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Susan Crandall

*University of Massachusetts Boston, [susan.crandall@umb.edu](mailto:susan.crandall@umb.edu)*

Marija Bingulac

*University of Massachusetts Boston, [Marija.Bingulac001@umb.edu](mailto:Marija.Bingulac001@umb.edu)*

Bianca Ortiz-Wythe

*University of Massachusetts Boston, [bianca.ortizwythe001@umb.edu](mailto:bianca.ortizwythe001@umb.edu)*

Andrew Seeder

*Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative*

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## **Exploring Opportunities for Urban Youth Inclusion in the Creative Economy in Boston's Dudley Square**

**Susan R. Crandall, Marija Bingulac\*, Bianca Ortiz-Wythe**  
Center for Social Policy at McCormack Graduate School  
University of Massachusetts Boston

**Andrew Seeder**  
Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative

with assistance from the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative Youth Research Team: Peter Guillen, Shakim Grant, Learie Cabey, Jonathan Lovemore, Sydney Raye, Lorraine Williams, Edwin Kollie, Esmeralda Hernandez



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## Executive Summary

Communities throughout the U.S. need to attract and retain businesses and talent to grow and to thrive. One approach to economic development which has gained traction in recent years is the concept of a “creative economy,” which suggests that investing in creative occupations and industries is integral to support economic and culturally vibrant cities.

Although the implementation of creative economy initiatives has successfully boosted economic development in some cities and regions, critics have argued that a focus on the creative economy is fueling urban inequality, focusing primarily on college-educated professionals and ignoring the needs of blue collar and service workers. Recent research on the creative economy has pointed to a growing racial divide, with African Americans being significantly less likely to occupy key jobs in the creative economy.<sup>1</sup>

Although the City of Boston has made efforts to incorporate community feedback into the development of the creative economy, residents have expressed concerns about growing inequality and gentrification.<sup>2</sup> With significant state and city investment in building the creative economy, inclusion of communities of color must be prioritized and incorporated into policy design and implementation.

Boston’s Dudley neighborhood was recently declared an Arts Innovation District by the city of Boston, making it critical to engage its diverse residents—one of the Commonwealth’s greatest assets—so that they are not left behind in the new economy. To level the playing field and to increase pathways into the creative economy for young people of color from low-income communities, the University of Massachusetts Boston Center for Social Policy (CSP) conducted Participatory Action Research (PAR) in partnership with the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative (DSNI) to provide training for youth-led research that engaged youth artists, and community organizations in Dudley.

The goal of this participatory, youth-led action research was to uncover community assets and barriers to career pathways in the creative economy, and to propose recommendations for the inclusion of local youth from the Dudley neighborhood in the creative economy. Using focus groups and a survey, we explored how youth and artists defined the creative economy, including their awareness of jobs and opportunities; perceived barriers to accessing jobs and

careers; and generated policy solutions to increasing youth inclusion in the creative economy.

The partnership between DSNI and CSP revealed workable, community-led solutions.

Policy recommendations include:

- Promote a community-driven definition of the creative economy;
- Develop pathways to the creative economy through school-based learning, and increase funding for arts in public high schools;
- Invest in spaces for artist development and performance venues that have wide recognition;
- Support mentoring relationships between youth interested in the arts and working artists;
- Develop artist-in-residency programs and financial support for artists;
- Pilot creative procurement and arts purchasing strategies.

The process of co-learning summarized in this report is intended to inform collective action and provide recommendations for sparking enhanced inclusion into the creative economy in Boston and across the Commonwealth.

## Introduction

### An Overview of the Creative Economy

To date, there is no generally accepted definition of the creative economy.<sup>3</sup>

Richard Florida defines the “creative class” as a group of individuals that includes artists, engineers, scientists, and other private sector professionals.<sup>4</sup> According to his definition, the creative class is a group of workers who “create new ideas, new technology and/or new creative content” and the creative class “shares a common creative ethos that values creativity, individuality, difference, and merit.”<sup>5</sup> In another conceptualization, Howkins defines the creative economy as comprising advertising, architecture, art, crafts, design, fashion, film music, performing arts, publishing, software, toys and games, TV and radio, and video games.<sup>6</sup> The City of Boston’s definition closely aligns to that of Howkins, eliminating industries such as business services, health care, and engineering and including cultural institutions like museums to the definition.

Each region has unique assets based in the creative industries. Understanding where these assets are and what they contribute to a state’s economy is a critical first step toward using creative industries as an economic development tool. To fully understand the economic contributions of these industries, states can “map” their arts and culture assets.<sup>7</sup> In a 2009 report, the National Governors Association identified several ways in which to identify place-based creative industries. They include; performing an ongoing inventory of arts assets, conducting a cluster analysis, maintaining arts industry data, targeting specific sectors and developing a vision.<sup>8</sup>

Since the inception of the creative economy concept, some studies have explored the potential benefits of enhancing a community’s or a region’s creative economy. Creative economy industries can offer both rural and urban communities a range of economic benefits. Identifying creative industries in an area can help bolster economic development. Because of the typically decentralized nature of the creative economy, it can benefit residents of areas often thought to lack economic strength.<sup>9</sup> At the core of the creative economy industries are artists well-connected to the communities in which they reside. Connecting these artists with entrepreneurial opportunities both inside and beyond their regions offers many economic development possibilities.

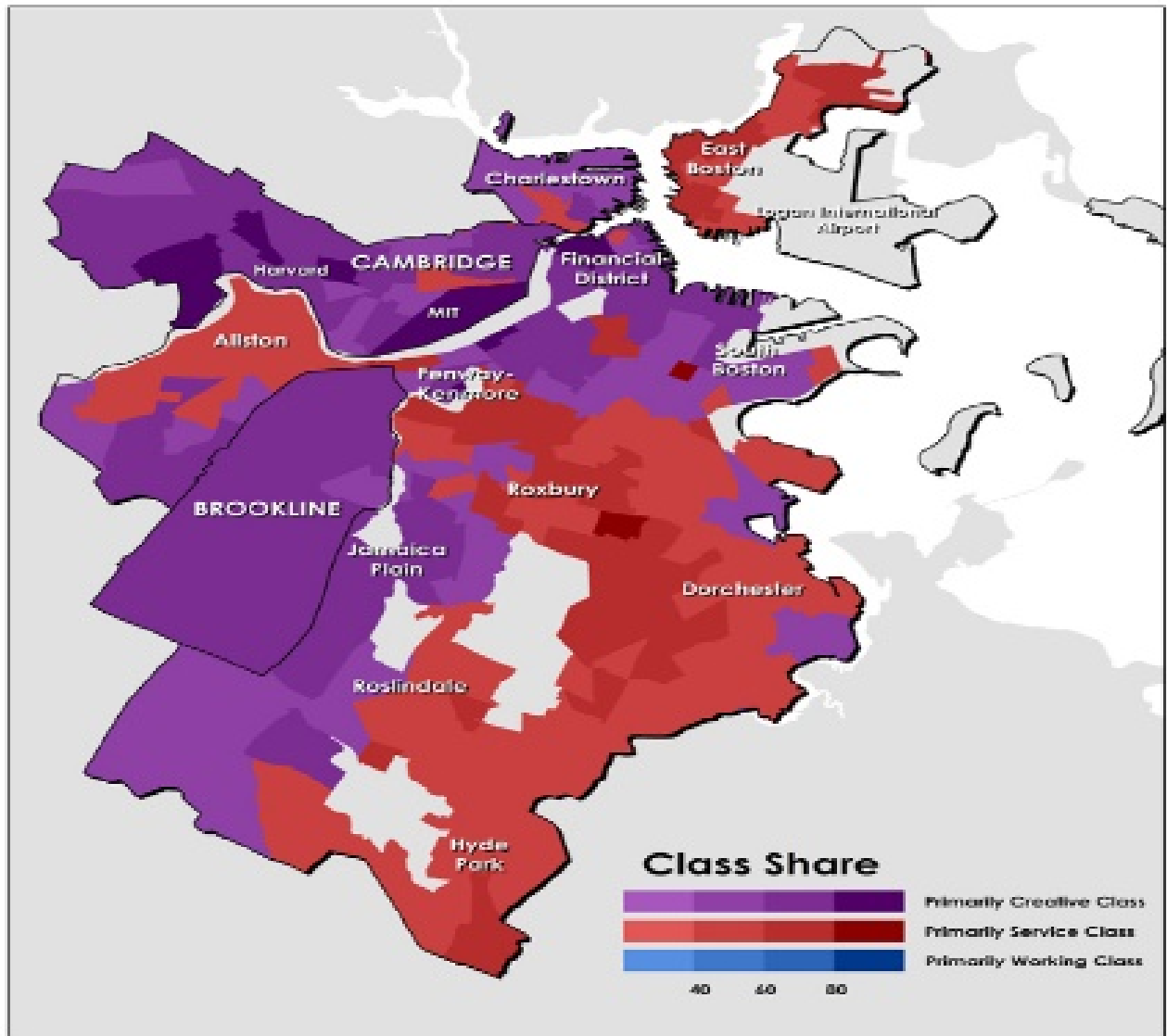
Creative industries may also facilitate the development of a skilled workforce. The recognition and marketing of a community's arts and culture assets is an important element of economic development. Creatively acknowledging and marketing community assets can attract a strong workforce and successful firms, as well as help sustain a positive quality of life. This is the case in Sheridan, Wyoming. Known as the center of cowboy art, the region has a higher percentage of individuals employed in the creative economy than in manufacturing.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Creative Economy and Inequality**

Critics of the creative economy approach to economic development contend that the benefits of the creative class accrue largely to its predominately white members and do little to improve the wellbeing of workers in lower wage jobs, many of whom are people of color. They argue that investment in attracting creative class workers has done little overall for the urban middle class, much less the working class or the poor.<sup>11</sup> This is particularly true in cities such as San Francisco, New York and Seattle, where creative and tech types have revitalized downtown neighborhoods to the point where only those with high income can live comfortably.

Work in the creative industries is often characterized by a culture that purportedly embraces inclusivity, transformation, and progress. However, recent studies on the creative economy have highlighted stark inequalities relating to race/ethnicity. Across America, almost three-quarters (73.8 percent) of all “creative class” jobs nationwide are held by white (non-Hispanic) workers, compared to about nine percent (8.5 percent) by African Americans. While 36 percent of all workers nationally are part of the creative class, 41 percent of white workers hold creative class jobs, while just 28 percent of black workers do.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, there is not a single large metro across the U.S. where the share of black workers in the creative class exceeds the share for white workers. Thus, the creative economy skews white, with African Americans being significantly less likely to occupy these jobs.

## The Creative Economy in Greater Boston



In Massachusetts, 85 percent of creative economy jobs are held by white workers (higher than the national average, which is 73.8 percent) compared to 3 percent African Americans, 4 percent Asian and 5 percent Hispanic.<sup>13</sup> In the Greater Boston area, neighborhoods with higher rates of creative economy workers are



clustered outside the city of Boston, in middle and upper-middle income areas as opposed to neighborhoods within Boston city limits which have higher densities of service workers (For additional labor market information on the creative economy in Massachusetts and Boston, see Appendix A). Thus, from an inclusion perspective, efforts need to be intentional to foster equal access to the creative economy.

## **The Creative Economy in Dudley Square**

Policies to develop an inclusive creative economy in Boston may serve to mitigate both inequality and occupational segregation to some degree. In 2015, “Boston Creates” was initiated to conduct a comprehensive analysis of creative assets in the neighborhoods of Boston. The cultural assessments included town hall meetings, community conversations, stakeholder focus groups and a creative engagement participation survey, available in four languages. In its findings, the Boston Creates plan identified five priority areas<sup>14</sup> as part of an overarching plan to develop an equitable and inclusionary arts culture in the city--essential given the racial inequities inherent in the creative economy.<sup>15</sup>

- Expand City support for the arts through investments in public art as part of major City infrastructure projects;
- Commit to a sustainable source of affordable artist housing;
- Work with local philanthropy to establish collaborative funding mechanisms to meet the needs of the arts and culture sector;
- Launch a pilot program that addresses the need for affordable rehearsal space.
- Commit to the inclusion of three Arts Innovation Districts in Imagine Boston 2030, the citywide comprehensive plan.

The Imagine Boston: 2030 Vision Report states that Upham’s Corner, part of the greater Dudley neighborhood, will be the first of three Arts Innovation Districts in Boston. The greater Dudley neighborhood, which includes parts of the communities of North Dorchester and Roxbury, covers 1.3 miles and is home to 27,000 residents. One of Dudley's greatest assets is its diversity; with 58% African American or Black residents, 26% Latino residents, and 14% Non-Hispanic White residents. In 2016, DSNI and Jobs for the Future conducted a neighborhood assessment that revealed that 40% of Roxbury and Dorchester residents earn less than \$25,000 a year and that only 13% have a bachelor’s degree. This is emblematic of a larger problem of rising inequality in Boston; in fact, one where only half of the city’s residents earn more than \$35,000 per year despite the concentration of high-paying industries like biotechnology and finance.<sup>16</sup>

In the Dudley square area alone, 84.4 percent of workers are employed in the service industry.<sup>17</sup> The service industry consists of low-wage jobs such as food service and preparation and retail sales. Unemployment in Roxbury is 11.9 percent; one of the highest unemployment rates for a neighborhood in Boston.<sup>18</sup> Over 40 percent of residents are under the age of 24.

The plan for an Arts Innovation District slated for Dudley's Upham's Corner is an example of "creative placemaking", which is the intentional practice of leveraging art, cultural, and creative assets to serve a community's interest while driving a broader social agenda for change in a way that promotes inclusive public spaces, personal well-being,<sup>19</sup> and is a valuable resident-engagement strategy.<sup>20</sup> These findings suggest that, with appropriate support, the Dudley neighborhood is poised to create opportunities for young residents into Boston's greater creative economy.

The new Arts Innovation District, which runs from Dudley Square to Upham's Corner, is slated to provide employment opportunities, support existing businesses and start-ups, and provide resources and space for art institutions and local artists.<sup>21 22</sup> The Fairmount Cultural Corridor case study, *Do you See Yourself in Upham's Corner?* provides an overview of a typical arts innovation district. Per Imagine Boston: 2030, residents can expect the Arts Innovation District to have artist housing and resources and supported from re-purposing City-owned buildings, revised zoning, and other regulations.<sup>23</sup> However, gentrification is threatening to disrupt the sense of community needed to fuel these initiatives.

In the absence of specific information about available resources for local residents and merchants, residents have expressed concern about whether the proposed Arts Innovation District pilot will provide tangible benefits to current community members, and eventually lead to displacement of low-income residents and existing small businesses. Dudley youth have raw potential in the visual and cultural arts, strengths that could be transformed into specific skills needed for creative economy jobs. However, without targeted intervention, Dudley residents, especially youth and young adults who already face a high unemployment rate, will be left out of the Commonwealth's creative economy. Thus, this youth-led research project was designed to ensure that residents are part of shaping and defining the final plans of their Arts Innovation District.

## Overview of Project

### Research Questions and Goals

The goal of this participatory, youth-led action research was to uncover community assets and barriers to career pathways in the creative economy, and to propose recommendations for the inclusion of local youth from the Dudley neighborhood in the creative economy.

To that end, there were three research questions guiding this project:

- How do youth define the creative economy and what have been their experiences with accessing creative economic opportunities?
- To what extent are Dudley youth and residents aware of job and career opportunities in the creative economy and what are their perceptions of potential barriers to access?
- How do youth and neighborhood stakeholders envision a neighborhood-specific strategy for including youth in the creative economy?

The research included the involvement of employer and community organizations to examine how resources could be leveraged to increase the employability of youth in specific branches of the creative economy. It also resulted in the development of public art as a form of creative expression to share the research with the community.

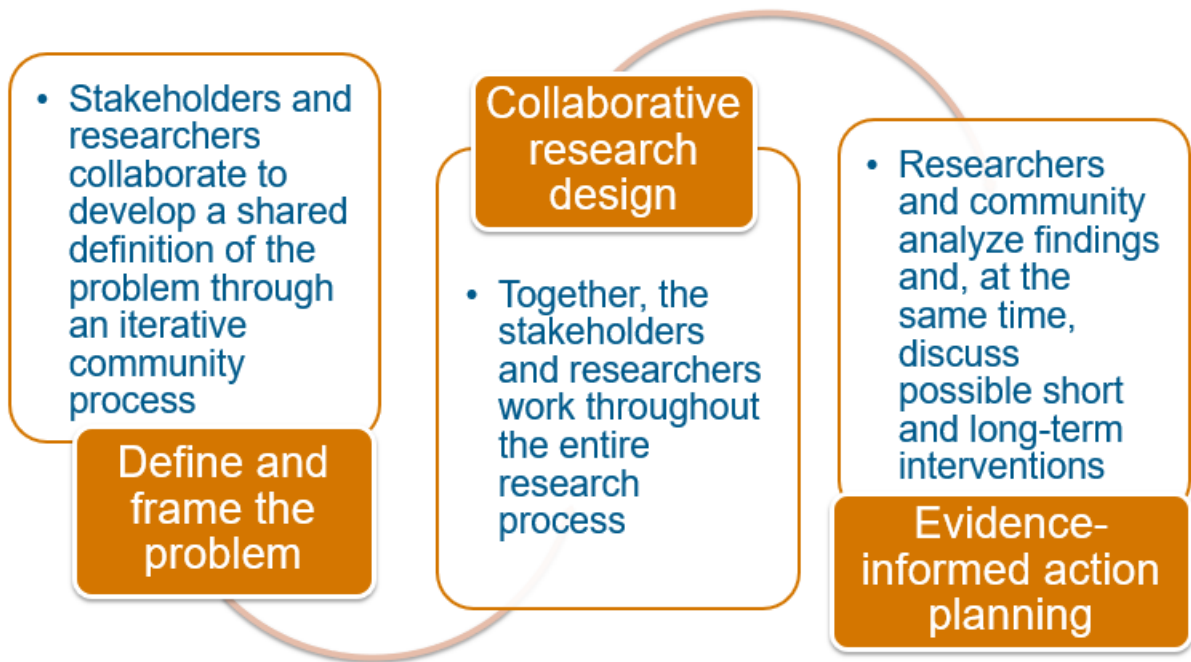
### Project Methodology

The goal of Participatory Action Research (PAR) is to empower economically disadvantaged communities by uncovering community assets and addressing inequalities from within the communities.<sup>24</sup> There are many different ways in which PAR can be implemented, based on the type of methods employed and the community-specific objectives and context. For this research project, the first three general steps of PAR<sup>25 26</sup> were implemented:

1. **Define and frame the problem:** Stakeholders (community members, policy makers, etc.) and researchers collaborate to develop with a shared definition of the problem through an iterative community process.

**2. Collaborative research design:** Based on how the problem is defined, PAR participants plan and design research. Together, the stakeholders and researchers work throughout the entire research process; from framing the problem, designing the research, collecting data, analyzing data, and generating recommendations. Knowledge is generated from people who are the real experts on issues facing communities—the local residents.

**3. Evidence-informed action planning:** Researchers and community members analyze findings and, at the same time, discuss possible short and long-term interventions.



Over the summer 2016, CSP worked with a group of 8 youth employees from the Dudley neighborhood over a six-week period to train them on Participatory Action Research (PAR). During the first week of the project, CSP facilitated the generation of research questions, a survey instrument, and focus group questions with the youth researchers. The methodological emphasis was to reflect on the importance of the project in terms of what it means for the youth and the community.

In the second week of training, youth researchers received intensive instruction on focus group facilitation, recruitment, and engaged in mock focus groups to prepare them to take on the facilitation roles. In the third and fourth week of the project, the youth disseminated a survey that explored the creative economy as an opportunity to develop skills and define career pathways and led four focus groups: two with other area youth and two with artists and arts organizations. CSP provided training on qualitative and quantitative data analysis and supported youth in the analysis of the research data they generated. In December 2016, the DSNI team facilitated the fourth focus group, with local artists and educators, to supplement the findings generated from the youth-led research. In total, 15 youth and 13 adults attended the focus groups. The adults represented the following creative economy occupations: performing arts, graphic design, cultural councils, visual arts, creative placemaking, and entertainment.

## Focus Groups Findings

The focus group data were analyzed to uncover themes and policy recommendations, as summarized below.

### Defining and Accessing the Creative Economy

Focus group participants collaborated to propose a definition of the “Creative Economy”: ***The Creative Economy creates opportunities in the community, supports self-expression, and enhances the vibrancy of the community.*** This definition reflects the voices of young people and artists, and it illustrates themes that emerged during the Participatory Action Project.

A flexible definition of the Creative Economy opened an important collaborative space during the focus groups to encourage open discussion. For artists of color in

Boston, economic and residential inequality exacerbates challenges for the development and sustainability of the creative economy.

*I think something we have to consider, with respect to the economy, is the real economic divide between downtown Boston and a lot of the wealth. Look at the new Seaport Innovation District, whereas Roxbury and Dorchester have been left behind in a lot of ways. There's a lot of conversation to make the increases in Boston city wide and not just in specific neighborhoods where there becomes this big economic divide in terms of the haves, who have tons of income, and are gentrifying neighborhoods, to where the infusion is not happening. So I think about economic divide as something which is a very real part of the growing economy, not necessarily uniformly growing city wide. - Community Focus Group Participant*

In terms of accessing opportunities in the creative economy, there was near-consensus among participants that school-based learning is the strongest place to support arts education and skill building:

*To me, I'd like to see the creative economy be incorporated more in school and in education as a whole. Just by providing classes for people to actually express themselves, like art classes, theater classes, whether they're just once a week or every other day, I feel like it's a good way for us to express ourselves, to be more included in a way. - Youth Focus Group Participant*

Given that young people spend so much of their time in school, participants noted that the creative economy must have pathways that extend into schools. These pathways could be after-school clubs, arts classes, field trips, mentoring relationships, or other programs.

*Revamp Boston Public Schools and actually put in art programming or make it so that if you don't want to hire an art teacher, make art residency from year to year basis. Hire them to work with students on specific projects, help develop them as artists, then have it last. Or two years. So that's could be working professional artist who provide quality education. - Artist*

## **Career Opportunities in the Creative Economy**

Participants were asked about the extent to which Dudley youth and residents were aware of job and career opportunities in the creative economy as well as their perceptions of potential barriers to access. Generally, the group characterized creative economy careers as “out of the box.” Some of these “out of the box” careers include the visual and performing arts, muralists, graphic artists, cosmetology, writing, music, and producing. As for potential barriers, many participants echoed similar sentiments concerning displacement due to gentrification and art-washing to attract wealthier, mostly white professionals.

Many of the focus group participants chose arts education as a critical factor in preparing young people for the creative economy. While schools are an obvious place to develop arts education strategies, they are not the only option. Participants agreed that there needs to be youth-friendly (if not entirely youth-led) venues in which creative communities can convene and collaborate.

## **Community-Driven Spaces for the Creative Economy to Thrive**

Reflecting about a “pipeline from education to market side,” one artist discussed why recording artists have difficulty making their careers in Boston:

*To get signed, you need venues, small and then enough large venues that people can be on circuit within their own city. Then you need an industry. If someone wants to move from a small to larger venue so that they can survive, you can't stay here. You need to go to NYC or Nashville to be at that scale. We don't have a full pipeline or value supply chain. - Artist*

Investment in venues allows artists to thrive in communities and offers a step-ladder toward exposure, as well as financial stability. Programs in schools, galleries, community centers, recording studios are where young people find pathways into the creative economy.

More venues for artists results in more opportunities to enter the creative economy. These venues would need to build their own recognition and reputation among Boston's creative communities. Exposure, recognition, reputation, and prestige are the kinds of dynamics that make up the creative economy. These aspects are difficult to quantify but necessary for a thriving creative economy.

When the traditional arts institutions (labeled by one artist as the “Boston Brahmins”) have strict definitions of who counts as an artist, and there is low capacity among arts non-profits, and a lack of venues, then there are few authentic spaces where Boston’s creative communities can connect and collaborate. One artist shared an anecdote about a collaborative space in which beats were shared with other performers only to then be stolen by those performers. These collaborations must be supported by trusted relationships between people.

Our analysis also uncovered distrust about traditional investments in neighborhood arts work. “Art washing” was discussed during two focus groups, as participants worried that a lot of public art, especially art created by outside artists, can accelerate gentrification. “Art washing” refers to marketing and political strategies that make use of art and artists to raise the price of local real estate.<sup>27</sup>

Young participants suggested that that the City of Boston should prioritize a “cultural exchange” with artists from other cities, so that Boston might learn how to better incorporate arts learning into the character of the city’s neighborhoods. A group of artists suggested developing a “counter theory” to creative placemaking in neighborhoods by investing in “indigenous artists.” These artists could be supported by “creative procurement” strategies. For example, new hotels, offices, and public buildings could buy visual art from Boston artists.

## **Connecting Young Artists to Communities**

Our analysis revealed that there is a gap between young people who are interested in the creative economy and artists who are able to guide them on a pathway. Currently, non-profit arts organizations are not sufficiently resourced to meet this need. This capacity gap narrows pathways into the creative economy and leads to what one artist called the “atomization” of Boston’s creative communities:

*Non-profit organizations are not designed to scale; they are not designed to be an industry. This creates narrow pipeline. Huge institutions like the MFA have particular guidelines for what’s “an artist.” Then you get lack of venues. There is a trickle-down effect - different artistic communities become atomized and it all goes underground-art show at someone's house. It is informal. Large communities don't connect. It can be in same areas but don't know what's happening. This creates cliques, and people don't work together. No one is making it. The same story keeps happening. - Artist*



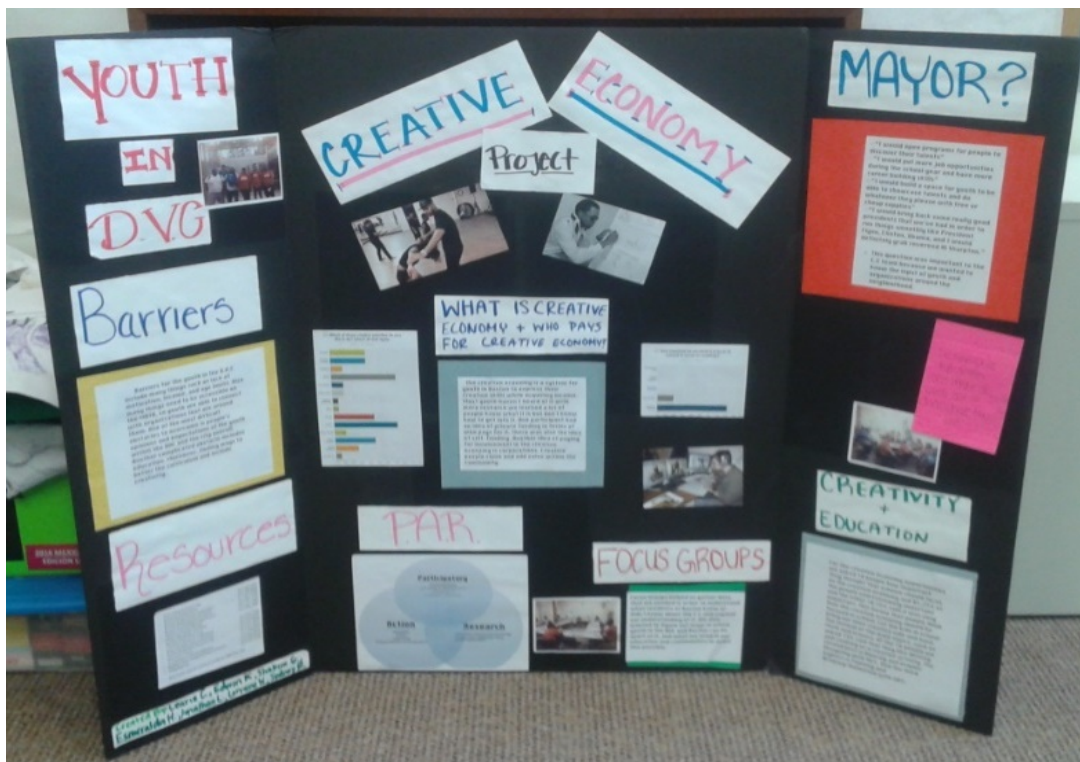
Fostering mentoring relationships emerged as a neighborhood-specific strategy for building pathways into the creative economy. Mentoring expose young artists to new methods and fosters trusting relationships. This enables youth to “learn the ropes” about how to navigate the creative economy, such as how to build a portfolio, who else to work with, or which opportunities to pursue. Mentoring is an important part of having an inclusive creative economy. As one artist expressed:

*The most important thing is solid mentorship. Really solid, good, people invested in working with youth and have them be working artists from communities. Can have an impact if they develop that relationship and if they are getting intense 1-1 teaching and guidance. - Artist*

The youth-led team also designed and administered a survey during the focus groups and at the Multi-Cultural Festival. They obtained 16 responses in total, resulting in a small sample and thus results must be interpreted with caution. The survey found that 50 percent of participants personally knew 20 or more individuals involved in making creative works of art. However, in a follow-up question concerning artists and economic sustainability, 38 percent of participants knew fewer than six individuals who support themselves financially through their art work. Regarding their own financial support of the creative economy, participants responded spending anywhere from less than \$100 to between \$1,000 to \$1,500 a year on creative products such as music, movies, books, paintings, makeup, and art supplies. Overwhelmingly, participants stated that community-based organizations, non-profits, and creative-based cooperatives could help connect individuals to jobs in the creative economy.

## Visual Art Project

The youth translated their finding into visual art that they shared with the community during DSNP's Annual Multicultural Festival in August 2016, which welcomed approximately 300 residents. As shown below, the art project visually depicts pathways into the creative economy for the greater Dudley community.



## Summary of Key Recommendations

The focus groups, supplemented by a literature review, revealed the following key findings and recommendations for next steps:

### Promote a Community-Driven Definition of the Creative Economy

As noted earlier, focus group participants collaborated to create a definition of the “Creative Economy”: *The Creative Economy creates opportunities in the community, supports self-expression, and enhances the vibrancy of the community.* This definition reflects the voices of young people and artists, and it illustrates themes that emerged during the Participatory Action Project.

Since there is no consensus definition of the Creative Economy, this grounded definition provides a starting place for policy-makers and planners. Rather than a top-down approach with predetermined definitions and goals, this community-created definition provides an opportunity to authentically engage with more residents, further expand and refine, and determine how the creative economy should be developed to benefit Boston neighborhoods.

### Develop Pathways and Invest in School-Based Learning

In terms of accessing opportunities in the Creative Economy, there was near-consensus among research participants that school-based learning is the strongest place to support arts education and skill building. Curriculum for young adults could have a greater focus on planning for a career in the arts, including portfolio building, making connections to galleries, or learning about furthering a student’s education. These pathways could include after-school clubs, arts classes, field trips, mentoring relationships, or other programs.

While there has been progress in providing arts education to Boston Public School students specifically, there is much work that needs to be done. According to the BPS website: “The number of high school students receiving any arts instruction has more than doubled from 2009 to 2015, from 26 to 63 percent, respectively.” However, there is an opportunity gap when students transition into high school. While many BPS students get exposure to the arts before high school, 37% of students do not access an art curriculum designed for high-schoolers.

## **Invest in Spaces for Artist Development and Promotion**

Economic and industry infrastructure needs to be in place in order for career pathways to be built. There is a need for more and larger venues for artists; and the City and neighborhood could explore theaters already built for festivals and other arts events. There are many under-utilized and under-recognized venues. For example, the Strand is a theater in the neighborhood, but it does not have the kind of recognition that ART, Merrimack Reparatory Theater, or Huntington Theater do.

To be sustainable, these venues need to be situated within the arts market -- such as galleries, recording studios, and neighborhood cultural centers. The UP Market is an example of easily integrating an arts market into other pre-existing spaces. The mission of the UP Market is to build a creative economy that supports local artists and businesses.<sup>28</sup> It features unique and local products created and offered by local artists and entrepreneurs. For example, at a performance of Mr. Joy at The Strand Theater, attendees could shop at the UP Market while they waited for the doors to open.

## **Support Mentoring Relationships**

Neighborhood-specific strategies for building pathways into the creative economy need to incorporate mentoring relationships. Mentoring relationships expose young artists to new methods, enable them to “learn the ropes” about how to navigate the creative economy, such as how to build a portfolio, who to partner with, or which opportunities to pursue. Thus, mentoring is an important part of fostering an inclusive Creative Economy

## **Develop Artist-in-Residency Programs and Financial Support for Artists**

There is an extant vibrant arts and culture in the Dudley Village Campus to leverage for the further development of the creative economy. For example, another case study published by the Fairmount Cultural Corridor, “*Intimate*

*Infrastructures: Spatial Expressions of Resilience and Connection*,” focuses on the impact that an Artist-in-Residence program has had on artists and the creative community in the neighborhood. The case study also describes how artists rely on small grants and philanthropy to pursue their artwork in the neighborhood.

A few cities in the U.S. have implemented innovative ideas to provide public support for artists. For example, in the low-income Central Northside neighborhood of Pittsburgh, writers-in-exile find sanctuary at City of Asylum, a hybrid arts and social service organization that transforms vacant and blighted residential properties into homes, venues for civic and cultural programs, and public spaces for arts-based community programs. In exchange for rent-free living and working space, medical benefits, a living stipend, help in securing publishers and long-term employment, City of Asylum’s visiting artists can be found teaching creative writing to local school-age children, holding public readings in the adjacent Reading Garden, or joining local musicians in parading down a newly-built trail to the river’s edge during the Jazz Poetry Festival. This is an idea the City of Boston could draw from.

### **Pilot Creative Procurement and Arts Purchasing Strategies**

Develop a “counter theory” to top-down creative placemaking in neighborhoods by investing in neighborhood artists. These artists could be supported by “creative procurement” strategies by the City of Boston. For example, new hotels, offices, and public buildings could buy and display visual art from Boston artists based in the community. Such investments could have larger payoffs: A local arts procurement strategy in the Canadian city of St. John resulted in one local artist’s work being displayed at the renowned Venice Biennale cultural exhibition, providing exposure for both the artist and the Province of Newfoundland.

### **Avenues for Future Research**

During the course of the project, a number of ideas emerged as potential questions to pursue for future research:

First, it is important to identify the educational and employment pathways for specific careers in the creative economy. Further research is needed on occupations, wages, pathways and bridge programs to the creative economy to ensure opportunities exist for all, thus leveraging talent across the board. Special

attention is needed to ensure the inclusion of low-income communities.

Next, it is essential to uncover what factors impact decisions to pursue careers in the creative economy. For example, youth may be deterred from taking certain jobs due to concern that their income will impact family earnings and thus public support receipt, lowering overall net resources (i.e., cliff effects).<sup>29</sup> Also, to what extent do diverse role models, existing art and cultural spaces, and mentorship play a role in career decisions? Understanding these factors in greater depth will provide critical information to design effective mentorship programs.

Finally, in addition to exploring racial disparities, it is also critical to unpack how gender affects formal definitions of creative occupations and the creative economy. Some occupations (e.g., cosmetology, make-up artists, etc.) may not be included or may be underrepresented in the creative economy due to gendered notions of creativity. A survey conducted in England concerning sex, gender, and work segregation in the creative industries, found that there is uneven distribution of women in the different fields in the creative industries and occupations. Specifically, creative jobs consisting of coordination and production were markedly 'female.' This includes book publishing, which holds 61 percent female employment and magazine publishing, at 48 percent.<sup>30</sup>

However, creative jobs considered more prestigious (directors), technical, and higher paying, are occupied in majority by men. The few craft and technical jobs held by women (costume designers, make-up artists, etc.) are undervalued and frequently "*not even recognized as involving craft or technical skills at all.*"<sup>31</sup> Research concerning gender segregation in the creative industries in the U.S. is still underdeveloped. The intersectionality of race and gender needs to be taken into consideration as creative economy policies are developed and implemented. Finally, there is a need to better understand the impact of alternative work arrangements and the creative economy. In the past decade, economists Katz and Krueger report that there was an increase of 9.4 million workers in "alternative work arrangements."<sup>32</sup> According to the art platform Etsy, 65 percent of the 1.7 million sellers on its site sell their goods as a way to supplement additional income.<sup>33</sup> More research is needed to understand how workers in creative jobs sustain themselves economically, including understanding the impact of online commerce and social media. This may be particularly salient for residents of low-income neighborhoods who have more limited access to public transportation to higher paying jobs.

## Conclusion

The creative economy is increasingly playing a critical role in contributing to state economies. Investing in an area's creative economy generates income, jobs, and tax revenue, and it also creates visibility for a region. Arts and cultural activities have become prominent features in a number of states and regions. Broadway in New York City; the entertainment industry in California; theater and music festivals of the Berkshires; and jazz in New Orleans, are all examples of place-based creative assets. As the city of Boston continues to invest resources in attracting private sector businesses to the area, the creative economy represents an opportunity to invest in local, cultural assets.

In order to realize the opportunities presented by the creative economy, initiatives must be developed with inclusivity as a priority. Otherwise, the creative economy can exacerbate issues of gentrification, segregation, and inequality. Currently, participation in the creative economy is clustered outside of Boston proper, in predominantly white, middle to upper class neighborhoods. This is indicative of the city's continual struggles with disparities in education, housing, income, and economically and racially segregated neighborhoods.<sup>34</sup> To make a significant impact, any future policies concerning economic and workforce development in the creative economy must be developed with equity and inclusivity at the center.

“Cultural” policy has the potential to create and implement innovative ideas around creative economy development in the city of Boston, with equity a central driving force. This research unearthed several ideas—some of which echo recommendations in the Boston Create initiative—in which the city could utilize public investments to develop creative assets in communities. Specifically, developing artists-in-residence programs in BPS, investing in affordable venues to inspire collaborations and mentorship between artists and youth, and supporting artist procurement contracts between the City and local artists to generate sustainable revenue streams. These policy recommendations have the potential to clear pathways into the creative economy for Boston's residents. As the city of Boston moves forward with its creative economy plan, the implementation of these community-driven policy recommendations will create a strong, Boston-centric and inclusive creative economy.

Improving neighborhoods in Boston's distressed areas is not just an issue for the economy, it's a matter of life and death. A report by the Healthy Neighborhoods Equity Fund, in partnership with the Conservation Law Fund and the Massachusetts Housing Investment Corporation<sup>35</sup> revealed that Roxbury residents

may expect to live, on average, until they are 58.9 years old. A Roxbury resident would expect to live longer if they lived in Cambodia, Gambia, or Iraq. Just three miles away, a Back Bay resident may expect to live until they are 91.9 years old. Improving access to the educational, employment, and cultural opportunities provided by the creative economy is a step toward increased well-being for all Boston residents.



## Appendix A

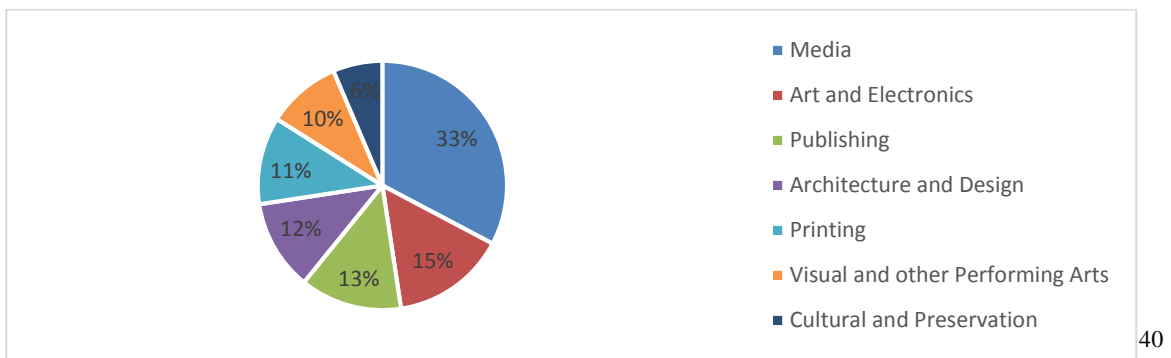
### Creative Economy in Massachusetts and Boston

The creative economy plays a larger role in New England's economy than in other parts of the U.S., employing more than 300,000 people who earn an estimated \$17 billion each year.<sup>36</sup> Of the roughly 22,600 creative enterprises in New England, approximately 44 percent are located in Massachusetts, with 9,943 firms employing 115,882.<sup>37</sup> Boston is home to close to 2,000 creative enterprises, more than any other city or town in New England with over four percent of the region's total creative enterprises. In 2014, employment in the creative industries for the city of Boston totaled 26,762 jobs in business establishments, making up 5.4% of the City's total private sector payroll employment. Inclusive of self-employed individuals, Boston's creative economy totals 36,254 workers. The 29,762 workers on employer payrolls took home over 2.4 billion dollars combined, averaging \$81,179 in annual wages.<sup>38</sup> However, total creative economy employment remains nearly unchanged since 2002 due to a boon in industries such as software development coupled with sharp declines in broadcasting, film and photography, and sound recording.

Recently, the Boston Planning and Development Research Agency (BPDRA) updated findings from their 2005 report assessing the scope and impact of creative industries in the city. The report focuses on tracking creative and cultural goods and services through what they identify as the "Creative Production Chain," from initial creation, to production and sometimes manufacturing and through to distribution.<sup>39</sup> Using this framework, the report found substantial shifts in creative sectors over the last decade, especially following the Great Recession. Broadcasting, publishing, film and photography, and sound recording have declined sharply. Boston's number of self-employed workers in the creative industries has increased in nine of the last twelve years, growing from 4,902 to 6,483 (32.2%) over the same time period. That increase accounts for a growth in independent artists, writers, and performers. Currently, self-employed workers make up just under half of Boston's creative economy, averaging \$59,087 in wage income, below the total average of wage income for creative economy employment.

In 2015, employment in the creative industry in Massachusetts totaled 149,438. Moreover, total creative occupations totaled 79,270. As demonstrated in Chart 1, “Employment by Creative Industry in Massachusetts 2015,” Media, Art and Electronics, and publishing were the largest occupations groups. Further, the top five creative workforce occupations include public relations specialist, graphic designers, postsecondary teachers involved in the arts, librarians, and public relations and fundraising managers.

**Chart 1. Employment by Creative Industry in Massachusetts (2015)**



**Chart 2. Employment in Creative Occupations in Boston (2014)**

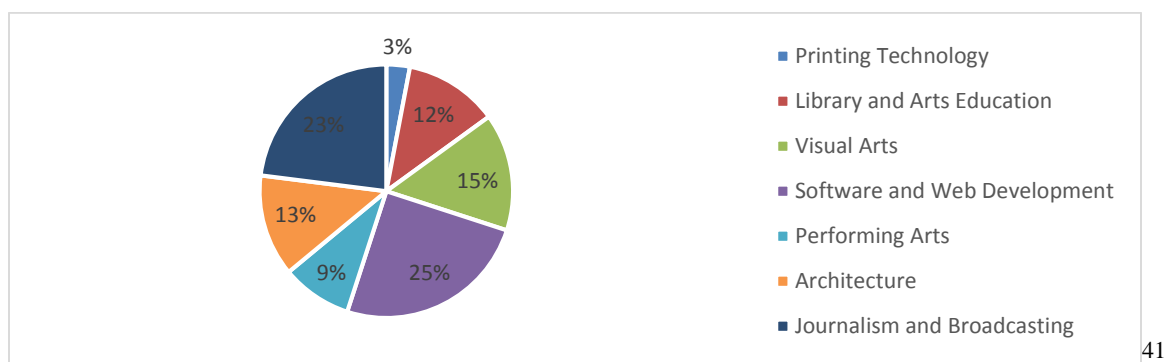


Chart 2, “Employment in Creative Occupations in Boston 2014,” shows the largest occupation groups for Boston. In the aftermath of the recession, growth has been strong across almost all creative economy sectors in Boston, with the total expanding by 20.9% between 2011-2014, compared to 7.1% growth for all private payroll employment. Software and web development as well as journalism and broadcasting make up almost half of creative occupations while performing arts and printing technology make up lower shares. Overall, this data concerns labor market trends within creative economy jobs, and does not include alternative work arrangements.

Using the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) ten-year occupational projections, the BPDRA estimated that the creative economy occupations will expand by 7.2 percent over the next decade, adding roughly 1,800 net jobs. These projections are slightly higher compared to traditional industries such as retail, where jobs are expected to expand by 5.3 percent. In contrast, hospitals are expected to expand jobs by 13 percent.<sup>42</sup> A majority of the fastest growing creative occupations require at least a bachelor’s degree. Openings in creative occupations will also be created by employee retirement and turnover. Counting both new job creation and replacement openings, creative occupations will have roughly 700 annual openings over the next decade in the city of Boston.

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