831.page>.