



The Social Impact of the Arts Project is a research center at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Policy & Practice. SIAP conducts research on the role of arts and culture in American cities with a particular interest in strategies for arts-based revitalization. Since 1994, SIAP has focused on developing empirical methods to study the links between cultural engagement and community well-being.

What's new?

Creativity and Neighborhood Revitalization

Over the past two years, with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation, SIAP has collaborated with The Reinvestment Fund in an exploration of the potential of arts-based regeneration strategies. For the collaboration, SIAP produced a critical review of the literature on culture and revitalization and three policy briefs.

[From Creative Economy to Creative Society](#)

This brief uses a social policy lens to look at the impact and potential of the creative economy for urban neighborhoods. While the growth of the creative sector is helping to regenerate regional economies, it is also exacerbating economic inequality and social exclusion among urban residents. The brief reviews current trends and proposes a new model—*a neighborhood-based creative economy*—as a way to move the 21st century city toward shared prosperity and social integration.

[Cultivating “Natural” Cultural Districts](#)

This brief uses existing research on urban culture and community arts to make a case for culture-based revitalization from the bottom up. This brief highlights a particular kind of social network—the geographically-defined networks made possible by the presence of a density of cultural assets in particular neighborhoods. Because “natural” cultural districts evolve through the self-organized efforts of local players, the challenge for policy-makers is how to do sensitive social investment that maximizes community benefits.

[Migrants, Communities and Culture](#)

This brief uses the Philadelphia experience to explore whether culture can help engage new immigrants with other social institutions. The brief looks at the role of migrant cultural expression in urban neighborhoods, existing institutional barriers, and how migrants' adaptation to their social marginality is changing “mainstream” culture. A century ago, the settlement house movement used culture to link immigrants to opportunities in education, employment, and health care. Can the arts play a similar role in Philadelphia today?

A full description of the project and other publications are available at:

www.sp2.upenn.edu/SIAP/trfrock.htm

Knight Creative Communities Initiative evaluation

Mark Stern and Susan Seifert are conducting an evaluation of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation's Creative Communities Initiative in Duluth, Tallahassee, and Charlotte. Their interim report is available [here](#).



SIAP Classic

[Dynamics of Culture](#)—research on changes in the cultural sector and its impact on communities sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation

[Philadelphia and Camden Cultural Participation Benchmark Project](#)—a study for the Community Partners Program of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation

[Culture Builds Community evaluation](#)—an evaluation of a grant-making initiative of sponsored by the William Penn Foundation

[Arts Resources for Children and Youth in Philadelphia](#)—a study with the Central Philadelphia Development Corporation for The Pew Charitable Trusts

[Working papers](#)

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