



Knight Creative Communities Initiative Evaluation

Final Report

By Mark J. Stern and Susan C. Seifert
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Abstract

The Knight Creative Communities Initiative (KCCI) was undertaken as part of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation's recent interest in the development of social entrepreneurs to promote community transformation based on Richard Florida's creative class theory to stimulate economic development. The focus of KCCI was sponsorship of the "Creative Community Leadership Seminar" in three regions in order to "train Foundation staff and selected community leaders as creative community leaders."

Communities

Knight made KCCI investments in three of its communities: Duluth, Minn. (with City of Superior, Wis.), Charlotte, N.C. and Tallahassee, Fla.

Executive Summary

The Knight Creative Communities Initiative (KCCI) was undertaken as part of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation's recent interest in the development of social entrepreneurs to promote community transformation based on Richard Florida's creative class theory to stimulate economic development. The focus of KCCI was sponsorship of the "Creative Community Leadership Seminar" in three regions in order to "train Foundation staff and selected community leaders as creative community leaders." Florida's consulting firm, Creative Class Group (CCG), implemented the initiative in Charlotte, North Carolina; Duluth, Minnesota/Superior, Wisconsin; and Tallahassee, Florida.

The report begins with an overview of the logic of KCCI. We then examine participants' experience of the initiative, from March 2007 to March 2008, using a chronological structure: the selection of community catalysts, the initial two-day seminar, the organization of the action teams, and the history of the teams. The report concludes with a framework for evaluating the medium and long-term impacts of KCCI on the three communities.

Assessment of KCCI's first year

The centerpiece of KCCI was the selection of a group of approximately thirty community members in each locale to serve as volunteer "community catalysts." The catalysts were to be trained by CCG in the theories and evidence of Florida's approach. This group of volunteers was responsible for virtually the entire project with relatively little financial or technical support.

From the outset, KCCI articulated clear *outputs* and intended *impacts*. The outputs would be the specific projects developed and implemented by the catalysts. The intended impacts would consist of a transformation in the community's creative assets so that it would become a creative class magnet. The weakness in KCCI's logic was connected primarily to *outcomes*, that is, short- and medium-term changes in the three KCCI communities that would set the stage for its wider impacts.

KCCI was built on an innovative theory of economic development. However, it lacked a clear set of connections between its specific projects and the broader changes it sought to achieve. In addition, the initiative did not articulate its rationale about how change would occur. In other words, KCCI knew what its destination was but did not have a roadmap for getting there.

The data for the assessment in this report derive from three sources: an analysis of census data for the three KCCI communities; a survey of community catalysts; and phone and in-person interviews with a number of KCCI participants—including Knight program directors, local organizers, CCG staff, and community catalysts.

The three communities chosen for the initiative represent a range of experiences in terms of population and economic growth. The two Sunbelt communities had enjoyed rapid growth since 1990 while Duluth/Superior has lagged. Since 2000, however, Tallahassee's economy—historically tied to higher education and state government—has stagnated as well.

These patterns of economic and population change provided an important context for KCCI. In Charlotte, economic growth has been a given part of the city's experience for

many years. On the flip side, economic and population decline are strongly embedded in the civic life of the Twin Ports. The recent history of Tallahassee provided the best “fit” for Richard Florida’s ideas. After decades of population and economic expansion, in the past five years—as state government and public universities experienced constrained growth—the city’s once vibrant economy has gone flat. This slowdown has created a situation in which the young, well-educated “products” of the city’s leading industry—higher education—provide a key, underutilized asset.

The major role of CCG in KCCI was conducting a two-day seminar in each community attended by the catalysts and local coordinators of the initiative. Although catalysts and local organizers had a variety of reactions to the seminar, the balance of opinion was decidedly negative.

From the standpoint of participants, the seminars were only partially successful in achieving their goals. While the catalysts were generally impressed with the CCG staff’s knowledge of creative class theory and their use of data, they were concerned about Richard Florida’s engagement in KCCI, the process for selecting projects, and their overall preparation to move to the next stage.

A total of fifteen separate projects emerged from the two-day seminars—four in Tallahassee, five in Duluth/Superior, and six in Charlotte. The community catalysts generally remained excited about the action team projects. At the same time, survey responses and key informant interviews suggest that a significant share of the catalysts disengaged from the projects. In this respect, KCCI was fairly typical of volunteer efforts, especially ones that require a significant time commitment. Also, it appears that KCCI’s goal of selecting a pool of younger, ethnically diverse, and civically unconnected catalysts was only partially achieved.

Based on a September 2007 survey and individual interviews, the evaluation team was impressed with the continuing level of energy and enthusiasm among the catalysts. While many projects ran into problems as they developed, very few ceased to function. Most importantly, the catalysts with whom we spoke expressed a deep sense of responsibility to see the projects through.

CCG’s rush to identify projects and form action teams had an unanticipated effect. Catalysts complained that they no longer felt a part of the broader initiative. While creative class theory provided a clear idea about goals for KCCI, it provided little in the way of guidance about how to pursue those goals. Many of the catalysts expressed disappointment that this gap was not addressed during the two-day seminar, which explains the high proportion of catalysts that believed they were not ready to pursue their projects.

Catalysts identified three sets of problems faced by the action teams: defining the scope of their projects, logistical and time pressures, and funding. One surprise to virtually all of the participants in KCCI was the limited role played by CCG after the two-day seminar. The original proposal called for on-line sessions in which Florida would participate. Yet, the catalysts reported that Florida himself had no contact with them after his appearance at the seminar.

The catalysts remained committed and positive about KCCI. Sixty-two percent said the initiative met their expectations, and only sixteen percent said it failed to do so. Still, there seemed to be a disconnect in the initiative between its change goals, resources,

and time line. What would appear to be the more important action team goals—retaining the educated workforce in Tallahassee and Duluth/Superior, rehabilitating districts in Tallahassee and Charlotte, and connecting the arts and commerce in Duluth/Superior and Charlotte—clearly needed more than nine months and greater resources to produce results. Projects that could be completed in nine months, however, were difficult to connect to lasting outcomes.

In contrast to a positive assessment of their own involvement in KCCI, the catalysts continued to be critical of CCG's involvement. More than half (fifty-three percent) viewed CCG's overall performance negatively, while only sixteen percent viewed it positively.

KCCI 's design left a gap in the logic of the initiative. It did not provide the catalysts with a theory of change to guide their work. In response to this gap, the catalysts and local organizers developed their own theories to explain how KCCI would influence civic life. The two most common theories of change focused on building social capital and expanding civic capacity in their respective communities.

Evaluating KCCI's longer-term community outcomes

In addition to a formative or process evaluation of KCCI's first year, Knight asked the evaluation team to make recommendations for a summative or outcome evaluation of the initiative. We do so with some reservations. It is clear that if KCCI is to be replicated, the experience of the first cohorts and communities will lead to significant changes in its structure. Hopefully, a second KCCI would clarify the connections between inputs and outputs, which would simplify the design of an evaluation.

The outcome evaluation framework is based on the logic model developed by the evaluation team to assess the initiative. The model outlines how the action team projects could contribute to the development of *community capacity* and *civic capacity*. While KCCI began with the goal of having a lasting impact on economic development in the three communities, participants have suggested that these intermediate civic outcomes—not a major economic transformation—would be the most likely direct effect of the initiative.

Among the evaluation team's recommendations are that the KCCI process be restructured with a focus on leadership and team development among the catalysts and that CCG's role be redefined and its responsibilities clarified.

Often, bold failures are more valuable than timid successes. The Knight Creative Communities Initiative represented a brave effort on the part of the Foundation to bring new thinking to a relatively stale area of public policy. We, as a nation, have no choice but to develop strategies for transforming communities if a diverse and protean American civilization is to meet the challenges of the coming century. The fact that KCCI has not fully achieved its ambitious goals should not obscure its merit in seeking innovative ways to address real challenges.

The standard for judging initiatives like KCCI, then, is to ask what we can learn about communities and strategies for their transformation. In speaking with catalysts, local organizers, and others involved in the program, it is clear that all parties are interested in fixing what went wrong, enhancing what went right, and moving ahead. In this respect, we can report with confidence that KCCI has been a success.

Knight Creative Communities Initiative
KCCI Evaluation: Final Report
July 2008

During the summer of 2007, we were asked by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to undertake a process evaluation of its Creative Communities Initiative (KCCI) underway in three communities—Charlotte, North Carolina; Duluth, Minnesota/Superior, Wisconsin; and Tallahassee, Florida. This report is based on site visits to the three KCCI communities, two surveys of the community catalysts who carried out the initiative, and key informant interviews with catalysts and others involved with KCCI. This final report incorporates the findings of our interim report (December 2007) as well as data we have gathered subsequently.

The report begins with an overview of the logic of KCCI. We then examine participants' experience of the initiative using a chronological structure: the selection of catalysts, the initial two-day seminar, the organization of the action or initiative teams, and the history of the teams. The report concludes with a set of recommendations for evaluating the medium and long-term impact of KCCI on the three communities.

1. The Logic of KCCI

KCCI was undertaken as part of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation's recent focus on the development of social entrepreneurs to promote community transformation. As Alberto Ibarguen, president of the Foundation, observed:

Social entrepreneurship—the application of entrepreneurial business thinking to social issues—is an increasingly popular concept around the world. But it isn't a fad. It is a simple and logical way to set visionary goals, plan for sustainability, and demand performance and accountability in social enterprises. We see it as part of our larger effort to identify transformational leadership and opportunities.

To that end, we sponsored urbanist Richard Florida to work in Charlotte N.C.; Duluth, Minn./Superior, Wis.; and Tallahassee, Fla. with groups of "community catalysts" tasked with identifying and building "the creative class." (John S. and James L. Knight Foundation 2006)

As President Ibarguen notes, KCCI grows out of the academic work of Richard Florida on the role of the "creative class" in stimulating economic development. In several books and numerous speaking engagements since 2001, Professor Florida has promoted his theory that a metropolitan area's economic vitality is less a function of attracting businesses than its ability to attract and retain creative people (Florida 2002, 2005a, 2005b, 2008).

Florida argues that three features are critical to attracting the "creative class": talent, technology, and tolerance—the "3 T's." In the lead up to KCCI, Florida and his associates added a "fourth T"—the unique territorial assets of a particular community.

To translate his theories into empirical work, Florida and his associates developed a variety of novel indicators, including *melting pot*, *coolness*, *gay*, and *creativity* indexes. Florida used these indexes to demonstrate that creativity is distinct from more common

measures of contemporary economic dynamism, like the overall level of education and skill (human capital).

One feature of Florida's academic work is notable for the design of KCCI. The creative centers identified by Florida were *not* the product of intentional action; they generally arose "naturally," often through the unanticipated interaction of academic centers, start-up businesses, and the historical character of a place. Where traditional economic development theories highlight features like tax rates and a "positive business environment," creative class theory suggests that a more complex set of interactions is necessary to transform a place into a creative class magnet.

The model for KCCI derived from projects that Professor Florida and his associates undertook in 2006 in El Paso, Texas and Tacoma, Washington. In El Paso, for example, the El Paso Electric Company and several government agencies sponsored the El Paso Region Creative Cities Leadership Project, which included the selection of "Creative Change Agents," a two-day seminar and a number of projects (El Paso 2008). In Tacoma, Florida's group had—in one newspaperman's opinion—"one smashing success, a handful of good ideas mostly stuck in the good-idea stage and an encouraging sense that Tacoma, while headed in the right direction, has a long way to go." (Voelpel 2007).

As these projects were unfolding, Richard Florida Creativity Group—a for-profit consulting firm—received a grant from the Foundation to analyze data on the Knight communities and to hold a seminar in September 2006 for the Foundation's program officers in Detroit. The same month, the Foundation's Board approved a second grant to Richard Florida Creativity Group (which subsequently changed its name to the Creative Class Group) for \$585,000 to implement the Knight Creative Class Initiative in three communities.

As specified in the proposal, the focus of KCCI was on the "Creative Community Leadership Seminar" that would "train foundation staff and selected community leaders as creative community leaders." At the end of the seminar, "the participants will have formed teams and laid the groundwork for year-long strategic community transformation initiatives." The proposal noted that in the nine months following the seminar, "each community will complete three one-hour live online sessions with Florida and the RFCG Team."

Conventionally, logic models identify three types of results of a particular project:

- *outputs* that consist of "the direct products of program activities";
- *outcomes* that consist of specific changes in participants' behavior, knowledge, and skills over the period following a project; and
- *impacts* that consist of fundamental and long-lasting systemic change.

From the outset, KCCI had clear *outputs* and intended *impacts*. The outputs would be the specific projects *developed* and *implemented* by the catalysts. The intended impacts consisted of a transformation in the community's four T's so that it would become a creative class magnet. Ultimately, according to creative class theory, transforming the four T's would have an even broader impact by driving economic development and prosperity.

The weakness in KCCI's logic is connected primarily to *outcomes*, that is, short- and long-term changes in the three KCCI communities that would set the stage of the

impacts discussed above. Based on a review of documents and discussions with CCG staff, we have identified several possible outcomes.

The direct path would be that the projects undertaken by the catalysts were of such a magnitude that on their own they stimulate systemic change. For example, the Greenovation team in Tallahassee believed that its work could lead to a transformation in the environmental consciousness of local residents that would impact their behavior over the long-term. CCG expressed the hope that many of the projects would influence the civic dialogue on challenges facing the local communities and thereby have a catalytic impact on public consciousness.

Yet, this type of project would be exceptional, especially given the short time-frame of KCCI. Even a greening project would require significant preparation before and after the initiative to have a significant direct impact.

Indeed, the experience of a project in Tacoma illustrates this difficulty. Project EDEN sought to revive a declining business district in the city. Yet, “when such ventures depend on so many variables—selling a common vision, finding willing developers, securing affordable space, inspiring passionate entrepreneurs”—success may exceed the capacity or time-commitment of the catalysts.

A second alternative—and one endorsed by CCG staff—is that the projects would generate broader social networks of creative class members who understood the nature of their challenge and were committed to changing the civic dialogue. Social networks appear to be a plausible link between outputs and impacts, but one that, on the face of it, would require a variety of supports to carry through to a successful conclusion. Indeed, the online sessions (now called “check ins”) in KCCI’s design hardly seem sufficient to sustain these projects and the overall initiative over the long term.

The social network outcome is tied to the idea of leadership. It is important not only to develop networks but also to train leaders who can use those networks to accomplish particular outcomes. This possible outcome might draw inspiration from the significant literature on community capacity-building that argues for coordinated efforts at building social capital (networks) and leadership training.

Indeed, the lack of a clear set of anticipated outcomes was linked to another challenge of KCCI’s design: the articulation of a *theory of change*. Creative class theory is focused primarily on how a set of community assets, when they are in place, stimulate economic development. There is very little in Florida’s work to aid conscious efforts to engage residents and sustain their efforts over the long-term. In practice, as we shall see, KCCI communities turned to models of community change that were already present in the three cities rather than relying on creative class theory.

The lack of clarity about a theory of change posed a challenge for evaluating the outputs as well as the outcomes of KCCI. The individual projects undertaken by the catalysts—what logic models would label as the outputs—do not provide a reliable measure of the impact of KCCI on community transformation. In the absence of a clearly articulated theory of change, many of the catalysts fell back onto models that had already gained traction in the KCCI communities, social capital development and leadership development being the most commonly cited strategies.

For purposes of the evaluation, we have attempted to formalize the ideas developed by the catalysts and local organizers around two related bodies of work: community

capacity building (Chaskin et al 2001) and civic capacity (a concept closely identified with Clarence Stone). Community capacity building focuses on developing the abilities possessed by a community to address its challenges. Chaskin *et al* provide a formal definition:

Community capacity is the interactions of human capital, organizational resources, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community. It may operate through informal social processes and/or organized efforts by individuals, organizations, and social networks that exist among them and between them and the larger systems of which the community is a part.

As this definition makes clear, capacity building is focused on a bottom-up development of individuals, groups, and the community as a whole so that it can secure and mobilize resources to address the problems faced by the community. Although it gives some attention to the actual processes through which those solutions move forward, capacity building is just that, an ability to do something, not so much actually doing it.

In contrast, civic capacity focuses on doing something. As Stone (2005) explains:

[C]ivic capacity . . . [is] a concerted effort to address a major community problem. By “concerted” I mean special actions to involve multiple sectors of a locality, including both governmental and nongovernmental. The label “civic” refers to actions built around the idea of furthering the well-being of the whole community, not just that of a particular segment or group.

In contrast to community capacity, which focuses on abilities, the concept of civic capacity is focused on accomplishments. Specifically, a city has civic capacity when different sectors can work together to solve problems. As Stone writes elsewhere:

Civic capacity concerns the extent to which different sectors of the community—business, parents, educators, state and local officeholders, nonprofits, and others—act in concert around a matter of community-wide import. It involves mobilization—that is, bringing different sectors together but also developing a shared plan of action.



Source: Saegert 2006.

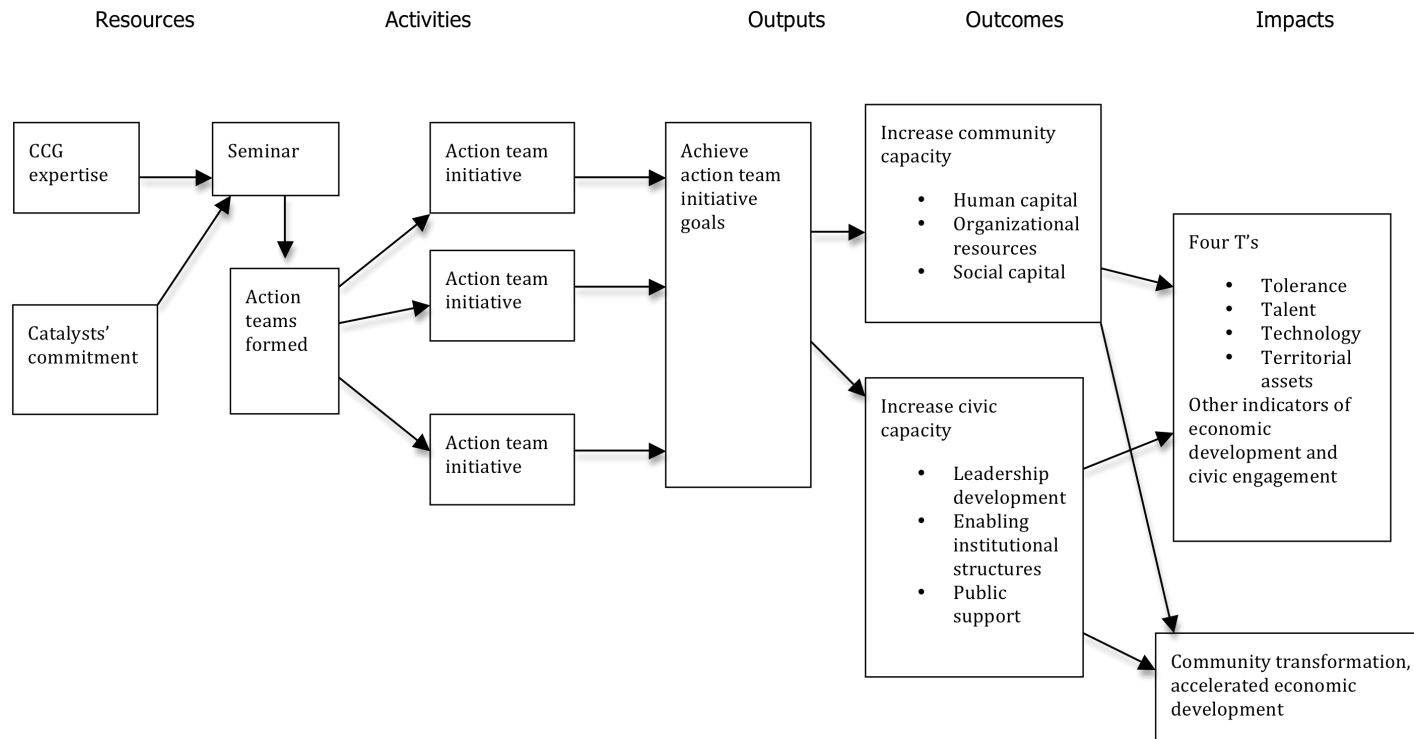
Community capacity building and civic capacity as complementary elements of a single system

The two concepts clearly are complementary. Community capacity building involves developing abilities—leadership, social connections, skills—that give a community the ability to tackle problems. Civic capacity takes those abilities and puts them into action. Indeed, Susan Saegert (2006) has proposed that the two elements can be thought of as a single system, one that builds a community's resources and another that applies those skills to a problem. Saegert goes on to suggest that by viewing these processes as complementary reduces the tension between confrontational and cooperative strategies for undertaking community work. For Saegert the outcomes of community capacity building—social capital, leadership, and human capital—are the raw material for implementing civic capacity strategies.

In summary, the design of KCCI left a gap in the logic of the initiative. In response to this gap, the catalysts turned to a variety of strategies with which they were already familiar, in particular, social capital building and leadership development. We propose that the concepts of community capacity building and civic capacity provide a link between these *ad hoc* decisions about how to proceed and a larger debate about how communities can deliberately address the challenges they face.

In KCCI's original conceptualization, the issue of impacts was straightforward: the expansion of the four T's, which leads to community transformation and economic development. However, as KCCI unfolded it became less associated with creative class theory. Therefore, in assessing the initiative's ultimate impact, it is worth considering a wider range of outcome measures of community well-being.

Taking together the original design of KCCI and our effort to clarify a potential set of outcomes, we propose the logic model below that outlines the resources, activities, and three sets of results that one might expect from KCCI. We will return to this model later in this report when we take up the issue of formative evaluation.



KCCI logic model

One challenge for CCG staff related to the nature of community change efforts. Much of Richard Florida's consulting before KCCI involved working with businesses and organizations. While the issue of "buy in" is not foreign to organizational environments, once an organization's leadership has committed to a particular strategy, it can create the incentives and motivation to assure that other employees will engage in the process. In contrast, the "levers" for stimulating and sustaining community engagement are considerably more complex. CCG's model assumes that—with relatively little support—the volunteer community catalysts already possess the leadership skills necessary to engage the wider community and sustain that commitment over the long term.

KCCI was built on an innovative theory of economic development. However, it lacked a clear set of connections between its specific projects and the broader changes it sought to achieve. In addition, the initiative did not articulate its rationale about the ways in which change could or would occur. In other words, KCCI knew what its destination was but did not have a roadmap for getting there.

2. Data and Methods

The data for this assessment derive from three sources: an analysis of census data for the three KCCI communities; a survey of community catalysts; and phone and in-person interviews with a number of KCCI participants, including Knight program directors, local organizers, CCG staff, and community catalysts.

Census data

In order to compare our information on community catalysts to the “pool” from which they were drawn, we created a data file of adults in the three metropolitan areas. These data derived from the 2000 decennial census and the 2005 and 2006 American Community Survey—an annual one-percent sample of the American population. The ACS file included data on one hundred, thirty-two thousand individuals. In order to increase the reliability of the estimates, data from 2005 and 2006 were pooled.

Catalyst surveys

The research team conducted two on-line surveys of the community catalysts: one in September 2007 and a second in March 2008. Questions on the first survey related to their motivation for becoming catalysts, preparation for the seminar, and their assessment of the seminar and their subsequent work as members of an action team. Questions on the second survey related to catalysts’ assessment of their action team projects and their views about the lasting impact of KCCI on their involvement in civic affairs. The surveys were pre-tested with several catalysts and the Knight program directors and distributed on Survey Monkey.

Sixty-two catalysts began the first survey, of whom fifty-two completed all sections. Of these, nineteen (thirty-seven percent) were from Duluth/Superior; seventeen (thirty-three percent) were from Tallahassee; and sixteen (thirty-one percent) were from Charlotte. Forty catalysts began the second survey, of whom thirty-four completed all sections. Between the first and second surveys, the number of completed surveys declined by seven in Charlotte, five in Duluth/Superior, and one in Tallahassee.

Most of the questions on the surveys were open-ended. The research team coded these answers into standard categories. For a number of questions relating to the catalysts’ assessment of aspects of the initiative, a three-level coding scheme (positive, mixed, negative) was used. Results were downloaded into a statistical package for analysis.

Site visits

During September and October 2007, a member of the evaluation team made a site visit to each of the KCCI communities. In consultation with the Knight program directors, we set up interviews with a number of catalysts and local organizers. In addition to individual interviews, in two of the cities, we were able to attend meetings of action teams and one all-catalyst meeting.

The catalyst interviews were structured around three topics: their assessment of the progress of KCCI in their community, elements of the initiative that had either supported or undermined their efforts as catalysts, and ideas about how one might judge the overall success of KCCI.

3. The KCCI Communities

The three communities chosen for the initiative represent a range of experiences in terms of population and economic growth. The two Sunbelt communities—Charlotte and Tallahassee—had enjoyed rapid growth since 1990, while Lake Superior’s Twin Port communities—Duluth and Superior—have lagged. Since 2000, however, Tallahassee’s economy—historically tied to higher education and state government—has stagnated as well.

Between 1990 and 2000, the populations of Charlotte and Tallahassee’s metropolitan areas grew by twenty-nine and twenty-one percent, respectively. Duluth, during the same period, experienced a population decline of two percent. Between 2000 and 2006, Charlotte continued its rapid growth expanding by seventeen percent and Duluth continued to stagnate, its population declining by three percent. Tallahassee, however, experienced a sharp slowdown in its population growth; between 2000 and 2006, the city’s population increased by only six percent.

Population change 1990-2006, KCCI communities

City	Population			Change	
	1990	2000	2006	1990-2000	2000-2006
Charlotte	419,558	540,828	630,478	28.9	16.6
Duluth	85,493	86,918	84,167	1.7	-3.2
Tallahassee	124,773	150,624	159,012	20.7	5.6

Source: US Census 1990, 2000, city estimates 2006.

Since 1990, virtually all categories of Charlotte and Tallahassee’s occupational structure experienced increases. In Charlotte, managerial and professional occupations and service occupations grew most rapidly; while in Tallahassee, production, craft, and repair and extractive occupations—which included construction—grew the most. In Duluth/Superior, between 1990 and 2005, professional and managerial occupations and extractive occupations enjoyed positive growth, seven and 125 percent respectively, while other occupational categories declined.

Since 2000, however, growth has been spottier in Duluth/Superior and Tallahassee. In the Twin Ports, only extractive occupations enjoyed significant growth. In Florida’s capital, professional and managerial and technical, sales, and administrative support employment actually fell while manual occupations increased.

The term *creative worker* has no single definition. Richard Florida has used a relatively expansive definition of the creative class in his work. He differentiates a “super-creative core”—that includes “scientists and engineers, university professors, poets and novelists, artists, entertainers, actors, designers and architects, nonfiction writers, editors, cultural figures, think-tank researchers, analysts, and other opinion-makers”—from “creative professionals” in a range of knowledge-intensive industries including financial services, health care, law, and business. Here we use an adapted version of Mount Auburn Associates’ definition of creative industries based on census industry categories.

In 2000 the creative industries composed a bit over three percent of the labor force of the three KCCI communities. However, the distribution of creative jobs varied across the three cities. Charlotte’s creative workforce was overrepresented in specialized design and independent artists, while in Tallahassee, architecture and advertising were relatively large. Duluth’s creative industrial profile had a traditional tilt with publishing, radio and television broadcasting, and museums and galleries dominating.

Creative industries, KCCI metropolitan areas, 2000

<i>Industries</i>	<i>Charlotte-Gastonia- Rock Hill, NC-SC</i>	<i>Duluth-Superior, MN/WI</i>	<i>Tallahassee, FL</i>
Newspaper publishing	9.5	20.0	7.1
Other publishing	5.9	9.8	5.4
Motion picture, video	4.4	4.4	4.7
Sound recording	1.0	0.0	0.7
Radio and TV broadcasting	12.5	20.8	15.2
Architecture	28.3	18.1	35.7
Specialized design	7.1	4.6	3.5
Advertising	10.3	9.0	16.2
Independent artists	17.6	6.2	9.8
Museums, galleries, historical sites	3.5	7.2	1.7
All creative industries	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	25,392	3,335	5,146
Percent of labor force	3.1	3.3	3.3

Source: Authors’ calculations from Ruggles et al 2008

Given the importance to creative class theory of attracting new talent, we analyzed data on migration patterns. Using the available census data for 2005 and 2006, we divided the labor force into three groups: those who moved to the KCCI community from elsewhere in the past year, those who were not born in the state (so presumably moved at some point in the past), and those who were born in the state. In both Tallahassee and Charlotte, about two-thirds of the labor force were born out of state or moved in during the past year, while only a third of Duluth/Superior’s labor force were not Minnesota or Wisconsin natives.

Workers in creative industries were less likely to be natives in all three cities, although only in Charlotte was this underrepresentation significant. Non-natives were overrepresented in most creative industries across the three communities. The greatest concentrations of recent migrants were in publishing (other than newspapers) and sound recording. Among other migrants, specialized design and advertising industry workers had the highest representation. Interestingly, the classic creative workers— independent artists—were actually more likely to be born in their state of residence than the general workforce.

Migration status of creative industry workers and entire labor force, KCCI metropolitan areas, 2000

<i>Metropolitan area</i>	<i>Industry</i>	Migration status			<i>Total</i>	<i>N</i>
		<i>Move last year</i>	<i>Other mover</i>	<i>Native</i>		
Charlotte-Gastonia-Rock Hill, NC-SC	Creative industries	22.0%	51.3%	26.7%	100.0%	32,257
	Total labor force	21.1%	42.8%	36.1%	100.0%	925,786
Duluth-Superior, MN/WI	Creative industries	12.9%	25.5%	61.5%	100.0%	3,092
	Total labor force	14.6%	18.3%	67.1%	100.0%	94,944
Tallahassee, FL	Creative industries	27.7%	36.4%	36.0%	100.0%	5,954
	Total labor force	23.7%	38.4%	37.9%	100.0%	155,402

Source: Author’s calculations from Ruggles et al 2008.

These patterns of economic and population change provided an important context for KCCI. In Charlotte, economic growth has been a given part of the city’s experience for many years. While civic leaders certainly are aware of the importance of economic development, other issues—like the quality of life and inter-group relations—are often more compelling. On the flip side, economic and population decline are strongly embedded in the civic life of the Twin Ports. While attracted to creative class ideas, the catalysts did not expect their work to provide a quick fix to the region’s economic challenges. As a result, issues of civic leadership and social exclusion often displaced economic development in the catalysts’ world view.

The immediate history of Tallahassee provided the best fit for Richard Florida’s ideas. After many decades of population and economic expansion, in the past five years—as state government and public universities experienced constrained growth—the city’s vibrant economy has gone flat. This slowdown has created a situation in which the young, well-educated “products” of the city’s leading industry—higher education—provide a key, underutilized asset. Creative class theory’s stress on retaining and attracting this population group provided a blueprint for reestablishing a pattern of growth that had only recently deserted the city.

4. KCCI Implementation

The Knight Creative Communities Initiative consisted of four stages:

- recruitment and selection of community catalysts;
- catalysts' preparation;
- a two-day seminar; and
- action team projects.

This section addresses the catalysts' experience with the first three stages. The next section examines the action team experience in more detail.

Recruitment and selection of community catalysts

The centerpiece of KCCI was the selection of a group of approximately thirty community members in each region to serve as volunteer catalysts. The catalysts were trained by the Creative Class Group in the theories and evidence of Richard Florida's approach. By the end of CCG's two-day seminar, the catalysts formed "action teams," which were tasked with completing a set of projects between May 2007 and March 2008. In other words, this group of volunteers was responsible for virtually the entire project with relatively little financial or technical support.

Catalysts learned about KCCI from a variety of sources. Nearly half of the catalysts for whom we have data learned through the newspaper or Internet. Another third learned from either Knight program directors or other organizational contacts. The remainder learned through personal contacts.

Not surprisingly, catalysts who learned about KCCI through the newspaper or the web knew fewer catalysts before the initiative than those who learned through a contact. The differences, however, were smaller than expected. Those who learned through the newspaper or web knew, on average, three or four other catalysts before KCCI. Those who learned through an organizational contact knew seven catalysts before KCCI. Thus, the catalyst networks appeared to build on existing social networks in the three communities.

This observation was confirmed through interviews. Each city has had a variety of civic engagement initiatives over the past several years. It appears that many catalysts were *joiners* who had been involved in previous efforts. This reality has two implications for KCCI. First, although CCG hoped to mobilize creative people who had not previously been engaged in civic improvement efforts, it was essentially attracting many of the people who were already civically active. Second, many catalysts complained that CCG did not acknowledge that it was building on a number of existing assets, including these earlier efforts and the experience of the catalysts.

A *host committee* made up of significant members of each community reviewed the applications and selected the catalysts. One point that was emphasized by members of the CCG staff, program directors, and some others involved in the process was an interest in selecting catalysts who were ethnically diverse and who represented younger members of the creative class who might not already be involved in civic affairs. This view, however, wasn't unanimous. Some local organizers hoped the catalysts would be

more seasoned and influential. From this perspective, the time commitment required by CCG may have deterred some from applying to become catalysts.

Our only consistent measure of ethnicity comes from the respondents to the catalyst survey. Of the forty-five catalysts who responded to the ethnicity question, eighty-seven percent were white and seven percent were black. The twelve percent of Duluth/Superior respondents who were not white was actually higher than the nonwhite representation among professionals and managers in the Twin Ports in the 2005 and 2006 American Community Survey (four percent). However, the nonwhite catalyst figures for Charlotte (seventeen percent) and Tallahassee (twelve percent) were lower than the nonwhite representation of professionals and managers in those metropolitan areas in 2005 and 2006. The representation of African Americans, in particular, was much lower among survey respondents than in the overall professional and managerial population.

It may be that respondents to the survey were more likely to be white than the catalysts generally. If this were the case, the organizers may have had greater success than the survey results suggest. Yet, it seems likely that survey respondents were more engaged in KCCI than non-respondents. This suggests that non-white catalysts may have become less engaged in KCCI after their selection.

The age profile of catalysts (as reflected by the sixty-three percent of catalysts for whom we had age information) was heavily weighted by 35-to-54 year-olds. A number of the younger catalysts commented that younger adults were less likely to be included, a point supported by the evidence. Duluth/Superior was the only community in which catalysts between twenty-five and thirty-four were over-represented compared to the age structure of all professionals and managers in the metropolitan area.

KCCI's goal of selecting a pool of younger, ethnically diverse, and civically unconnected catalysts was only partially achieved. Non-response bias may explain part of this finding, although if young, nonwhite catalysts were less likely to respond to the survey, that may itself be notable. It may also be a product of the relatively short period of time the communities had to complete the selection process. A number of people involved in the process opined that they had done a good job of creating an applicant pool, but they generally acknowledged that time was a significant constraint.

Catalysts' preparation

Catalysts were expected to undertake two types of preparation for the seminar. They were expected to review an information packet of materials on creative class theory written by Richard Florida. They were also expected to host a *working social* with local residents to discuss Florida's theories and how they might apply to their community. In addition, they were asked to attend an initial meeting of the catalysts to outline the plan for KCCI.

Participants generally found this process satisfying. Most catalysts did some reading (although many acknowledged that they did not get through much of the material) and developed a method of discussing the initiative with a group of friends.

Several catalysts expressed concern that the information gathered through the working socials was not integrated into the two-day seminar. Several catalysts felt that these socials had been a very valuable exercise, but that the two-day seminar did not allow for a two-way exchange between CCG staff and the local participants.

Two-day seminar

The major role of the Creative Class Group in KCCI was conducting a two-day seminar attended by community catalysts and the local coordinators of the initiative. Although catalysts and local organizers had a variety of reactions to the seminar, the balance of opinion was decidedly negative.

The overall structure of the seminar consisted of a keynote address by Florida, followed by the presentation of data on the individual community (compared to other communities on which CCG had developed data). Later during the first day, CCG facilitated a number of breakout sessions during which the four T's were discussed in light of the local data. A large part of the seminars was devoted to discussing and selecting projects on which the catalysts would work and the division of catalysts among the projects. The seminar culminated with the presentation of the projects to an audience.

Seminar preparation

As they had done in El Paso and Tacoma, Florida and his associates gave local organizers an extensive list of requirements for the two-day seminar, including the exact days of the seminar, the local accommodations for CCG staff, and the setting and catering requirements. As with the recruitment and selection process, local organizers felt great time pressure in preparing for the seminar and believe that insufficient time was allocated.

The funding of the two-day seminar was unusual. Although CCG received funding from the Foundation for KCCI, CCG staff informed local organizers that they would be responsible for all costs associated with the seminar. Apparently, only one of the three Knight program directors was aware of this fact before planning was well underway.

Friction from the planning of the seminar continued to influence the trajectory of KCCI. Local organizers pointed to two sources of conflict. First, although local organizers were required to fund all costs associated with the seminar, they were not consulted on the arrangements or the budget for those costs. While many of the arrangements for CCG staff were not outlandish by corporate standards, they exceeded those common in the nonprofit sector. For example, CCG billed local organizers for private limousines in both the KCCI communities and the departure cities. On another occasion, a local organizer was required to send a check to a travel agent for air travel before the seminar rather than receiving an expense report afterwards.

The timeliness and quality of seminar materials also contributed to friction between local organizers and CCG. In one community, the original seminar materials arrived only days before the seminar. In the opinion of the organizers, the materials included errors that needed to be corrected before they could be duplicated. Because of the time squeeze, local organizers were required to use a higher-cost duplication service that significantly added to the overall cost of the seminar.

Local organizers in two of the three KCCI communities came away from the experience with two strong impressions of CCG. First, they perceived CCG staff as "arrogant." The seminar was not a collaborative enterprise; local organizers saw themselves as simply following the orders and paying the bills of CCG. Second, for a number of local organizers, the preparation experience raised questions about the competence of CCG

staff. One organizer asked why CCG couldn't pay its travel agent; another asked why materials were late and poorly prepared.

Florida's presentation

The seminar opened with a presentation of creative class theory that CCG staff described as a shortened version of Richard Florida's typical speech. This was the extent of Florida's involvement in the seminar, although he was usually present for at least half of the first day. Florida's involvement generated extremely negative responses on the part of the catalysts. Only nineteen percent of respondents to the catalyst survey rated his involvement positively, while sixty-four percent saw it in a negative light. Most of the positive comments focused on the quality and vitality of the presentation. As one catalyst noted:

Richard was charismatic and inspiring. He got in and got out—but that is expected. He gave time to individuals if they wanted to chat. I thought he did a very good job and was personable and accessible.

Negative comments did not challenge this perception so much as question Florida's actual involvement with KCCI and how individualized his presentation was to the communities.

He did not have a role aside from a cameo appearance. His theory is what we are testing and hoping to achieve with our efforts. I didn't expect him to be there the entire time, but I didn't expect to get handed off entirely either.

A canned speech ... I expected much more direct interaction and guidance from him.

Richard flew in for a few hours and flew out so his role in the seminar was minor.

He did a "drive-by" appearance that seemed to be about 45 minutes in length and then was gone to pursue other things.

Presentation and discussion of data

The detailed presentation of the four T's and the discussion of community data were the parts of the seminar that participants found the most satisfying. Nearly half of the catalysts were positive about the discussion of the four T's, compared to only eleven percent who expressed negative opinions. Among the positive comments were:

I thought the discussion about what the four T's were was good. I think the link to economic development could have been highlighted more. I think more concrete examples of the importance of the four T's might have been helpful. I think this is clear in Richard Florida's writings though.

The T's seemed to be explained well. Overall, I thought that the seminar did not afford enough time for the catalysts to interact and discuss with the community. We were pushed (and are still pushed) to create initiatives without thorough discussion of the challenges faced in our community.

Yes, the data helped me understand more of what the theory of creative class is all about. I think many of us came to the seminar with our own agendas and the possibilities for moving those agendas forward became more evident as we

began to break down any barriers that might have existed prior to coming together.

Roughly forty percent of catalysts had a mixed response to these elements of the seminar. Typically, they saw the value of the concepts but felt that the presentation and discussion could have been more organized or more skillfully pursued.

I think in most cases the four T's were adequately explained. Some of the background research done on our market was questionable, and in some cases false. There was some disappointment among the catalysts that some of this research appeared on the shoddy side. I think more time could be spent explaining how these four areas correspond to a region and what areas need to be "propped up" by the catalysts would be helpful.

Somewhat, I think further research by the facilitators of our area to draw out examples would have been helpful. They were explained as they were in the text and that was it. They are self explanatory to a degree but relevance of them is key, which was not provided. More experience, accurate data of our area and a greater understanding of it as opposed to a drive around upon arrival.

I think they were adequately explained. How to incorporate them better into the community may not have been explained as well. I realize that it is a case of tolerance breeds tolerance, technology begets technology, but how to better foster these traits wasn't explained very well.

One issue that generated concern among many participants was the accuracy and timeliness of the data analysis produced by CCG. Roughly a third of respondents to the catalyst survey had a positive response to the data, a third had a negative response, and a third had a mixed response. These proportions varied by city; half of the Tallahassee catalysts had a positive assessment of the data, compared to only twenty-four percent of Duluth/Superior and twenty percent of Charlotte catalysts.

Catalysts expressed concerns that they did not receive the data ahead of time and therefore could not study them. Others asked why the data were not documented or the categories explained. Others were quite upset about the comparison communities that CCG used. Finally, some catalysts wondered how recent or accurate the data were.

No, there was not much time and I did not feel that it was in much depth. I thought that had we seen this before we might have been able to add more to it and make it more detailed. I think this was a missed opportunity to involve local people in prep of this data and/or share more info early so we could be more prepared. There was not much time dedicated to this.

The data was outdated. Particularly, I noticed some of the employment numbers were clearly wrong, as we've experienced growth in some areas and decline in others which wasn't represented.

Apparently the data from our community was a small sample which brought into question its accuracy. A question which several of us raised was what came first—the four T's, or the great city. Another question was whether the data used to measure tolerance was appropriate. This question was brushed aside with the statement that it was the best measure available.

Yes, there were questions about the data, and there was a bit of a defensive attitude taken by the researcher when his numbers were questioned. This is natural when you are "called on the carpet" about work that you have done. However, it did cause some catalysts to question all of the research and numbers that were presented at the seminar. It made for a rocky start to our relationship with the Creative Class Group in some regards.

First, there was NOT a significant part of the seminar devoted to the presentation of the data. This was a glaring weakness of the seminar. We had all of this information in our folder that was not covered or explained. I had looked at the data in advance but did not get the explanations and interpretations that I expected. Yes, I question the sources and accuracy of the data. As someone who does comparable work professionally, it was not an analysis that I would be willing to trot out in a public setting. I hate to say this, but the presenting group were "not ready for prime time" for an effort such as this one. They did not inspire confidence. They were clearly at one remove. And so on.

More than any particular deficiency in the data, their presentation during the seminar raised concerns among participants about the skill and competence of CCG staff. Many catalysts felt that CCG staff was unprepared to have a dialogue with them. The "defensiveness" noted by many raised concerns that, as one catalyst put it, the staff was not "ready for prime time."

Project selection

A significant part of the two-day seminars was devoted to identifying and selecting projects. The process consisted of a period of brainstorming ideas for projects followed by several rounds of "passion voting" in which catalysts had a number of votes that they could either spread over a variety of projects or concentrate on one particular project.

Overall, the catalysts expressed very negative views of the project selection process. As with other parts of the initiative, there seemed to be an emphasis on speed for speed's sake, which left many catalysts feeling coerced. As one catalyst noted, "I thought this process was awful. It seemed almost random and not thought through enough for such important decisions that would drive the time spent for a full year by thirty-one people. People expressed concerns with this process during the process, but it seemed like these concerns were ignored."

Overall, only nineteen percent of respondents to the catalyst survey viewed the project selection process in a positive light, while sixty-four percent viewed it negatively. The most common negative comments noted that the process was too rushed and would have benefited from a period of reflection before projects were selected.

Another aspect of the project selection process that concerned many catalysts was the requirement that each project fit into one of the four T's. As another catalyst put it: "One better idea would have been to identify three to four projects that crosscut all four T's, rather than projects for each T." Others expressed concern that the "T" that needed the most work—often identified as "tolerance"—was neglected by the selection process.

Several catalysts expressed concern about the skill of the facilitators:

I am very familiar with decision making processes like the one used that are meant to be evidence-based and participatory. The facilitators were not

particularly good at their jobs. There was not enough time allowed for the process to function properly. There was little effort to tie the various projects into an integrated whole. There was too much confusion. Steps were not fully or adequately explained and instructions were difficult to understand and follow.

I was frankly very disappointed in how the projects were selected. We were assured the process was well thought out and effective, but I had no confidence in it. Felt more like a frenzy and desire to stay on schedule than take to the time to develop the ideas sufficiently.

I think the consensus was that there was quite a push by the Creative Class Group to have the projects "cut and dried" by the end of the two-day seminar. In my mind, this was not possible and could actually have led to inferior projects.

I think the process was a canned approach to achieve their outcome for the day. The selection was forced, and poorly forced at that. The Florida team demonstrated no skills in facilitation and group process.

A final problem had to do with the number of projects. While ideally only three or four projects would have been chosen, in one community seven projects were launched. The proliferation of projects reduced the number of catalysts in each project group and subsequently created both resource and motivational issues for several of the action teams.

Were the catalysts prepared to undertake the initiative?

In September 2007, approximately five months after the two-day seminars, we asked the catalysts if the seminar had prepared them to undertake the individual projects. Only nine percent of the catalysts who responded to the survey responded that they were prepared; sixty-nine percent answered the question negatively.

One of the significant explanations of the lack of preparation was related to the gap between creative class theory's broad vision and a concrete theory of change that could guide the groups in their work:

While the seminar prepared us to comment on the overall strategy and thought behind KCCI, when speaking to people regarding the initiatives, I do not think that it was particularly useful for the hands-on implementation of the specific projects. I would add a component whereby catalysts in other communities who are currently implementing, or have already implemented, projects speak to the group to give them an accurate idea of the amount of time and commitment that is truly necessary to create an initiative and make it successful.

All we were able to do was identify initiatives but the next steps were and, to some extent remain, elusive. I would add more time to clearly presenting the data and tying it to the theory. I would spread out the decision-making process. I would recommend taking three days to get where you want to go—and include making it very clear what the next steps are.

No. I feel they should have a 'cookbook' with techniques for addressing commonly held issues with execution of projects (e.g., fundraising, building a team, etc.)

Another set of concerns related to the logistics of the seminar. In this view, there simply was not enough time to decide rationally on projects and divide into groups. Suddenly, at the end of the second day, several catalysts felt that they had been thrust into a group whose interests they might not fully share. A number of catalysts believed that a better process would have been to reconvene the catalysts several weeks later to make final decisions about projects and team membership:

Not really. A big push was to get people involved right away—even before we really knew what we were doing. This seems to be a recipe for failure.

No, there was insufficient time to create sound foundations for the initiatives. If I were to re-design the process, I would have the first two days built around learning about and discussion of the community. I would then bring folks back to create the initiatives. The initiatives could be built around the knowledge gained in the first two days and subsequent research in the community.

After the voting—there was little strategy time. If you could have a "do over" try this—have the seminar and a follow-up meeting two weeks later to do the strategy planning and reevaluate if—after some time away from the crowd—they really believe this is worthy of a year's commitment.

The two-day seminar was a central element of KCCI. It was the only opportunity for the CCG team to visit the KCCI communities and develop a relationship with the catalysts. CCG had conceptualized the seminars as critical to developing the catalysts' skill and knowledge around creative class theory. Finally, the seminars were intended to motivate the catalysts and send them into the planning phase of their initiatives with energy and a sense of purpose.

From the standpoint of participants, the seminars were only partially successful in achieving these goals. While the catalysts were generally impressed with the staff's knowledge of creative class theory and their use of data, they were concerned about Florida's engagement in KCCI, the process for selecting projects, and their overall preparation to move to the next stage.

During our site visits to the three KCCI communities, catalysts confided that they left the seminar with a determination to see the projects through, even though they felt that CCG had not held up its end of the bargain in preparing them for this task. This was hardly the best frame of mind for a group of volunteers about to undertake a set of challenging projects.

5. Action Team Experience

There are at least two ways to read the action team experience. Based on our survey respondents, the community catalysts generally remained excited about the action team projects. At the same time, survey responses and key informant interviews suggest that a significant share of the community catalysts disengaged from the projects. In this respect, KCCI was probably fairly typical of volunteer efforts, especially ones that require a significant time commitment.

Local theories of change

One striking feature of the project stage of the initiative has been the divergent experience of the three KCCI communities. KCCI did not take place in a vacuum; each project was influenced by the perspective of Foundation program directors, other collaborators, and other initiatives underway in the three communities.

KCCI did not provide the catalysts with a theory of change that they could use to guide their work. In the absence of a single theory, the different KCCI communities developed their own sense of how to pursue their work.

In Duluth/Superior, KCCI began on the heels of an effort to build social capital in the region, an initiative sponsored by the community foundation and in which a number of community catalysts had been involved. As a result, many aspects of KCCI in Duluth connect back to the need to develop trust and engagement across the region. This was combined, at times, with a focus on *social entrepreneurship* that focused on innovation and networking. To take one example, the ArtWorks project is focused on building bridges between the arts community and the business community in the Twin Ports, an effort that is supported by other local philanthropies.

In Tallahassee, local organizers were more explicit about their model for change. In the late 1990s, members of the civic community had initiated a dialogue on the future of transportation and environmental quality, called Blueprint 2000. The process culminated in the successful extension of a local sales tax to fund transportation and water quality improvements in the region. The success of Blueprint 2000 resulted from a deliberate effort to broker a working relationship between groups that had previously worked at cross-purposes. The success in overcoming these barriers fits closely with Clarence Stone's concept of civic capacity.

In all three KCCI communities, catalysts pointed to other leadership training efforts in their regions as models. These efforts typically focused on building skills and connections between participants rather than producing particular outcomes. By contrast, KCCI spent little systematic effort of these aspects of civic engagement.

The different theories of change had implications, as well, for the definition of outputs—that is, the most immediate results—of the initiative. In Tallahassee, from day one, local organizers expected the action teams to accomplish a tangible goal during the year and after that to have an ongoing presence. In contrast, the project director in Charlotte generally discouraged action teams from becoming nonprofits. There, the focus was on bringing “new blood” into civic leadership and giving the catalysts experience in what it takes to accomplish a particular goal. Thus, in Charlotte, the particular outputs of projects were less important than the longer-range outcome of shaping the character of civic leadership over the next several decades. Duluth represented a point somewhere

between these extremes. While most of the projects have continued in some form, the idea of developing civic leaders and an inclusive civic dialogue seemed to drive the initiative.

These differences in goals certainly affected the immediate outcomes. In Tallahassee, where forming a nonprofit was the goal, two nonprofits and a nongovernmental advisory board emerged. In Charlotte, where forming a nonprofit was not a goal, no projects did so. In Duluth, several of the projects found nonprofit homes in previously existing organizations and several may eventually spawn new nonprofits.

The diversity of change theories is not necessarily a bad thing. It underlines the fact that the catalysts were a creative and resourceful group of residents. In fact, the diversity provides an interesting evaluation opportunity. Local participants in all of the communities agree that the ultimate standard of success for KCCI would be its long-term impact on economic development and the development of civic infrastructure. Whether the route to these goals leads through establishing formal organizations or fomenting a culture of civic involvement is an empirical question. The evolution of KCCI provides a natural experiment for tracking the relative success of these distinctive strategies.

KCCI action team projects

A total of fifteen separate projects emerged from the two-day seminars—four in Tallahassee, five in Duluth/Superior, and six in Charlotte. In addition, each community had a communications committee. In Duluth/Superior it served as a kind of executive committee with representatives from each action team. In the other communities, it served a stand-alone function. The table below summarizes the original goals, outcomes, and current status of the action teams.

In **Tallahassee** three of the four action teams had ongoing activities as of April 2008. The Jump Start Plan X team never fully decided on a plan and suspended work in September 2007. The other three teams developed plans to form nonprofits and seek funding for on-going projects.

- *The Tallahassee Film Festival* began with the ambition of staging an international film festival. Over time, the reality of what it would take to do a festival at that level sunk in, and the organizers realized that a festival focused on student work in the home of one of the top film schools in the country made sense. The “first annual” festival took place in May 2008.
- *Greenovation* began with a focus on promoting sustainability in the community. The project started quickly with a variety of initiatives, including a park-and-ride experiment with the local transit authority and a recycling program coordinated with the city and county governments. In the end, the project created a nonprofit—Sustainable Tallahassee—with a focus on promoting green construction methods and materials.

KCCI community	Action team	Goal	Outcome	Status as of April 2008
Duluth/Superior	Art Works	Event to highlight art and commerce	Event held in March 2008	Spawned new set of initiatives
	Brain gain	Attract and retain college grads	Meetings of area college administrators	Discussions continuing
	Mix It Up	Bring diverse groups of residents together	Held several dinners; plan cultural competency training	Continuing
	Pathways	Events, art bike racks	Train-bike event; design of bike racks project	Has funding to complete set of bike racks
	We Mean Green (Sustainable Twin Ports)	Promote sustainable development	Merged with Sustainable Duluth; initiate "early adopters" project	Has funding to initiate first cohort of early adopters
Tallahassee	Get Gaines Going	Develop cultural corridor along Gaines Street	Involved in planning effort; green roof initiative	Advocating long-term arts' focused development
	Greenovation	Recycling partnership, park and ride program	Promote green construction methods and products	Sustainable Tallahassee—new nonprofit
	Jump Start Plan X	Develop business incubator	Suspended operation	No longer operating
	Tallahassee Film Festival	Stage international film festival	First festival, May 2008	New nonprofit seeks funding to make TFF an annual, student-focused event
Charlotte	e-Merging Arts	Develop market for local artists	Held show in Fall 2007	No further plans
	Creativity Festival	Weekend creativity festival	Partnered with schools in promoting competitions for students and professionals	No further plans
	The Blog	Develop online civic dialogue	Gathered information	No further plans
	Green 100	Stage event to promote green cars	Research led to "green" car show and hand-off to existing org	Major international event likely
	International Corridor	Undertake place-making along Central Avenue	Funding found for artist to work with students to create mosaics for trash cans at bus stops	Project continuing
	Third Space	Initiating "coworking" spaces	Gathered information	No further plans

KCCI action team projects, 2007-2008

- *Get Gaines Going.* Gaines Street has been a target for redevelopment for years. The goal of GGG was to stimulate positive action by the players to create a cultural hub in the area. As the project evolved, the original focus on doing something quickly changed into a longer-term development focus. The knot of issues involved—environmental challenges, existing incompatible uses, and political clashes—were not going to disappear in twelve months.

Duluth/Superior experienced the greatest variety in outcomes from the action team projects. Because of Duluth's size, the initiative attracted a great deal of public attention. In addition, the new mayor—elected in November 2007—was closely associated with many of the catalysts and other supporters of the initiative. As a result, principles of KCCI were evident throughout the Mayoral campaign.

The Twin Ports began the initiative with five action teams, all of which were active to some extent as of April 2008.

- *Art Works!* began with the goal of increasing the connections between artists and the business sector of the Twin Ports by sponsoring a conference—funded by several local philanthropies—on the relationship of the arts and business. The summit, held in March 2008, spawned eight new initiative teams with a variety of goals: forming a Twin Ports Art Alliance, creating an arts festival, creating a website with artist job opportunities, organizing a public arts coalition, creating an arts corridor, and promoting cultural tourism. The conference also endorsed cooperating with the Blandin Community Leadership Program to expand training of cultural sector leaders, underlining the importance of leadership development to many of the KCCI action teams.
- *We Mean Green* began with the goal of advocating sustainable business practices in the Twin Ports private sector. In fall 2007, its members began to collaborate with Sustainable Duluth, a partnership that led to a merger and the creation of Sustainable Twin Ports. The new organization received a grant from the community foundation to initiate an Early Adopters program to work with local businesses interested in using green strategies.
- *Pathways* goal was to expand connectivity and accessibility for cyclists and other non-motorized transportation uses. Its major activities during the year were sponsoring a train and bike excursion in the fall and the commissioning of artists' designed bike racks (funded by the community foundation). The bike rack project is still in its design phase; the group hopes to have the bike racks installed in the next six months.
- *Mix It Up* focused on promoting diversity and overcoming historical divisions within the community by holding a series of dinners with a diverse composition. Several dinners were organized during the year, and the group is continuing its work.
- *Brain Gain* hoped to address the difficulty the Twin Ports have in retaining their young, college-educated population. Their strategy involved coordinating the activities of different colleges and universities.

Charlotte took a distinctive approach to its action teams. Rather than focusing on the specific accomplishments of the teams, the overall goal was to connect a new generation of community leaders to existing resources. As a result, most teams finished their work in the spring of 2008 with no plans for the future.

- *e-Merging Arts* sought to expand the market for visual artists in Charlotte. It held an exhibit at a new housing development, and the developer hired a curator to keep locally created art in his projects.
- *Creativity Festival* sought to initiate a local festival. The catalysts had a variety of discussions with possible partners in the area.
- *The Blog* sought to develop an online discussion of civic issues and gathered information and assessed the possibilities for moving ahead.
- *Green 100* began with the ambitious idea of having a car race for green cars that would complement the city's NASCAR focus. In the end, the team's research led them to a green car show. They identified an existing organization that is now planning to develop what could become a major international event..
- *International Corridors* sought to use a place-making strategy to build community between older and newer residents—many of whom are immigrants—along Central Avenue. After investigating a variety of activities—banners, bus-shelters—the team developed and received funding for a project in which an artist from the neighborhood would work with local high school students to design a set of mosaic trash cans for bus stops along the route.
- *Third Space* began with the idea of developing “co-working” spaces in Charlotte. Team members restricted themselves to gathering information and assessing interest in the idea.

6. Action Team Assessment

Analyzing the September 2007 surveys and speaking with catalysts individually, the evaluation team was impressed with the continuing level of energy and enthusiasm among the catalysts. While many projects ran into problems as they developed, very few ceased to function. Most importantly, the catalysts with whom we spoke expressed a deep sense of responsibility to see the projects through.

Sustained commitment

Many of the catalysts reported that attendance in their action team had declined over time. In a sense, the patterns were quite predictable. Projects that had initial success retained their catalysts and attracted new members; projects that struggled at the start often lost energy and members.

Overall, according to the September 2007 survey, there were sizable differences in the level of catalysts' time commitment to the projects. Among the forty-seven respondents for whom we have data, the catalysts devoted an average of sixteen hours a month. Yet, this number was highly skewed: half of catalysts reported they worked ten hours or less; twenty percent of catalysts reported working five hours or less; while another twenty percent reported working twenty-six hours or more per month. In the March 2008 survey, the average hours had increased to nineteen per month, but half of catalysts worked less than ten hours per month and another twenty percent working twenty-three or more hours per month.

The catalysts' commitment to their action team projects is best seen in the context of their overall commitment to civic affairs. A number of the local organizers of KCCI hoped the initiative would enlist a new cohort of civic activists. They hoped they would bring new energy and diversity (defined by age and ethnicity) into the civic life of the communities. As we have seen, although the initial catalysts were more diverse and younger, those who ended up as the most active KCCI participants tended to be older and white.

Catalysts appear, as well, to have already been quite active in civic affairs. On the March 2008 survey, we asked respondents about their civic commitments before KCCI started. Seventy percent of the respondents reported that they had either been highly involved (regularly taking leadership roles) or high-to-moderately involved (regularly participated) in civic affairs. Only five percent reported that they rarely participated in civic affairs. The Twin Ports' catalysts were the most likely (eighty-six percent) and Tallahassee's catalysts the least likely (14 percent) to have been highly involved in civic affairs before KCCI.

This assessment was supported by the reported number of hours catalysts volunteered per month before the start of KCCI, which ranged from an average of thirty in Charlotte to fifteen in Duluth/Superior. During the course of KCCI, the level of involvement in non-KCCI activities dropped a bit—by about five hours per month in Duluth/Superior to less than an hour per month in the other communities. However, when combined with their KCCI commitments, there was a considerable increase in the catalysts' community involvement. Overall, their total hours nearly doubled (from an average of twenty-one in 2006 to thirty-eight hours per month in early 2008). The biggest average increase was in Tallahassee, where total civic hours increased by twenty-five hours; the smallest increase was in Charlotte where the increase was a bit over seven hours.

This pattern does not seem particularly unexpected for a volunteer effort, but it does serve to remind us that KCCI *was* a volunteer effort, and for that matter, a volunteer effort with relatively little external support.

Silo-ed

CCG's rush to identify projects and form action teams had an unanticipated effect that came out in our interviews with catalysts. Catalysts complained that they no longer felt a part of the broader initiative. This perception was less strong in Duluth/Superior, where regular all-team meetings were routine. But even there, catalysts perceived that their ownership was less with the initiative than with their particular project.

There are a variety of explanations for this feeling of isolation. The catalysts generally describe the two-day seminar as intense and hectic. They were excited about the prospects of their group but did not have time to form bonds with other catalysts. As discussed above, because of the method of choosing projects and forming teams, many of the catalysts saw their teams as an imperfect fit for their interests.

Yet, the perception of isolation may have had a deeper cause. As we noted earlier, while creative class theory provides a clear idea about goals for KCCI, it provides little in the way of guidance about how to pursue those goals. Many of the catalysts expressed disappointment that this gap was not addressed during the two-day seminar, which explains the high proportion of catalysts who believed that they were not ready to pursue their projects.

Whatever its cause, the perception of isolation and lack of support was common among catalysts. The evaluation team shared these findings with program directors, who made "mid-course corrections" to address the issue.

At the end of the initiative, many of the catalysts continued to see isolation as a concern. Increasing contacts between the different action teams and adding some team- or leadership-development exercises were some of the most common elements that catalysts suggested they would like to see changed if KCCI were to be repeated.

I think we didn't have a lot of opportunity to gain from the perspective of the catalysts on the other groups. Also, it seems like one or two of the groups have dissolved and I wonder if those catalysts could have been moved to other initiatives.

Focus hard in the beginning on training leaders how to organize their teams and mobilize community support. Bring the catalysts together often. The greatest asset was the level of enthusiasm, energy and depth of ideas when working as a group. The smaller group setting and instructions to conduct conference calls were a major detraction from the program.

Barriers faced by action teams

Catalysts identified three sets of problems faced by the action teams: defining the scope of their projects, logistical and time pressures, and funding.

Project definition

A number of catalysts reported that they quickly ran into difficulties defining (or re-defining) the nature of their project. On the most general level, one catalysts asked "What are we?" He continued, we need to "make sure that our goals/accomplishments align with the overall idea" of KCCI. Another noted that: "We have struggled as a team

to decide what we would do in the region.” “The biggest obstacle is staying focused on a couple of projects,” commented a third.

In a number of cases, projects simply ran into dead-ends and needed to be redefined. Here, the Knight project directors and other local organizers played an important role in working with the catalysts to get over the obstacles. The most common pattern in these cases was the scaling back of ambitions, for example, from an international film festival to one that focused on student work and emerging artists.

In other cases, the action teams became inactive, although we identified only one case in which a team agreed to disband. In speaking with participants, it seems clear that a mechanism for reassessing the projects and even redefining the teams would have been helpful. Such a tool would have enabled the catalysts to decide if a project in trouble should just be abandoned and the catalysts redeployed to other projects.

One catalyst proposed a longer and more interactive process for identifying projects that would have allowed catalysts to have “looked before they leapt”:

Split the two-day seminar into two one-day meetings. Give us some homework to prep us for the first session. Go into the idea storming and weed out to about a dozen ideas, then take some time away with just e-mail communication about various ideas. Come back to re-evaluate the ideas and continue on. Break into groups off the remaining ideas for the remainder of the second one-day session.

Then reconvene about four weeks later to once more re-evaluate and have constructive critiques from everyone about the various projects (and encourage us to be honest and forthcoming, we were much too nice to each other during the two-day seminar). Re-form groups for the various ideas and go off for two to three months to work on timelines, project plans, mission statements, etc. Publish those work plans to the entire group and ask for everyone to comment on for homework before the next session (one-half day at most). Meet up and discuss the pros and cons of each idea - this way the tires have truly been kicked and the ideas have had time to gestate and be picked over. Make this the final vote on which projects move forward with their realistic project schedules. Then let the team members loose and have them work their plans with regular check-ins with a mentor of some sort. It would also be ideal if the various projects were scheduled for a ten-minute presentation in front of various community groups (Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, Jaycees, Junior League, etc.) to help get the word out and get more feedback.

Logistical and time constraints

The most frequently expressed concern was lack of time and people to accomplish the work and to overcome barriers. As we noted above, there was great variation in the amount of time catalysts devoted to the projects. As a result, those who are most committed were likely to feel overwhelmed. “The main difficulty,” reported one catalyst, “is in carving out time to work on it.”

Because KCCI was essentially a volunteer effort, sometimes relatively small resource needs—for example, in designing a survey—proved to be a barrier. In other situations, the lack of clear organizational authority proved problematic. For example, when an action team in the Twin Ports sponsored a train/bicycle ride, the issue of liability insurance arose. Although there was general agreement that all parties would be liable in case of a problem, it remained unclear who would assume responsibility. CCG’s

reaction to the situation was quite interesting. Its staff asserted that it had nothing to do with the action teams and requested that the Foundation sign an indemnification waiver.

One issue that arose across communities had to do with the recruitment of other community members to the KCCI action teams. CCG actively encouraged the teams to recruit new members to expand the social network committed to a creative class view of economic development.

Yet, the catalysts were not sure how to treat newer community members. On some action teams, they were treated as “volunteers” as distinct from the catalysts. In other situations, they were referred to as “new catalysts.” This semantic disagreement is one symptom of a certain ambivalence among the catalysts about whether KCCI was their initiative, or whether they should pass ownership on to a wider group. Of course, literally, a *catalyst* is something that “precipitates a process or event, especially without being involved in or changed by the consequences.” Certainly, the community catalysts see themselves as neither uninvolved nor unchanged by KCCI.

Funding

In every community, catalysts raised the issue of funding for the action teams. Because KCCI was a high-profile initiative sponsored by a major national foundation and staffed by a well-known consultant, the catalysts assumed that there would be funding available to support the teams and allow them to move ahead with their projects. In one community, the catalysts believed that they would have a third of the \$580,000 price tag to work with.

The funding issue caused two types of problems. Relatively trivial sums—say, to get refreshments for public events—required a separate effort that could slow down the work of an action team. Most importantly, ambiguity about whether resources were available or “in the pipeline” occupied a significant share of some team meetings and added an element of uncertainty to the process.

Tallahassee addressed this concern early by making a small amount of funding available to each action team. The three surviving teams in Tallahassee successfully applied for grants from the Foundation’s community program. In the Twin Ports, the local community foundation made grants to four of the action teams. In Charlotte, the International Corridors team was able to identify public funding for its mosaic trash can project.

Creative Class Group’s role since the seminars

One surprise to virtually all of the participants in KCCI was the limited role played by CCG after the two-day seminar. The original proposal called for on-line sessions in which Richard Florida would participate. Yet, the catalysts reported that Florida himself had no contact with them since his appearance at the seminar.

Overall, the catalysts reported negative perceptions of the performance of CCG since the seminar. Twenty-three percent of survey respondents had a positive assessment of CCG staff’s performance, while fifty-four percent had a negative assessment. A number of catalysts found the “check in” calls and other contacts to be very helpful: “They have always been responsive to my e-mails or telephone calls. The information provided has been solid.” Another noted that they have “been very encouraging.”

However, the majority of opinion was not positive. Several catalysts saw the check-ins as “a waste of time” or “frustrating.” “I do not think the staff members have been helpful,” reported one catalyst. “In fact, some of the reporting requirements, etc, are more make-work in nature than helpful.”

In Duluth/Superior, the communication team was concerned that CCG had asked that all press releases from the action teams be vetted by CCG. There was a consensus on the committee that this would cause logistical problems and was unjustified given the limited contribution that CCG had made to the action teams.

Another problem reported by the catalysts was CCG’s lack of “local knowledge.”

We have followed the periodic check-in schedule with the Creative Class Group. Because the group is not familiar with local resources, we have not found them to be particularly helpful.

A few conference calls. Not too helpful. Seems like we spend a ton of time telling them things about our project that they should already know, then they make rather flippant/obvious suggestions that haven't been thought through. I don't have an understanding of the value that they are supposed to be bringing ongoing—so perhaps that is an issue and maybe I have too high of an expectation.

The “local knowledge” problem was exacerbated by CCG’s general lack of familiarity with the civic scene in smaller cities. Several catalysts reported that cities the size of the KCCI communities have few potential funders of nonprofits. Especially for catalysts who worked for nonprofits, suggestions that they seek funding for the project from these funders created great difficulties.

As a result, only eight percent of respondents said they would contact CCG when they encounter a problem or have a question. Instead, they identified the Foundation program director or another local organizer as their first point for help.

As the initiative drew to a close in the spring of 2008, a number of catalysts continued to identify the performance of CCG as a major impediment to the success of KCCI. In one community, the catalysts decided not to participate in the last set of “check-in” calls because they saw them as pointless. Other catalysts, when asked about what elements of KCCI they would change, suggested reducing or eliminating CCG's role:

I would drop the Creative Class Groups involvement—I don't believe they added much, if anything at all.

Drop the Florida group. Use community leaders in different areas of the four T's.

I would drop using the Florida group as facilitators. I would start off with clear discussion of the ideas about strong communities, articulate how you can make a community stronger, and I would also spend more time at the start on assessing what's already going on the community.

I would drop the Richard Florida creative class scam. He and his consultants, along with the host committee, provided very little support. KCCI could pull off the same results by asking people what do you envision Tallahassee becoming, and what specific projects could be done in a year as steps towards that vision.

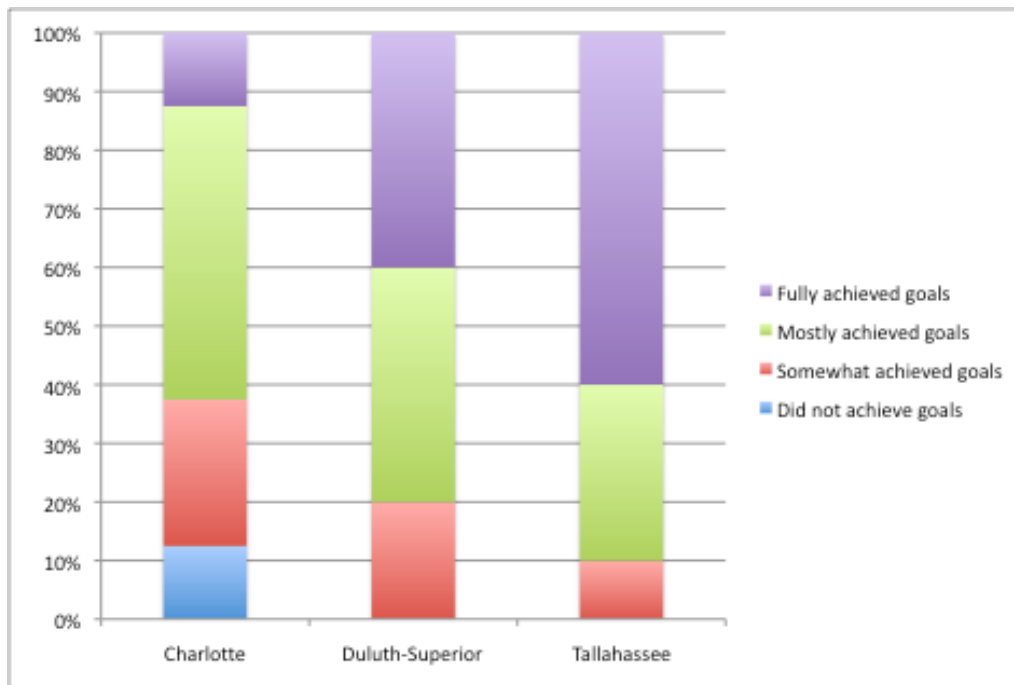
7. Overall Assessment of KCCI Implementation

The catalysts remained committed and positive about KCCI. When we asked in September 2007 if the initiative had met their expectations, sixty-two percent answered positively and only sixteen percent answered negatively. One catalyst noted, "I am happy to be participating in this effort and feel that our team is making a difference in our community." This seems to be a common perspective among the catalysts. When asked what activities were most satisfying about the experience, catalysts most frequently pointed to the full-team meetings and the meetings of the action teams. Clearly, the social interaction among the catalysts was one of the great draws.

Achievement of KCCI goals

At the end of the initiative, the catalysts continued to express generally positive attitudes toward their achievements. A third of the respondents to the March 2008 survey reported that they had mostly achieved their goals for the initiative and another third reported they had fully achieved their goals.

Still, there seemed to be a disconnect in the initiative between its change goals, resources, and time line. What would appear to be the more important action team goals—retaining the educated workforce in Tallahassee and Duluth/Superior, rehabilitating districts in Tallahassee and Charlotte, and connecting the arts and commerce in Duluth/Superior and Charlotte—obviously needed more than nine months and greater resources to produce results. Projects that could be completed in nine months, however, were difficult to connect to lasting outcomes.



Source: KCCI catalysts' survey, March 2008.

Catalysts' view of KCCI's success in achieving goals, March 2008

This disconnect may explain why the catalysts had second thoughts about whether the initiative had achieved results on the broader, community-transformation goals. When asked to identify the least successful elements of the initiative, the catalysts most commonly identified failures around the broader goals of the initiative:

Getting awareness for KCCI in general.

We bit off a large project, lost some members along the way, and most definitely lost faith in the Richard Florida Group.

The team's feeling that we lacked the ability and resources to accomplish our goals.

Again, defined as doing something that will attract the Creative Class to Charlotte, I don't think we accomplished anything of any benefit.

Specific deliverables in terms of more members of the Creative Class choosing to move to or stay in Duluth-Superior. Perhaps that is a little too grand of a goal for this first year, but it would be nice if we could point to an expanding demographic in this regard.

I don't feel that we engaged the community as much as we could have.

Our agenda is still somewhat unclear. Also, we do not have an executive director yet, making the organization still voluntary and that makes getting things done a little cumbersome.

The other common response to a question about least successful elements of KCCI focused on obstacles to completing action team projects:

Losing one of our team members, not having enough momentum to sustain the project.

I have had a difficult time "finding a fit" or clear direction with the Brain Gain team. I think that it might have been helpful, meaningful for academics but it failed to connect with the broader community. Perhaps the group tried to be too broad by including all of the campus reps from a large region?? Too many agendas and schedules to manage, in addition to trying to deal with College Connection, 40 Below and the 10K concepts.

Ideally, we would be six months ahead of where we are and be installing bike racks this spring. It looks like we will be installing racks this fall instead.

Lasting community impact

As KCCI came to a close, the catalysts were influenced by a set of conflicting forces. On the one hand, they expressed great satisfaction with their work on individual projects and the value of their KCCI experience. On the other hand, residual anger from the two-day seminar experience mixed with the realization that the projects were only faintly connected to broader transformation goals. As the catalysts reviewed the lasting impact of KCCI on their communities, only a small minority concluded that the impact would conform to the original goals of KCCI:

I think it has pushed the umbrella topic of the Creative Class and their potential value to a community solidly into the discussion framework of economic development. Whether it will last or not is the big question I suppose.

Yes, it has created awareness and impact of the 4 T's and economics of it has also formulated a new group of individuals who have begun relationships.

I believe in several meaningful ways the KCCI has changed the conversation in the community. For example, our initiative has changed the dialogue in our region regarding the economy. Until the KCCI, no one was talking about the "creative" economy. Now it is acknowledged in nearly every newspaper article and media story relating to economic news in the Twin Ports. I believe our efforts have also helped people look much differently at just what leads to a successful community. The idea that an open, welcoming community can be much better for the bottom line; that we should play on our strengths and improve resources like access to our beautiful territorial assets. And that change is coming to our community, that we are no longer as homogenous culturally as we were a couple of generations ago, and the sooner we accept that, the more prosperous we can become. We have a remarkable capacity for growth here, and even now the Twin Ports is bucking the economic woes the rest of the country is feeling. If we play our cards right, the sky is the limit.

Yes. The lasting impact is the broad awareness of the need to be open to many kinds of people and to new ideas. The old school of economic development is pretty much dead here. I think KCCI helped to drive in some of the final nails in the coffin.

Yes, it has generated excitement about the future of our city. I just hope the excitement continues to lead to action.

Among catalysts who saw a lasting impact, it was more common to see a focus on the individual projects. After having made a significant commitment in time and energy, these short-term projects were the major pay-off of the initiative for the communities:

Hopefully, one or two of the Charlotte initiatives might have LT impact. However, I think it is too early to say.

If the Sexy Green Car Show happens, it could have major impact and direct Charlotte's attention away from itself and more toward national concerns.

Yes! I think the ArtWorks! event was awesome! Their group did a great job of communicating the message. The Pathways team also did a great job of pulling off an event early in the process.

Art Works has had an impact on the community. I am not sure about the other initiatives within the KCCI project.

I can't speak for the other initiatives, but Art Works! definitely has a lasting impact. Besides the eight initiative groups moving forward, people made connections, got new jobs, found new business opportunities and bumped into each other in hundreds of positive ways that began generating new networks.

Got some very constructive dialogue going. Some initiatives have been implemented in a very positive manner (Pathways, Artworks, etc.)

Time will tell. I think some of the groups have done some great things that hopefully will stand the test of time. This question will be better answered in a year or two, however.

Yes, I think some of the initiatives have been very successful and will be sustained.

Yes, the KCCI projects have heightened awareness about the Green and Sustainability Movement as well as fostered a greater appreciation for the arts and the need to transform Gaines Street corridor.

Yes, the Tallahassee Film Festival and Greenovation groups were able to tap into a niche within the community that had been missing for quite a while. I see those groups growing. GGG may take credit for work now being done on Gaines, but much of that work was slated to begin long before that initiative group was established.

Yes, three or four initiatives have and will continue to improve quality of the community.

Yes, a Film Festival and commitment to Sustainable Tallahassee.

Yes, it is lasting - we will have two very tangible products as a result - the Film Festival as well as the new Sustainable Tallahassee board and its initiatives.

Still, a substantial proportion of catalysts who responded to the survey questioned whether it would have any lasting impact at all:

Hard to say at this point. Some of the projects - the Central Avenue corridor team - have the potential to have a wonderfully lasting impact. But in general, I think the impact will be short lived from a project standpoint.

Not clear yet. I do believe new networks were forged, that I hope continue to thrive.

I think the people involved were really wonderful, but I don't see it having a lasting impact on the community.

I hope so. I think the verdict is still out.

No, I do not think KCCI has a lasting impact. If you were to take a random sample of phone numbers or households in Tallahassee and ask them "Do you know what KCCI is and what it has done?", I believe that less than ten percent of the respondents could tell what KCCI is, and even fewer could name an impact of KCCI.

The jury is still out. It has had an impact, but we have not cemented "lasting".

Creative Class Group's role

In contrast to a positive assessment of their own involvement in KCCI, the catalysts continue to view CCG's involvement negatively. In September 2007, half (fifty-three percent) viewed CCG's overall performance negatively, and only sixteen percent viewed it positively. The most favorable assessments acknowledge that CCG's contribution was primarily during the seminar:

The Creative Class Group was very important as we began this journey, but as we move forward with the details of making this work the Group has taken on a secondary role. This is the case simply because they are not in our local community and, therefore, unable to help with issues that arise.

A more mixed assessment made a similar point (speaking directly to CCG):

You ran a nice seminar but I haven't sensed much involvement since then. During our group update via conference call, one of the facilitators was talking via cell phone as he walked to another meeting. I know you're busy people but not being able to dedicate 15 minutes to a conference call—the only structured contact to date—left me wondering how much effort our facilitators are putting into this project from their end. It feels a little like you held a seminar, helped us pick interesting but unrealistic initiatives, and then said goodbye and walked off into the sunset. Maybe you're doing more than I'm aware of, but if so, you should keep us posted on your efforts.

The negative comments were less charitable, ranging from “poor” to “useless.”

I don't feel that there has been much "facilitation" other than the initial meeting. It feels more like reporting back.

The Creative Class Group (Florida's folks) seems more interested in the gospel of Richard Florida than in what the unique issues and needs are for Charlotte.

Non-existent. If they are recruited to do this in other communities, only do it if they have added demonstrated skill in group facilitation and support or limit their role to the data delivery.

On a scale of 1 to 10 I would give them a "one."

I would give them a D-. In most ways, it is the catalysts that are making things happen.

Would not be eligible for re-hire.

At the end of the initiative, the catalysts appeared narrowly split about whether Richard Florida and creative class theory played an important role in the initiative. Those who did see an impact generally focused on raising public consciousness of the 4 T's:

The ongoing projects definitely conform to the 4 T's and to that extent I believe they are influencing the 4 T's within the community.

I think their impact will be moderately successful in its impact. I think KCCI will have some impact on each of the Four T's outlined in Florida's theory.

Yes, but without Florida's group.

I believe the greatest impact would be to make the community ready to accept people of diversity in our community; to improve access to talent, especially at our four-year and two-year educational institutions; and leveraging of our territorial assets to greater advantage.

Talent and Territorial Assets will be enhanced in the community.

I think there's a greater awareness of the importance of at least three of the T's: Talent, Tolerance, and Territorial Assets. I think at the very least the community is willing to weigh those factors in thinking about economic and community development for the future.

The underlying message that an area should focus on being an attractive and vibrant place to live ... and the jobs will follow was the underlying theme. Again,

I don't know about "influencing" the four T's ... maybe I'm just struggling with the word choice there.

Anytime you try to better understand change and look at things differently, one hopes that you learn and grow. I think the 4-Ts are overly simplistic but they do allow us to see things in one way. The main thing that stays with me is that we have to honor human creativity more than we do ... our very survival depends on it.

Sure, or I wouldn't have remained active. Did Richard Florida's work help us achieve our goals? No. It simply was a means to draw us together.

Those catalysts who did not see a significant creative class theory impact of KCCI were more likely to focus on the substance of change in their communities. Indeed, for some it seemed hard to separate their assessment of Richard Florida's ideas from his actual involvement in KCCI:

Ha! Not at all.

We abandoned the 4 T philosophy early on.

I don't think any of the initiatives were aggressive enough to influence the Ts. I don't think Florida's theories translate well into applied methods.

None. Other than the two-day seminar, very little about Florida's concepts was a part of the program. This was very disappointing.

I am not seeing direct connections here other than a loose umbrella created by the KCCI initiative.

I do not think KCCI will have any impact on Tallahassee conforming to Florida's idea of the creative class. Based on Florida's own data, Tallahassee already has a sizeable creative class, but clearly that is not enough. KCCI did not influence any of the four T's, particularly tolerance.

I believe the creative class is a creative scam.

8. Framework for Evaluating KCCI Community Outcomes

In addition to a formative or process evaluation of the first year of KCCI, Knight asked the evaluation team to make recommendations for a summative or outcome evaluation of the initiative. We do so with some reservations. It is clear that if KCCI is to be replicated the experience of the first cohorts and communities will lead to significant changes in its structure. Hopefully, a second KCCI would pay more attention to clarifying the connections between inputs and outputs, which would simplify the design of an evaluation.

The outcome evaluation framework is based on the evaluation team's logic model discussed in the first section of this report. The model focuses primarily on the links between the immediate action team experience and the intermediate results (outcomes) with a focus on *community capacity* and *civic capacity*. While KCCI began with the intention of changing the trajectory of economic development in the three communities, the link between the specific actions undertaken by the catalysts and economic development outcomes is so attenuated that we would not recommend attempting to document them.

The framework proposed below would evaluate KCCI as an integrated effort at social change. An alternative approach would treat each action team as a separate and independent effort. It would develop a logic model for each action team initiative and use this model as the basis for assessing its impact. Given the increasingly diverse implementation of KCCI in the three communities, such an approach has some merit, but it would entail recognizing that KCCI no longer represents a coherent initiative.

Will KCCI increase *community capacity* and *civic capacity* in the KCCI communities?

As KCCI unfolded in the three communities, the catalysts and local organizers developed their own theories to explain how KCCI would influence civic life. In Duluth, as we have noted, because of a 2006-07 social capital initiative, the catalysts saw community building as a central channel through which they hoped to influence community life. In all three KCCI communities, local participants linked KCCI to possible effects on how the community could come together in an inclusive manner to address its challenges—what Stone would call the community's civic capacity.

For both of the potential outcomes of KCCI—community capacity and civic capacity—we describe indicators of success and discuss a strategy for data-gathering.

Community capacity—indicators

The community capacity literature points to three indicators of increased community capacity—social capital, organizational resources, and human capital.

Social capital refers to the extent and density of social networks and their usefulness in accessing resources. The literature on social capital is voluminous; a recent online search turned up 3,700 references to the term in academic literature alone. Scholars disagree about whether social capital is an attribute of an individual or of a collective. In addition, some scholars have seen its usefulness as essentially expressive and psychological while others have focused on its instrumental utility in accessing resources. These theoretical disputes have implications for its measurement.

For KCCI, we recommend using a *position generator* and *resource generator* approach to tracking social capital over time. This method was developed by Dutch researchers and has been adopted by a range of international social capital projects. Its primary focus is on individuals' ability to identify their access to individuals in particular positions in society (position generator) and useful resources (resource generator). The position indicator asks informants, for example, if they know anyone who is a lawyer, a policy maker, a nurse, a hairdresser, or truck driver. The resource generator asks informants if they know someone who can do your shopping when you are ill, help you with financial matters, or help a family member get a job.

Organizational resources as an indicator of social capital have two aspects. First, are there organizations in a community that see mobilizing community members as part of their purpose? Second, do community members know about these organizations and see them as effective?

These two aspects of organizational resources would require separate data collection strategy. One would focus on an inventory of community resources and its change over time. The other would require a survey of individuals. One possibility is that an element of the resource generator survey would ask specifically about this type of resource.

Broadly speaking, **human capital** refers to the overall level of skill possessed by a community's residents. In the context of community capacity building, human capital refers to skills that contribute to a community's ability to mobilize around its challenges, including leadership, technical, and organizational skills.

Community capacity—data gathering

The community capacity conceptualization proposed above suggests a mixed-method design that would gather data on the catalysts' involvement in their communities, on a wider sample of residents, and on community organizations (see earlier discussion of organizational resources).

Catalysts' survey

If KCCI were to have its expected result, one would expect the catalysts to acquire the social connections and skills that contribute to effective community building and to play a role in expanding these connections and skills through the rest of the community. An annual survey of catalysts' would include questions about their social capital (position and resource generators) with a particular focus on their links to organizational resources. It would also include questions about their level and type of civic involvement.

Resident survey

The catalysts' survey would be complemented by a survey of residents to determine if changes in the catalysts' civic involvement and connections were accompanied by changes in the community at large. This survey could utilize *respondent-driven sampling*—a chain-referral method that promises to provide reliable estimates of population characteristics. By beginning with referrals from the catalysts, the survey could both identify the impact that catalysts are having on their social networks and on the community as a whole.

Data Source	Catalyst survey	Resident survey (respondent driven sampling)	Organizational inventory	Action team case studies	Other civic initiative case studies
Indicator					
Human capital	X				
Organization capacity		X	X		
Social capital	X	X			
Leadership development	X			X	X
Enabling institutions				X	X
Public support		X		X	X

Community capacity and civic capacity—indicators and data-gathering strategies

Civic capacity—indicators and data-gathering

Studies of civic capacity have generally used a qualitative case study method. For example, a multi-city study of educational reform created research teams in a variety of cities that were believed to have different levels of civic capacity and then had these teams follow efforts to improve public education over several years.

The case studies used for KCCI would focus on the action team initiatives and a set of additional community issues to determine if they conform to the idea of civic capacity. First, does the community actually take action on these challenges or is there a stalemate? Second, what is the nature of the process used to address problems? Is it inclusive and participatory or exclusive and restricted? Are community leaders able to work together in spite of differences in values and resources?

The literature points to three indicators of increased civic capacity—**leadership development**, **enabling institutions**, and **public support**. The idea of *social entrepreneurship* could also inform this aspect of the evaluation. Estimates of these three indicators would be based primarily on interviews, participant observation, and document review. The resident survey would allow the evaluators to estimate changes in public support, as well.

Data gathering for the civic capacity aspect of the evaluation could use an *interrupted time-series* design that examines processes of civic decision-making before, during, and after KCCI. In all three KCCI communities, local participants hope to encourage more inclusive and effective civic decision-making as major community challenges.

The different models that emerged during KCCI provide a natural experiment that is well suited to quasi-experimental design. In essence, the Tallahassee model—institutionalization of the action teams—creates an *interest group* for particular issues. The Charlotte model, by contrast, fostered individuals with enhanced skills, values, and social contacts. Discovery if one of these models has a stronger long-term effect on community decision-making is a compelling empirical question.

To answer these questions fully, the evaluation would need to examine not just the issues raised by KCCI but those associated with other community initiatives. As we mentioned earlier, Tallahassee KCCI was built on the perceived civic success of Blueprint 2000. Currently, Charlotte is involved in a major effort around inclusive civic capacity called Crossroads Charlotte, while Community Action Duluth has undertaken a Blueprint to End Poverty.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

Should KCCI be replicated in other Knight communities, this evaluation offers some clear lessons for the Foundation, local organizers, the Creative Class Group, and the catalysts.

Restructure the KCCI process

Based on the three KCCI communities, there are some elements of the KCCI process that could be organized differently. Many of these derive from the catalysts' perception that haste makes waste—that emphasis on doing things quickly undermined the best efforts of participants. In addition, there should be a focus on team building before catalysts are pushed into the more instrumental elements of the project.

While the catalysts did their "homework" before the two-day seminar, there was no opportunity to reflect on the readings or the working socials before the two-day CCG seminar. A KCCI orientation meeting before the seminar would also have allowed the catalysts to get to know one another.

Many of the catalysts felt that trying to accomplish too much during the two-day seminar compromised the quality of the outcomes. A number of participants suggested that allowing some time—perhaps two to three weeks—between the brainstorming about projects and the actual selection process would enhance the quality of the projects selected and the commitment of the catalysts to their team.

KCCI would be a stronger initiative, as well, if *all* the catalysts felt ownership of *all* the projects. First, this would prevent the silo mentality—reported by many catalysts—from developing. Second, it would allow the group to assess which projects deserved to continue and which might be profitably shut down. Finally, it would prevent the lack of success of one project to lead to the catalysts' dropping out of the initiative.

While some of the catalysts were unrealistic to expect that they would have significant Foundation funding available immediately, there should be a pool of funding to support meeting expenses and modest event costs. In addition, clear local leadership (not just coordination) of the initiative and technical support would reduce the likelihood that the action teams would "get stuck." These are areas where all-volunteer efforts are predictably vulnerable. A modest investment in project support would greatly enhance the initiative.

From the start, CCG viewed the three KCCI communities as a pilot test for the process. CCG facilitators have been aware of a number of the concerns raised by project participants and see them as part of the learning process associated with refining their model.

Clarify CCG's responsibilities

The most striking feature of KCCI was the ambiguity about the role of Creative Class Group. The original project design seemed to anticipate the active involvement of Richard Florida and his staff in the action team projects. Yet, their involvement was limited, by and large, to a set of periodic conference calls, which many catalysts see as more of a hindrance than a help. As far as we know, Richard Florida himself has been virtually absent from KCCI since his appearances at the two-day seminars.

Frankly, it seems remarkable that the Foundation's agreement with CCG could remain this unclear. CCG wishes to take credit for the successes of KCCI and to distance itself

from its shortcomings. For the evaluation team, the illogic of the situation was exemplified by CCG's assertion that it should be released from any liability for KCCI activities because it was neither convener nor participant in the action teams' work.

A major part of CCG's efforts went into developing data on the communities and comparing them with other metropolitan areas. Many catalysts raised questions about the utility of these data. Certainly, the data played a very limited role in the selection of projects and the work of the action teams. While the data should play a role in the eventual evaluation of KCCI's success, their importance to the catalysts' work seemed relatively minor and should be reassessed.

Ultimately, Richard Florida's celebrity may limit CCG's ability to play successfully all of the roles it currently assumes. The catalysts want someone to get into the trenches and help them accomplish their work. It is unrealistic to expect Richard Florida to do so.

Given the catalysts' judgment about the quality of CCG's efforts since the seminar, it might make sense to restrict CCG's role to the first part of the seminar (Florida's presentation and discussion of creative class theory). Then, the process could be handed over to a local facilitator who would oversee the development of projects. This would take advantage of CCG's assets and reduce those aspects that the catalysts viewed negatively.

Add leadership and team development

Although the original design for KCCI called for a "Creative Community Leadership Seminar," the initiative did not include any planned attention to developing leadership and social entrepreneurial skills among the catalysts. It is notable that in all three communities, catalysts spontaneously turned to leadership development efforts for models in developing action team initiatives. Developing the skills needed to do community-based work is critical to community and civic capacity. Any replication of KCCI should focus on using models of leadership development as a central aspect of the effort.

Often, bold failures are more valuable than timid successes. The Knight Creative Communities Initiative represented a brave and bold effort on the part of the Foundation to bring new thinking to a relatively stale area of public policy. We, as a nation, must develop strategies for transforming communities if a diverse and protean American civilization is to meet the challenges of the coming century. The fact that KCCI has not fully achieved its ambitious goals should not obscure its merit in seeking innovative ways to address real challenges.

The standard for judging initiatives like KCCI, then, is to ask what we can learn about communities and strategies for their transformation. In speaking with catalysts, local organizers, and others involved in the initiative, it is clear that all parties are interested in fixing what went wrong, enhancing what went right, and moving ahead. In this respect, we can report with confidence that KCCI has been a success.

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