

MEASURE FOR CHANGE

Community Indicators Consortium Newsletter

www.communityindicators.net

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CIC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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CIC Board President
Center for Accountability and Performance
American Society for Public Administration

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Allen Lomax

CIC Action Plan Approved: Your Involvement is Needed to Help Implement the Plan

For the past several months, your Board of Directors has been very busy developing a three-year action plan for CIC. I am pleased to announce that development of the action plan is completed. This action plan will help us all make progress in achieving our organization's mission to:

- Advance the art and science of community indicators and the exchange of knowledge through an active learning network and community of practice among persons interested or engaged in the field of community indicators development and application.
- Encourage the development and facilitate the effective use of community indicators across the globe

The action plan is based on the following five goals:

1. Advance the use of indicators for community awareness and change;
2. Create a global community of practice;
3. Strengthen international perspective and relevance;
4. Promote connectivity between indicators and performance measurement; and
5. Build and sustain the organization.

These five goals will serve as the framework for CIC's efforts over the next three years and to do so, the action plan includes specific actions, targets, tasks, task owners, outputs and deadlines for each goal. CIC's ability to achieve these goals is build upon some very important strategies. Of course the most important strategy is the willingness of CIC's members to volunteer and help work on the various action items in the plan. Another important strategy is to build partnerships with other organizations that share our interest in developing and using fact-based information to engage people make our international, national, regional, and local communities better places to live. Finally, another important strategy is to increase the

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awareness and use of indicators by individuals, community leaders, elected and appointed officials, and organizations.

CIC's action plan will be posted on its Web site (www.communityindicators.net). Please go to the Web site, read the action plan, and let us know how you want to get involved. If you have any question or comments or would like to help implement the action plan, please contact me at aclomax@aol.com or ed@communityindicators.net.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the members of the CIC Board and its Executive Director for all their hard work and I especially want to thank Anindita Mitra, one of CIC's Vice Presidents, for leading this work.

MEASURING CULTURAL VITALITY IN COMMUNITIES

Maria Rosario Jackson

The Urban Institute

Launched in the mid 1990's, the Urban Institute's Arts and Culture Indicators Project (ACIP) began with the premise that a healthy place to live includes opportunities for and evidence of arts, culture and creative expression. Our initial reconnaissance of community indicator efforts around the United States in the 1990's revealed that, for the most part, this premise was not reflected within community indicator systems. For more than a decade now, ACIP has been working with practitioners, researchers, and policy players in the areas of urban planning and policy, community development, and arts-related fields to (a) better understand the role and presence of arts and culture in communities; (b) develop measures to more adequately capture arts and culture and (c) integrate arts and culture into quality of life measurement systems and urban policy discussions. At the same time, based on our early field research in many U.S. neighborhoods, ACIP has sought to expand the conventional paradigm of what counts as arts and culture in a way that makes it more consistent with and inclusive of the demographic realities of our nation-including low-and moderate-income communities, communities of color, and immigrant communities. ACIP encourages communities to monitor their *cultural vitality* evidence of a community's capacity to create, disseminate and validate arts and culture as part of everyday life. Inherent in this definition of cultural vitality is a broad range of activity-formal and informal, professional and amateur, active and passive, and occurring in both arts-specific venues such as museums and concert halls as well as in other kinds of places such as parks, schools, community centers, churches, and in a range of commercial venues. defined as

The goal of integrating arts and culture into indicator systems and quality of life discussions has required important groundwork that ACIP has now concluded-field research on arts and culture in communities; identification of indicator categories for measurement; development of conceptual frameworks that guide our ongoing investigation of a broad range of relevant data sources; testing new data sources; and the development of recommended measures. Building on this groundwork, ACIP has developed seven nationally comparable measures of cultural vitality (using data

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from the National Center for Charitable Statistics, County/Zip Business Patterns, and Bureau of Labor Statistics) and has identified an array of examples of ways in which aspects of cultural vitality can be measured using more nuanced locally generated data from a range of administrative sources (such as parks and recreation departments, police departments, economic development departments and permitting agencies) as well as recurrent surveys. (See Jackson, Maria Rosario; Florence Kabwasa-Green and Joaquin Herranz, "Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators," The Urban Institute, Washington, D.C. 2006)

ACIP currently operates in collaboration with 12 sites around the country where arts and culture data are beginning to inform discussions and decisions about topics such as community development, economic development, transportation and education. We welcome new collaborations with interested indicator initiatives. For more information, please contact Maria Rosario Jackson at mjackson@ui.urban.org

NEW REPORT ON DATA-DRIVEN POLICY MAKING

In April 2007, the Center for American Progress released a report entitled, *Governing by the Numbers: The Promise of Data-Driven Policymaking in the Information Age*, by Daniel C. Esty and Reece Rushing. This is a very interesting study that highlights the importance of data and how it can help inform policymaking. While the study primarily focuses on federal government level actions to improve data-driven policymaking, it also includes examples of state and local level of data-driven policymaking as well as recommendations for closing knowledge gaps and action items to build a robust data infrastructure. To get a copy of the report go to

http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2007/04/data_driven_policy.html

CATCH THIS BLOG!

In March 2007, the CIC conference in Jacksonville brought home just how many people around the world are interested in community indicators, and how much indicators practitioners could benefit from ready access to what is happening in the field.

In one attempt to capture at least part of that content stream, www.communityindicators.blogspot.com was launched on March 15 without fanfare as an experiment to see if this medium might be helpful in sharing information about the people, data, programs, conferences, and innovations happening in community indicators.

By the time you read this newsletter, over 200 articles will have been read by over 2,000 unique visitors to the site. Topics range from the Istanbul Declaration to the way an artist depicted the nine million children without health insurance in America. You'll see new projects, book reviews, data sets, data display techniques, conference announcements, and people raving about how exciting community indicators really are. You'll also find links to other blogs, listserves, and websites our community of practice might be interested in.

Check out the blog. If you have an article to share, a web link you think is important, or a blog of your own, send it in. If you have a comment to add on any of the posts, please do so. If you're interested in becoming a contributing author on the blog, drop me a line and I'll make sure you have that opportunity.

Ben Warner

Jacksonville Community Council Inc. (JCCI)

ENGAGING CITIZENS IN MEASURING AND REPORTING COMMUNITY INDICATORS

The IBM Center for The Business of Government has released an important new document that we are certain will be of interest and value to CIC members and friends. It is

"Engaging Citizens in Measuring and Reporting Community Conditions: A Manager's Guide" by Alfred Ho.

In it, Dr. Ho presents two case studies - one from Des Moines, Iowa; the other from Boston, Massachusetts - where government agencies and citizen groups reported their own or their government's performance, respectively. While each of these cases reflects different strategic approaches, they both attempt to bring together what government does and what citizens see as being important in their community. In his report, Dr. Ho examines "how government officials can engage the public more directly in performance measurement and reporting efforts and how they can communicate more effectively about the efforts and accomplishments of public policies and programs." The goal, he notes, is to "make performance measurement and reporting more relevant and meaningful to taxpayers."

The report can be downloaded for free at:

http://www.businessofgovernment.org/main/publications/grant_reports/details/index.asp?gid=301

AMERICA'S CHILDREN

Key National Indicators of Well-being 2007

The Federal Interagency forum on Child and Family Statistics has released its 2007 annual report, "America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-being 2007." Statistics are gathered from 22 federal agencies, and the report presents background data and highlights 38 key indicators of child well-being. This year's tenth addition includes nine new indicators and two new sections. See <http://childstats.gov> to order copies or go to CIC's "Publications" page to see the PDF of the report.

■ ARE YOU A CIC MEMBER ?

JOIN TODAY!

As a Member you Will:

- Be a part of a groundbreaking learning network that exchanges, shares, teaches, learns and fosters indicators systems throughout the globe.
- Be a part of the force that fosters and facilitates this network.
- Get first hand information on local, regional, and national indicators initiatives, trends, evolutions, and best practices.
- Obtain a discount in registration for CIC International Conferences and other CIC gatherings.
- Become listed on the CIC email and mail list for notices, newsletters, announcements, and more!

Member Benefits:

Our informative quarterly newsletter, a discount on future CIC Conferences, upcoming Learning Forums, peer-to-peer discussion groups with priority given to members and a special Members Only section of our expanded web site.

Click here to join online : http://www.communityindicators.net/documents/CIC_Membership_Form.pdf

CIC PURPOSE

To promote communication among and help integrate the efforts of various networks, organizations and individuals involved in community indicators work in the U.S. and around the world. The ultimate goal of the consortium is to enhance the effectiveness of these networks, organizations and individuals in advancing the art, science, and impact of indicators for improving the health, quality of life and sustainability of communities.

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