2021

Flipping the Script: Community Initiated Urban Research with the Liberal Arts Action Lab

Jack Dougherty
Trinity College, jack.dougherty@trincoll.edu

Megan Brown

Jeff Partridge

Trinity College
HARTFORD CONNECTICUT

About the authors:

Megan Brown is Assistant Professor of Advocacy and Political Leadership at Metropolitan State
University in St. Paul, Minnesota. She was the first director of the Liberal Arts Action Lab,
serving from 2017 to 2020.

Jack Dougherty is Professor of Educational Studies at Trinity College in Hartford, CT. He served
as Trinity's first faculty director of the Liberal Arts Action Lab and also as the first director of the
Center for Hartford Engagement and Research.

Jeff Partridge is Professor of English at Capital Community College in Hartford and Director of
the Hartford Heritage Project, a place-based education initiative. Jeff serves as the college's
faculty director of the Liberal Arts Action Lab.

Abstract

At traditional academic research centers, faculty and graduate students make decisions on what
topics to study. But the Liberal Arts Action Lab "flips the script" by empowering local residents of
Hartford, Connecticut to drive this process. In this chapter we compile, analyze, and reflect on
two years of data generated by Action Lab partnerships to answer the question: to what extent
has the Action Lab model of promoting resident-initiated participatory action research influenced
community development in the City of Hartford? We identify five distinct ways we found the
Action Lab to have produced effects with our partner organizations and the broader ecosystem
of community development in Hartford, CT: reflective effect, process effect, discovery effect,
applied effect, and strategic effect. In the chapter below, we describe the theory and practice
behind the Action Lab model, discuss how we use technology to increase participation in our
project selection process, and provide a brief overview of the program itself before describing in
detail the forms of effect we identified.

Introduction

At traditional academic research centers, faculty and graduate students make decisions
on what topics to study. But the Liberal Arts Action Lab "flips the script" by empowering local
residents of Hartford, Connecticut to drive this process. Prospective community partners from
different neighborhood groups and non-profit organizations submit one-page proposals about
real-world problems they wish to solve. All must agree to share their proposals on a public web

page, designed to share -- rather than hide -- what different organizations are planning to work on. The Action Lab convenes a board of Hartford residents to review and prioritize these proposals based on city-wide needs. Teams of undergraduate students and faculty fellows are drawn from the two campuses that jointly run this program: Capital Community College and Trinity College. Working together for a semester, students learn action research methods as one large group and collaborate in smaller teams to collect and analyze qualitative and/or quantitative data on the research project with their community partners. Depending on the needs of their partners, student teams produce solutions in a variety of formats, including educational materials, technological approaches, policy recommendations, and strategic shifts. The teams present their findings and proposed solutions at a public event and on the Action Lab website at http://action-lab.org.

From its launch in January 2018 through March 2020, the Action Lab has received 86 proposals from more than 70 different Hartford organizations, of which 27 have been selected to become teams, based on our capacity to staff training for undergraduate researchers. Community-initiated topics have included areas such as housing eviction, creative placemaking, and career advancement for food service workers. As one example, the North Hartford Promise Zone Mapping Project team worked with Community Solutions Inc., a Northeast Hartford community development corporation, to transform their block-by-block survey data into a series of story maps to illustrate the relationship between housing conditions and neighborhood health. Staff from this non-profit organization regularly attended classes with Action Lab students to learn GIS mapping skills, since their organization lacked this resource. As a result of the work, the organization added a residential strategy to their plans to redevelop an abandoned factory building. Also, the project sparked a larger collaboration on housing and health outcomes in all Hartford neighborhoods, funded by a 500 Cities Grant from the Urban Institute and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Learn more about all of the projects at https://action-lab.org/projects.

This chapter offers us a valuable opportunity to compile, analyze, and reflect on two years of data generated by Action Lab partnerships. Our research question: to what extent has the Action Lab model of promoting resident-initiated participatory action research influenced community development in the City of Hartford? In Fall 2019, we conducted interviews with organizations that submitted proposals -- both those that were and were not selected to become Action Lab teams -- to evaluate the relative influence of our collaborations. How did the process of submitting their Action Lab proposals on a public website shape their organization's thinking? For those selected to become Action Lab projects, to what extent did the undergraduate research partnership influence their work?

The relationship between community-based participatory action research and community development outcomes is nonlinear and often difficult to measure. Put another way, what counts as *action* in action-oriented research strains is under-theorized and under-researched (Stoecker, 2009). In most cases, when tasked with evaluating the broader impacts of community-based educational partnerships, researchers at academic institutions prefer to measure effect on learning, student engagement, or the quantity of institutional partnerships,

rather than investigate the ways in which student work may influence the broader work of the organizations and people with whom they work. In this chapter, we investigate, qualitatively, the variety of effects that we are able to identify in the first few years of Action Lab operation. While some effects are observable and concrete (such as contributing to the construction of a new park or center), most other effects are more amorphous (such as producing knowledge to help strategic planning). In a project like the Action Lab, in which organizations are asked to invest time and thought in crafting proposals with no guarantee that they will be included in a formal partnership, an additional question arises: what effects might we observe that accrue to the proposal process itself? Through our conversations with our past partners, we have identified five types of effects that may accompany community-based participatory research partnerships involving undergraduate students: reflective effect, process effect, discovery effect, applied effect, and strategic effect. By defining these types of effects using qualitative data from interviews with our partners, we aim to expand conceptions of what matters in community-based participatory research. In a field in which the most common outputs include organizing meetings or writing reports, it is important to investigate the significance behind these actions. In addition, we discuss the potential for longer-term impact in the building of the Action Lab itself, explaining the infrastructure required to promote participation and expand partnerships between organizations and institutions of higher education. In the chapter below, we describe the theory and practice behind the Action Lab model, discuss how we use technology to increase participation in our project selection process, and provide a brief overview of the program itself. Then we define and discuss each of these forms of effect and how they contribute to the broader ecosystem of community development in Hartford, CT.

How does the Action Lab Develop Communities?

The Action Lab is an educational partnership, first and foremost, between Capital Community College and Trinity College. Students from both institutions enroll in Action Lab courses and work on a semester-long project with a Hartford-based community partner, exploring and proposing solutions to the most intractable problems facing the city. We are committed to both high quality learning and doing work that is important to the city of Hartford. Before turning to the ways that we define our effect on Hartford, we will begin by describing the conceptual underpinnings of the key programmatic components of the Action Lab, drawing on the literature surrounding community-based participatory research. First, we discuss the unique character of the educational partnership between two very different institutions. Then we discuss our techniques for encouraging community participation in our projects and remaining accountable to the broader communities to which we hold ourselves responsible.

Community-based participatory action research is a broad and diverse field, but the central innovation of the paradigm is centering the role of affected communities in knowledge production and using scholarship to actively combat oppression and marginalization (Cahill, Cerecer, and Bradley 2010; Janes 2015; Sherrod 2006). Employing techniques designed to relocate epistemic authority from academic sites to affected communities, participatory research aims to democratize knowledge while also improving research (Cahill et al. 2010). By cultivating

deep solidaristic relationships with affected communities, participatory methods practitioners strive to work *with* and not *for* people and places experiencing oppression and marginalization, knowing that these relationships are always contested and contextual, subject to reflection and mediation (Albrecht, Brewer, and National Women's Studies Association 1990; Cahill et al. 2010; Nagar and Sangtin Writers Collective 2006). In action-oriented strains of the tradition, research is tied directly to active engagement to change social conditions, especially feminist and anti-racist praxis (Bell 2012; Smith 1999). As Cahill, Quijada Cerecer & Bradley write, "more than studying a phenomenon, the research sets out to "do something" within a context in which it is urgent" (Cahill et al. 2010:407). The Action Lab was conceived in community-based participatory action methods, and while it remains a short-term, undergraduate-level, course-centered engagement, the questions posed by critical participatory research -- namely how best to co-create knowledge alongside affected communities while working to remain accountable to broader forms of action -- are those that drive us.

Specifically, as we developed the Action Lab, we grappled with three questions, both practical and conceptual, that were posed by the goal of 'flipping the script' of academic research: (1) conceptually, how should we define 'affected communities' as we embark on several short term projects in a semester?; (2) practically, using what democratic processes and what research techniques, how should we distribute decision-making authority among the participants?; and (3) by what standards will we know that we have 'done something' of use or importance through our projects?

Defining Affected Communities - With Whom Do We Work?

If centering the role of affected communities in research is a central component of participatory research, then defining the affected communities with whom we work is essential for new labs. The Action Lab takes its location in Hartford, CT as the starting point when defining the community to which we are responsible. The charter for the Lab states that we will work on projects that help to "strengthen the city and its role in the region, spark social innovation, and support civic engagement and sustainability" (action-lab.org). This breadth helps maintain the relevance of the Action Lab's work in the city, but it also creates specific programmatic closures that affect the direction of the work that we do.

While place-centric definitions of "community" are common, and indeed most attempts to define community include both "place-based" and "identity" components (Hoffmann 2016; Martin 2003), relying on the political boundaries of a city to provide a working definition of community runs contrary to current trends of community-based participatory research. Contrast our approach with projects like the Fed Up Honeys project in New York City (Cahill 2006; Cahill et al. 2004) or the Mestizo Arts & Activism Collective in Salt Lake City (Cahill, Cerecer, et al. 2010). These projects, like many others, define the communities to which projects are responsible using social categories such as race and gender, while geographic location serves as a container for activity. Other well-known projects, such as the Morris Justice Project in New York, take a hyper-local, neighborhood-level view of community, layering this geography with shared experiences of race, class, and gender (Stoudt and Torre 2014). Indeed, in segregated

U.S. cities, race and place are often conflated. In still other projects, communities are defined through shared circumstances, such as the Youth Action Hub, a participatory research project based in the Hartford area that employs youth with experiences of housing instability or homelessness in a long-term participatory research project (youthactionhub.org).

Keeping in mind the overlapping and intricate definitions of communities that drive many contemporary participatory projects, the Action Lab drew significant inspiration from an early example of participatory geographic scholarship: the Detroit Expedition. The Detroit Expedition was led by Gwendolyn Warren and Bill Bunge in the late 1960s and provided free college-level classes on geographic thought and empirical practices such as mapping and interviewing to residents of Detroit neighborhoods (D'Ignazio and Klein 2020). As an education and research experiment that also sought to prove the usefulness of geographic thought to combating racial injustice, the Detroit Expedition combined college credit with impact-oriented scholarship designed to influence policy. Its groundbreaking book, *Fitzgerald: Geography of a Revolution*, was a detailed and critical analysis of its Detroit neighborhood, which the collective used to influence policymakers and neighborhood residents alike (Bunge n.d.). Like the Detroit Expedition, the Action Lab stays firmly embedded in its urban location, grappling with understanding and addressing problems relating to structural disinvestment, racial injustice, and poverty.

A Note on Hartford

Hartford, Connecticut's state capital, is a small city of no more than 18 square miles. This city of 125,000 is home to a wide range of Latino residents (43%) from Puerto Rico and other Caribbean islands, Mexico, Central America, and South America; Black residents (39%); non-Latino White residents (15%) and Asian residents (3%). About one-third of Hartford residents identify as Puerto Rican, the second-highest concentration in the Northeast, and the city also includes a vibrant West Indian community, with many who identify as Jamaican. Politically, Hartford was one of the first major cities in New England to elect a Black mayor (in 1981), a Black female mayor (in 1987), and a Latino mayor (in 2001).

During the Gilded Age of the late nineteenth century, Hartford was known as the "richest city" in the United States and as a center for banking, insurance, and manufacturing. But much of that wealth moved to the suburbs during the twentieth century. As a result, economic inequality defines metropolitan Hartford today. The median household income is about $34,000 in the city of Hartford versus $73,000 in the metropolitan area. Similarly, about 24 percent of the housing stock is owner-occupied in the city versus 67 percent in the metropolitan area. Trinity College adjoins three neighborhoods -- Behind the Rocks, Frog Hollow, and Barry Square -- with some of the highest concentrations of people living in poverty (34 to 40 percent) in the city of Hartford (ACS 2013-17; CT DataHaven 2017). Hartford is also a city that is rich with institutions, home to a still-healthy financial and insurance sector, and surrounded by substantial personal and family wealth. Despite these advantages, the city government struggles to bring in enough tax revenue to pay for the services it requires, largely because a majority of its landbase is owned by non-property-tax-paying entities like the state of Connecticut and large nonprofit

institutions. With all of its advantages, the city struggles to make needed investments in infrastructure, social services, and education.

Because we define our community based on the political boundaries of the city of Hartford, the next questions are with whom should we work, and how should we structure that work? Our decision to define our affected communities by using the scale of the city - even a small city like Hartford - creates some operational difficulties when designing the mechanisms through which we select projects and structure participation. While other participatory projects often identify and enroll individual community members, creating research collectives that live in various organizational settings, we work primarily with organizations in short-term collaborations. We have worked with small nonprofits, city agencies, social entrepreneurs, community groups without nonprofit status, and larger and more established nonprofit organizations. Though the size and scope of the organizations are variable, it is important for us to have representatives to work closely with in our projects. Below, we outline in more detail the digital infrastructure that we built and maintain in order to foster connections amongst organizations spanning the space of the city.

A Strategic Higher Ed Partnership for Hartford

In investigating the effects of the first two years of Action Lab programming, it has become clear that the infrastructure created to sustain a partnership between two differently situated institutions of higher education is a crucial component of the lasting effect of the program. It also indelibly shapes the participatory nature of the work conducted at the Action Lab. An academic partnership between a private four-year liberal arts college and a public two-year community college is rare in the current higher education landscape. In fact, the Action Lab is the first significant curricular partnership that has been sustained between Trinity College and Capital Community College, despite the two institutions having shared the same small city for decades.

Trinity College is an internationally renowned liberal arts institution that draws from 45 states and 67 countries to make up it's student body of 2,200. It is a residential campus of traditional college-aged students (i.e. 17-21), 44% of whom receive some form of financial aid and 18% of whom are people of color. As such, the average student joining the Action Lab from Trinity College is new to Hartford and does not identify experientially with the economic and ethnic make-up of the communities of Hartford. Capital Community College, by contrast, is a commuter college with an average student age of 29 and, like Hartford, is majority students of color, with 36% black, 31% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and 9% self-identified as Other. Among the black and Latinx populations, Jamaicans and Puerto Ricans predominate, which reflects the largest ethnic populations of Hartford itself. Like Trinity, Capital draws from students around the globe, with over 45 languages represented in its student body, but at Capital, only a handful of non-native students are true international students (i.e. students residing temporarily in the United States to obtain a degree), but rather are immigrants and refugees seeking to better their prospects in their new homeland.

Prior to the Action Lab's founding, both institutions were profiled by the *Hechinger Report* as pillars of opposite ends of educational privilege. In 2015, an article was published that the Trinity College Communications Department simply refers to as the "flavored water" article. In it, the author opens with the stark contrast between the dining hall at Trinity College and the

campus of Capital Community College, one of the only other institutions of higher education located within the Hartford city limits.

> "The main dining hall at Trinity College starts you off with a choice of infused water: lemon, pineapple, strawberry, melon. There are custom-made smoothies, all-day breakfasts, make-your-own waffles, and frozen yogurt, along with countless choices of entrees hovered over by white-jacketed chefs… Across the city, off an exit from an elevated highway, other students dodge downtown traffic to squeeze into the sluggish elevators in time for the start of their classes at Capital Community College. This campus consists of a concrete parking garage and a onetime department store converted into classrooms and offices."

Viewed through this singular lens, the two institutions are well positioned to reflect the staggering inequality in the higher education sphere. Yet both operate in the same city and students, though not in large numbers, have attended both institutions. Two of these students currently serve on the Hartford Resident Advisory Board of the Action Lab. The Action Lab began as a partnership to create a curricular opportunity that was open to both Capital and Trinity students to learn about community-engaged scholarship and apply lessons to projects proposed by Hartford-based community partners.

At first glance, such a partnership may seem impractical. The connotations of the terms "private" and "public" suggest significant preparatory and class differences on the one hand; while significant practical differences surely loom on the other: residential vs. commuter campuses, full-time vs. part-time matriculation, traditional college age vs. age diversity, and more. Such differences are real, and some of the challenges they pose will be briefly explored below. However, the Liberal Arts Action Lab was constructed around the expected benefits of such an unlikely partnership. In short, the strategy is intended to enhance the ontological groundedness and diversity of the research teams as they work with Hartford community partners in service of Hartford residents. Moreover, this strategy helps to bridge -- and in some cases, demystify -- perceived differences between these institutions and their students.

By joining forces with Hartford's community college, the Action Lab increases its experiential identification with the communities it seeks to serve and thereby increases its relevance and effectiveness. Although the Action Lab does tend to attract Trinity students who have already been exposed to Hartford through service learning and other Hartford-centric programs, it is rare for Trinity students to be from Hartford itself. Significantly, 71% of Capital's students are residents of Hartford and neighboring towns, with residents of Hartford proper making up 35% in 2019 and 50% in 2018. This ratio is mirrored in the Action Lab enrollment from Capital Community College. Each semester of its operation, the Action Lab has attracted a Hartford-resident percentage of 50% or higher from among its Capital cohort. In Spring 2019, seven of the eight Capital students enrolled in the Action Lab were Hartford residents.

The strategy of partnering between these two institutions draws upon each institution's strengths. Trinity College has a strong community-engaged research programming that encourages civic-mindedness among its students, a history of engagement with Hartford as a key anchor institution, and financial resources. Capital Community College has diverse and engaged students who both represent and identify with Hartford. Together they form an alliance

that can collaborate with Hartford community organizations in their mission to address the problems facing Hartford and its residents.

The unique partnership influences the work we do in several important ways. First, Hartford community organizations are eager to work with blended teams of Capital and Trinity students. In the course of one-on-one discussions about the Action Lab, many potential partners have mentioned that they were drawn to the program because of the chance that some students would be local to Hartford and stay in Hartford after graduating. They also appreciated the fact that there would likely be students who came from the Hartford communities that their organizations represented or worked with: recent immigrants or migrants to the US, students who went through or worked in Hartford Public schools, students who had experienced homelessness, Hartford residents who had lived in the neighborhood for 40+ years. In fact, each of these examples comes from a specific Action Lab project in which students paired with organizations had lived experience that was relevant to the project. As mentioned above, community-based participatory action research seeks to foster the deep involvement of affected communities in research. It is especially important to promote involvement that goes beyond data collection and includes designing the project and analyzing results. The Action Lab, by virtue of its partnership between Trinity College and Capital Community College, extends this commitment by building the institutional connections necessary to ensure that the student populations involved in all stages of these projects are likely to have relevant community ties.

In many cases, for example, Capital students had been long-term residents of the specific neighborhood in which a project was working. For one of these projects, a local parks organization, Riverfront Recapture, wanted to engage community input to help shape the development of the park they were planning for a North Hartford neighborhood. A long-term resident of the neighborhood was on the Action Lab team that took on the project. She was able to help connect the other students to important community locations, accompany them to the neighborhood to collect surveys, and identify important other neighborhood groups where she led the team to present its work. Without her presence the team would have had a harder time making inroads into the neighborhood to get and share back relevant information.

Another example of the efficacy of this partnership can be found in the team formed for the Black Heritage project in Spring 2020. This project set the student team with the task of researching and promoting the historical significance of the Talcott Street Congregational Church, which was a center of emancipation, spiritual community, education, and black resistance to white supremacy in the 19th century. The church existed a block from the current Capital Community College and remains unmarked and un-memorialized. This project attracted four strong applicants, three from Capital, residents of Hartford, and one from Trinity, a resident of a Massachusetts city with many similarities to Hartford. All four of the students were attracted to this project because, as young black scholars, they saw the erasure of this history as a personal affront. They reflected on their own schooling and were appalled that no one ever taught them about the black community in 19th century Hartford and the significant advances in resistance, education, and abolition that centered at this one site, now forgotten to nearly everyone. In the year following the completion of the Action Lab component of the Black

Heritage Project, the project itself has lived on. It was recently awarded a grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities to implement some of the recommendations made by the students and continue the development of curriculum relating to these important historical sites.

Demystifying Differences

While the primary purpose of the partnership between these two very different institutions is strategic, the partnership has also helped shape a new narrative about the students of these two institutions. Community partners, staff and faculty of both institutions, and friends and family of the students come together at the end of each semester to view the digital poster presentations of each Action Lab group. Those who attend these sessions typically comment on the quality of the research and the professionalism of the presentations, and they call attention to the fact that the Trinity and the Capital students, as one visitor put it, "stood shoulder-to-shoulder, you couldn't tell the difference." This comment not only attests to the impressiveness of the Action Lab teams, but it belies the implicit expectation that Trinity students would outperform Capital students.

For the Capital students, this demystification of the elite private college student is advantageous to their own progress in pursuing a four-year degree. Finding that they work as equals with Trinity students gives the Capital students confidence to aim high in life and believe in their own capabilities. By the same token, if any Trinity students entered with a low view of community college students, their experience in the Action Lab would likely explode their preconceptions and stereotypes.

While this demystification of difference clearly takes place in the Action Lab and is an important result of the partnership between Trinity and Capital, the process does not always come without a struggle. Student project teams are often confronted with real differences -- like availability, levels of comfort in Hartford, and the digital divide (not just economic, but also age-based -- several of the students from Capital have been senior citizens working on their college degrees). The more insidious differences, however, are the perceived ones. Common refrains from the students include *'students from that college don't want to mix with us'* and *'we don't have as much time because our school work is more demanding'* or *'we don't have as much time because we have to work to pay for college.'* Undergirding all of these messages is the persistent refrain of group work, regardless of difference: '*why do we have to pick up their slack?'* Encountering and engaging with these power differentials, which are found between students from different colleges, between the academy and the community, and between teachers and students is the core of Action Lab work.

Lilly Herrera, Olivia Painchaud, Maria Martinez, Christian Gardner, members of the Hurricane Maria Action Lab team

These differences, perceived and real, are the differences the students will continue to face throughout their working lives. The partnership between Capital and Trinity therefore allows students from both colleges to develop, under the guidance of their professor, real life skills of teamwork and problem solving to meet an aim. In this respect, the Action Lab becomes a laboratory for learning teamwork and living democracy.

Designing Participation: What Techniques Do We Use to Distribute Authority?

Participatory research asks that affected communities be involved in each stage of a research project, from initiation, to data collection, to analysis, to write-up and dissemination. The methods used to structure this involvement vary substantially. Many thoughtful practitioners have noted that the persistent power imbalances between those in the academy and those on its fringes shape the quality and length of participation by affected communities (Janes 2015). When launching the Liberal Arts Action Lab in fall 2017, one of our key goals was to invert the regular routine of urban researchers by "flipping the script." Rather than asking academics what they wanted to study in the city, we invited Hartford community partners to define the problems and questions that they wanted to be answered, to help us attract and build teams of interested students and faculty from Capital Community College and Trinity College. The construction of the infrastructure used to encourage and structure participation in the process is a key outcome of Action Lab work in its first two years of operation. As we will outline below, the digital infrastructure, program policies, and strategic investments in personnel are crucial to locating the Action Lab as a site for community engaged research and action in Hartford.

As we developed the structure of the Action Lab, we deliberately designed programmatic and policy-oriented techniques to decenter the role of academic partners,

whether students or faculty, during the project initiation phase of the research.[1] The Action Lab has removed our academic partners - faculty, staff, and students - from the project initiation phase of our research projects as much as possible. Twice a year, we solicit proposals using word-of-mouth advertising and targeted outreach to collect problem statements from a variety of organizations.

Every Action Lab team research project begins with a one-page proposal submitted by a Hartford community partner. Partners are broadly defined to include neighborhood groups, non-profit organizations, government agencies, social entrepreneurs, and others who seek to improve the city or its role in the metropolitan region. The Action Lab widely distributes an invitation for partners to submit proposals well in advance of the semester when projects will be completed, typically at the end of February for the Fall semester, and the end of October for the Spring semester. The online proposal asks for basic information about the community partner and their mission, along with three core questions:

- **Project:** What problem or question do you want an Action Lab team to help you solve? Up to one paragraph.
- **Research:** What type of information and research work will your project include? Up to one paragraph
- **Products:** What products do you need (written, visual, web), and how will you use them? Up to one paragraph.

By design, the Action Lab minimizes barriers to entry by asking partners to write responses only to these core questions, which total up to about one page of writing. Since community partners and their organizations have different levels of funding and staffing, the Action Lab Director tries to help everyone submit their best possible application by offering to meet with them in person to draft or revise their written proposals prior to the deadline. Furthermore, the Action Lab welcomes joint proposals from two or more partners, and our simple online form makes this relatively easy for partners to collaborate. Finally, we inform applicants that, if their proposal is selected, they must be available to meet with an Action Lab research team at least once a month during our project times (either Tues, Wed, or Thurs afternoons, or Weds evenings) at our downtown campus. We follow up with those who advance to the next round on their scheduling preferences.

During our initial start-up period, we often explained to prospective community partners that the Action Lab, as a joint partnership between two academic institutions, was best positioned to help them solve their "knowledge problems." For example, what kind of local data could our undergraduate teams help collect and analyze, to answer a question about their work? Or how could we research different models of doing related work in other cities, and draw connections back to Hartford? We believed that "knowledge problems" needed to be distinguished from other types of problems that under-resourced organizations commonly face,

---

[1] Although this was not the inspiration for Action Lab program structure, a very similar model can be found in literature on "science shops." For a good outline of this model, see Stoecker, Barr, and Skinner (this volume).

such as "resource problems" (to obtain more funding for their work) and "political problems" (to build broader coalitions to support their work). It is not the mission of the Action Lab to directly distribute funds or lobby politicians on behalf of partner organizations, but the Action Lab emphasizes the power of education: by working together to gather research or interpret evidence to solve "knowledge problems," community partners certainly can become better equipped to make stronger pitches to prospective funders and political coalitions.

Unlike traditional applications that remain hidden behind closed doors, the Action Lab intentionally designed our application process to be online and open to the public. To submit an application on our website (http://action-lab.org/apply), a partner must check this box:

- **Public**: I grant permission for my proposal to be shared on the public web, after review by the Action Lab.

The Action Lab believes that making the application process public delivers important educational benefits to the broader community. When community partners can read each others' proposals, they learn more about each others' interests and plans for making positive change in the community, which increases the potential for cross-organizational collaboration. Furthermore, partners that are looking for ways to strengthen their written proposals can view all submissions online, and build on stronger examples that clearly identify the core problem or question and how a proposed Action Lab research team would work to address it. In our six proposal rounds, in which nearly 40 organizations submitted proposals, only one community partner expressed reservations about the public nature of the proposal process. When the proposal process is open, everyone has greater opportunities to learn.

Shortly after the deadline, all partner applications are compiled and reviewed by the Hartford Resident Advisory Board (HRAB). Its role is to ensure that community members make decisions on prioritizing proposals to receive support from Action Lab research teams, rather than granting this power to college administrators and faculty. HRAB consists of six city residents who are actively engaged in their communities and who are familiar with academic research, including what it can and cannot be expected to accomplish. HRAB members are nominated by the Action Lab Director and the two Faculty Directors from each academic institution. Some members have been students at Capital Community College and/or Trinity College, which offers valuable insight to our undergraduate teaching mission and an opportunity for alumni to give back to their communities. The Action Lab Director chairs the review meeting, where members are asked to discuss the merits of proposals on these criteria:

- Will this proposal lead to improving Hartford and/or its role in the metro region?
- Will this proposal lead to high-quality learning by a team of Capital/Trinity students?
- Have we prioritized proposals from a wide range of Hartford community groups?

These criteria reflect the Action Lab's continuous internal tension: weighing each community partner's institutional goals, versus the educational value to the students, versus the equitable distribution of academic research resources across the city. HRAB members address these

issues during their hour-long discussion, and then submit their numerical rankings by secret ballot. The Action Lab Director compiles the results to identify six top-priority projects to advance to the next round. Since HRAB members usually are not employed by Capital or Trinity, the Action Lab provides a modest compensation for their valuable contribution in ensuring that Hartford residents are the key decision-makers for research proposals involving the people of Hartford.
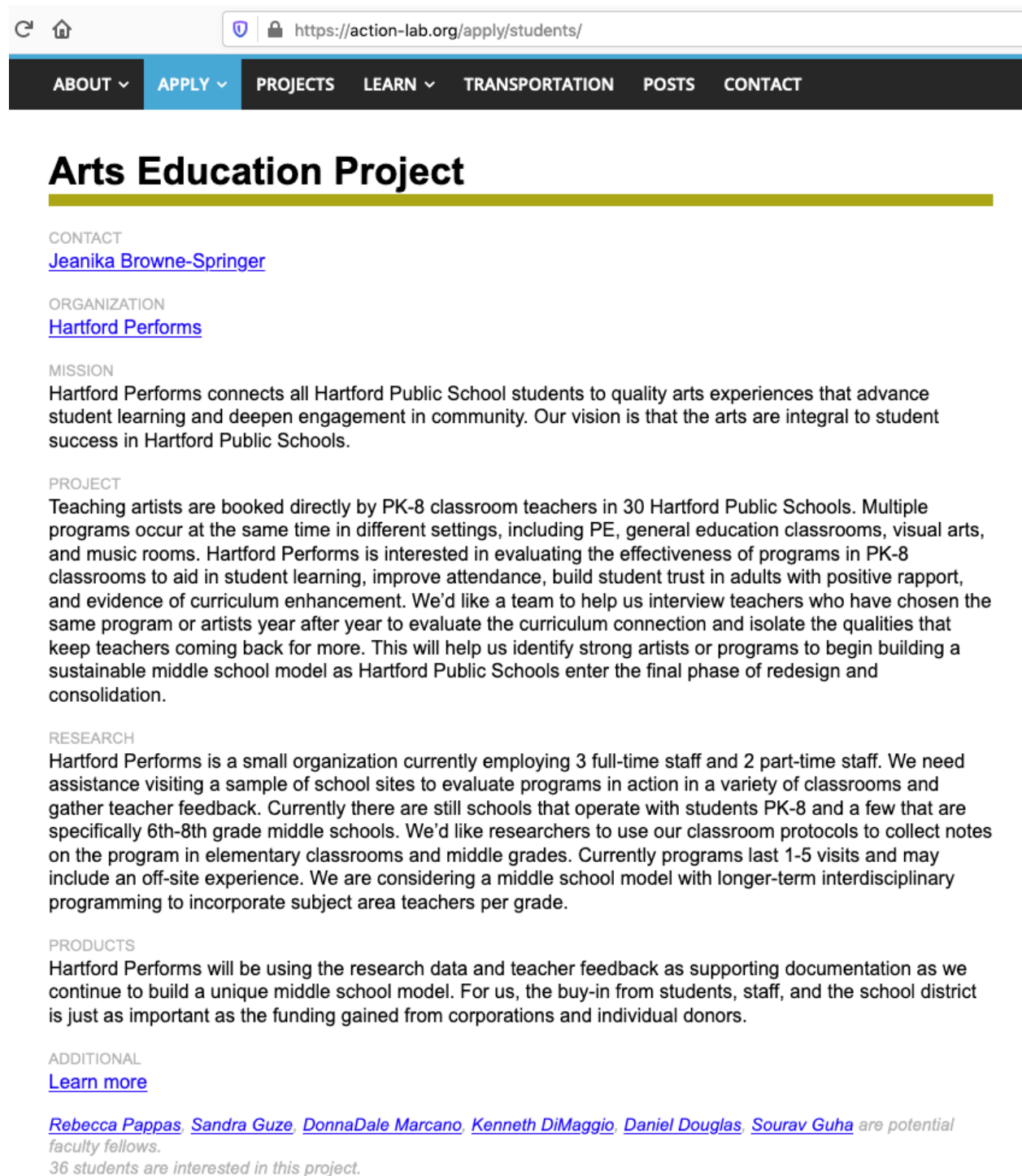
After HRAB has prioritized the community partners' top proposals, the next step is a "matching" exercise to recruit students and faculty fellows from Capital and Trinity to apply to join Action Lab research project teams in the upcoming semester. Since our launch three years ago, our average numbers each semester are now:

- 15-20 proposals submitted by Hartford community partners each semester
- 6 top-ranked proposals by HRAB, and Action Lab recruits students and faculty to apply
- 4-5 project teams matched by the Action Lab each semester, depending on faculty staffing and scheduling for all parties

This "matching" exercise raised many logistical challenges. While it was crucial to our project to hold an open and community-driven process while identifying projects, the number of proposals and the variety of organizations presented logistical problems. How could we "match" all of these people without asking them to meet up in the same room at the same time, especially if it wasn't certain that a given project could move forward? Our solution relied on a creative lightweight open-source code addition to a typical online Google Form. When Hartford community partners submit proposals on the Google Form, their results appear in a Google Sheet, where the Action Lab Director reviews content for clarity, adds a short project title, and checks a box to approve it. Approved proposals appear on the public Action Lab web page, thanks to a short JavaScript code extension written by Ilya Ilyankou, the Action Lab student software developer, which publishes the Google Form content online. (For details, see this open-source GitHub repository: https://github.com/Action-Lab/application-matching).

The screenshot below illustrates how proposals appear on the public Action Lab website. In this example, Hartford Performs is a non-profit community partner that requested assistance in conducting observations of their arts programming in Hartford Public Schools. When filling out the online form for Spring 2020, the partner checked the box to grant permission for the Action Lab to make their proposal public online. Since this proposal was ranked highly by the Hartford Resident Advisory Board, it advanced to the next stage for the Action Lab to recruit prospective students and faculty fellows from Capital Community College and Trinity College. At the bottom of the screenshot, names of six prospective faculty fellows who expressed interest in the proposal appear online (with their permission), along with links to their faculty profiles, which we included because students requested to know more about their potential faculty fellows. Finally, when prospective students fill out their version of the online application form, with their research team and schedule preferences, the total number of interested students appears at the bottom of the screenshot to indicate the relative popularity of the project. This serves as a rough indicator of the likelihood the proposal will become an actual

research team, while protecting individual student confidentiality. Overall, this open-source code addition makes Google Form data more valuable to all Action Lab participants by making it more visible.

Screenshot of sample Hartford community partner proposal on Action Lab website.

The Action Lab seeks to democratize the knowledge process through a combination of newer web technology and old-fashioned face-to-face conversations. Both digital and human communication are essential: we could not relay all of these details to our partners, students, and faculty fellows without computers, but at the same time we could not persuade all of these people to participate in this public forum without personal support and assurance of mutual respect. The Action Lab depends on building relationships through transparency and trust.

Action Lab Programming and Teaching

Once we have selected the projects that we work on and formed our project teams for the semester, Action Lab programming begins in earnest. Prior to the beginning of the semester, community partners, faculty fellows, and the Action Lab director meet to discuss the goals for the project, ironing out the details of the students' work and establishing expectations for the partnership. Each project is different, requiring the project teams to draw on tools from different disciplines, and the needs of a specific project may require tweaking the Action Lab curriculum to support the specific needs of the partner.

The students in the Action Lab enroll in two simultaneous courses, a survey course designed to introduce students to Action Research Methods and a project-based course. Our students are early career undergraduates, many of whom have not had prior coursework in research design or community-based projects. The survey course emphasizes ethical collaboration with diverse communities, including several weeks in which we critically reflect on the role of difference in knowledge production and collaboration.

The project-based course asks students to immediately apply what is being learned in the survey course to their collaboration with their community partner. Students work in teams to design a semester-long project, collect data, analyze data, and propose solutions to the problems they have been tasked with solving. Along the way, they meet regularly with their partner organization and with their faculty fellow to collaborate and debrief about the process. As the projects themselves progress, students gain confidence in research skills; they also gain confidence in navigating differences within a team, fairly distributing work, holding team members accountable, reaching out to community members and community leaders for advice or interviews, navigating the city using public transportation, public speaking skills, and incorporating a variety of conflicting perspectives in final products.

How does the Action Lab process affect Hartford community partners?

Since the Liberal Arts Action Lab announced its first call for proposals in September 2017, over 70 Hartford community partners have submitted a total of 86 proposals across a wide range of topics. A total of 27 projects have been run during our first three years of operation.

Community Partner Proposals to Liberal Arts Action Lab, 2018 to date

For semester	Proposals submitted	Project teams created
2018 Spring	11	5
2018 Fall	10	4
2019 Spring	21	4
2019 Fall	14	4
2020 Spring	15	5
2020 Fall	15	5 (postponed due to Covid-19)
Total	86	27

Source: Action Lab application archives

What effect has the Action Lab had on these Hartford community partners? Typically, when organizations (or their funders) discuss "direct impact," they often are seeking to answer the question of "How many people did you help?" But framing the question this way is too narrow. In this project, we interviewed community partners who have submitted proposals and/or worked with Action Lab teams to identify the ways that these partnerships have affected their organizations. Following these interviews, we analyzed the data using inductive methods to identify the forms of effect discussed by our partners. Based on this analysis, we believe it is more constructive to consider a broader framework to evaluate overall effect, and we suggest these five categories:

1. Reflective effect
2. Discovery effect
3. Process effect
4. Applied effect
5. Strategic effect

These five categories of effect emerged when we conducted an evaluation of Hartford community partners, based on emails and phone interviews with people who had submitted a proposal as of Fall 2019. We reached out to all applicants, whether or not they had been selected to become a research team, to ask a series of open-ended questions about their experience, and what they gained (if anything) through the partnership.

We want to examine and explain the particular types of effects that may emerge from research and information-based work: thinking in a new way about a problem (reflective), finding out new

information (discovery), reconsidering a process used in ongoing work (process), using knowledge products in service of external communication with funders or the broader public (applied), or shifting a theoretical perspective or a core strategy of action (strategic) are all effects tied closely to research and information products. As a result, not all of these different kinds of effects directly result in a lasting edifice, be it a building or a formalized policy. Many of the observed effects that we discuss below are still years in the making. That said, as educators and actors involved in community work, we argue that even amorphous and very-long-term shifts in perspective, be they the result of being asked to reflect on a problem statement or upon the discovery of a new piece of information or issue framing, also represent an important location for change in community-based participatory action research.

1. Reflective effect

We define "reflective effect" as the result generated by making time to think clearly and potentially reframe questions on a community development project. This is the most emergent form of effect that we identified in our interviews, and was described almost exclusively in conversations with organizations that proposed an Action Lab project but were not selected.

As we designed our proposal process, we explicitly tried to minimize the amount of time required of partners to produce and submit an Action Lab proposal, but were still floored by the sheer number of proposals we were not able to accommodate, including those who went through multiple submissions. If we are to take seriously the labor that we ask of potential partners at all stages of a participatory project -- including the precarious moments in which a partner's broader participation is not guaranteed -- it is important to consider what (if any) effects might result from the application process. We found that regardless of whether or not their application advanced to the final round, several partners described that this stage made a "reflective effect" on their work, by setting aside some time to think about the day-to-day work facing their organization and reframing it in the form of a researchable question for a potential Action Lab project team, often with direct assistance from the Action Lab.

One example of reflective effect came from David Biklen and colleagues from Immanuel Congregational Church. They submitted their "$15 Minimum Wage" proposal to request an Action Lab team to interview Connecticut employers that had already chosen to pay more than the prevailing wage, to better understand their motivations in order to persuade lower-paying employers to match them. Although this proposal did not advance to the next round, Biklen commented that the application process "Helped us think about what we might need regarding information and publicity" for their organization. Similarly, Richard Hollant and Zoe Chatfield from CoLab, Inc., a local design company whose leaders participate in the City of Hartford Commission on Cultural Affairs, submitted a "Public Arts" proposal that asked to research how other cities with related financial and organizational challenges have found successful ways to support arts and culture initiatives. This proposal did not advance to the next round, and when asked if the process of writing it up was helpful to their organization, the authors initially responded no, but then added: "It was helpful to return to the basis of the formation of the Commission, its duties as laid out in the ordinance, as well as reflecting on the changes in City

funding and departments that have posed a challenge for the Commission moving forward with arts initiatives." In other words, while their proposal did not receive the acceptance they had desired, the application process did help them to reflect on how the problem arose within the institutional structures of city governance.

Also, Kathy Evans from the Southwest/Behind the Rocks Neighborhood Revitalization Zone (NRZ), one of the neighborhood advocacy organizations recognized by the city, submitted a "Neighborhood Needs" proposal to request an Action Lab team to assist them in conducting a community needs and assets survey in collaboration with other organizations. While their proposal did not advance, Evans explained how "the process of narrowing down our needs and discussing which ones might be interesting to Trinity College was useful for our members. This is the first project that the NRZ worked on with [another organization], so it was a good first step in forming our partnership."

We fully understand that when the Action Lab asks unsuccessful applicants about the value of the process, their responses may emphasize positive aspects with the hope of future partnerships. Nevertheless, we believe that "reflective effect" is real and needs to be recognized, particularly in campus-community partnerships where education is the focus. Furthermore, some unsuccessful applicants above benefitted from time that the Action Lab Director devoted to discussing and helping them to revise their draft proposals prior to submission. In addition, several proposals that were initially unsuccessful were eventually accepted and made into Action Lab teams. While people inside organizations are often pressured to focus solely on day-to-day activities, meaningful conversations with people outside their regular networks can help to reframe the fundamental questions facing them.

2. Discovery effect

We define "discovery effect" as the result produced by answering research questions or uncovering knowledge for a community development project. When Hartford community partners submit proposals, a key component is to identify a problem or question that they want an Action Lab team to help them solve and the type of information or research work necessary to do so. While working together during the semester, teams and their community partners typically collaborate on qualitative interviewing projects or quantitative analysis of public datasets and share their analysis and findings through a public presentation and website. Since the Action Lab is supported by academic institutions, we value working with community partners to help them discover knowledge.

One example of the discovery effect emerged from our follow-up interview with Julie Geyer, the Director of Planning and Market Research at Capital Workforce Partners, a regional organization devoted to reducing employment barriers and closing gaps between skills and business needs in the Hartford area. Geyer and her colleagues submitted their "Opportunity Youth" proposal to collect and analyze local data on 16-24 year olds who are neither in school nor the labor market; the proposal was matched with an Action Lab research team in Fall 2018. The team analyzed local demographic data from the American Community Survey and program

data from five Hartford service providers and also conducted a focus group with eight Opportunity Youth program participants. Their findings focused on neighborhood differences (while most Opportunity Youth reside in Hartford's South End, most who currently receive services live in the North End) and also on the challenges these youth face due to criminal justice involvement and social service agency interventions. Geyer acknowledged that the Action Lab research process "got us thinking about different questions and different angles… so instead of making a preconceived notion about something, it helped us really delve further into it and ask more questions."

A similar response came from Violette Haldane, Vice President of the West Indian Foundation, a non-profit organization focused on the needs of Caribbean migrants to the Hartford region. Their "Student Success" proposal was matched with an Action Lab team in Spring 2019 to explore how local public schools integrate West Indian children and their families into the education system, given that most migrant programs are geared toward Latino students, whose needs differ from English-speaking West Indian students. The Action Lab team collaborated with the community partner to interview Hartford school administrators responsible for enrolling newly-arriving students, examine the school district's "Welcome Center" for new families, and conduct surveys with parents who emigrated from the West Indies. Their findings focused on structural and cultural differences between West Indian and US schools, as well as a unique experience encountered by incoming West Indian children when they are placed a grade lower than they expected based on their educational attainment in Jamaica or other islands. Haldane summarized that the research project "let us see that there is a need to address how students are placed [in the school system], and to do it based on an individual's skills instead of only their birthdate." As a result of the Action Lab team's finding relating to the ways that incoming students are placed at a grade level, the West Indian Foundation has pursued collaborations with a variety of community groups in the area to address this issue with the local school board.

The discovery effect deserves mention as a specific category and should be distinguished from the application effect, described further below, where community partners incorporate findings into new work products.

3. Process effect

We define "process effect" as the dynamic generated while people work together on a community development project. In the context of the Action Lab, this concept refers to collaborations between different groups of people involved in team projects: Hartford community partners and students from Capital Community College and Trinity College. While these groups do not ordinarily work together, in several instances the combined efforts of people with diverse perspectives and life experiences produced a richer outcome than would have happened if fewer viewpoints were represented.

One example of process effect arose in discussion with Lydia Velez Herrera, the CEO and Founder of Lilly Sin Barreras (translated as Lilly Without Barriers). She submitted the

"Hurricane Maria" proposal to research the lessons learned from efforts to integrate into the Hartford region Puerto Rican families displaced by the 2017 hurricane. Her proposal was matched with an Action Lab team in Fall 2019. Together, they conducted retrospective research to investigate which sources of aid were most beneficial to displaced families, the obstacles that service providers faced when coordinating aid, and the challenges that families faced in accessing services. Based on the students' interviews with relocation agency representatives and displaced people, the team identified several barriers to low-cost housing, employment, and mental health, and the failure of a coordinated organizational response to this emergency. The team also identified successes, including the regional education council's welcome center, the sense of community cultivated in response to the tragedy, and the continuing education of displaced children. Speaking about their collaborative work, Velez Herrera explained, "I was so excited. It was three women... and there was diversity on the team," referring to the Latina, Black, and White students from Capital Community College and Trinity College. "The next generation after mine, and my daughter's and my granddaughter's, are so committed and passionate to find out what's happening in our communities."

Similar themes emerged in our discussions with Action Lab students about what they valued from their experience. Josephine Bensa, a Capital Community student on the "Creative Placemaking" research team in Spring 2018, collaborated with her community partner, HartBeat Ensemble, a social-change theater organization, to investigate strategies for leveraging the arts to serve the needs of Hartford's Asylum Hill neighborhood without gentrifying it. Bensa, a lifelong Hartford resident, emphasized how the Action Lab collaboration was "all about the process, the journey that it takes you on, to make a difference and be part of the community that you're in." Another student member of that team, Trinity College student Giana Moreno, who came to Hartford from the Chicago region, reflected on what Action Lab collaboration meant to her. "I'm really learning how to listen to my peers. We all come from different walks of life and places, so someone is always offering a different perspective… so I'm learning how to think about it in a different framework." Ordinarily, students in such different colleges probably would not have met one another, and definitely would not have collaborated on a research project with Hartford community partners, without a bridge-building entity such as the Action Lab.

4. Applied effect

We define "applied effect" as instances when a community partner has incorporated findings from our research collaboration into newer work products for community development. To date, several Hartford community partners have applied knowledge or findings from past Action Lab research projects toward future efforts in program planning, grant funding, or future research.

One example of applied effect arose from discussion with Martha Conneely from Riverfront Recapture, a non-profit organization that connects people to the Connecticut River, a former pollution site that over time has become a reclaimed natural resource. Conneely and her colleagues submitted the "Cove Connection" proposal that asked for assistance in researching what residents in two neighborhoods -- Hartford's North End and Windsor's Wilson area --

desired in a revitalized riverfront park. They were matched with an Action Lab team in Spring 2019, which surveyed residents in both neighborhoods and also attended public meetings to gather feedback. Most residents desired more park services for children, and emphasized restrooms as their highest priority. But the team also determined that Hartford and Windsor residents expressed different needs in other areas, such as intended usage and perceptions of safety. Months later, Conneely reported that her organization finally purchased the land and "we included the Action Lab survey in a grant proposal we sent to the EPA [US Environmental Protection Agency] for cleanup of the property." Information gathered through the survey -- such as a strong resident preference for actual bathrooms, not port-a-lets -- "has had and will continue to have an effect on our plans for the park." Conneely valued her collaboration with the Action Lab because her organization did not have the capacity to conduct a community survey by itself, and rather than hiring a consultant to do it for them, "we really worked together on how to develop the survey" to produce "very meaningful" results. Furthermore, "funders want to know that we are reaching into the community" rather than "just claiming we plan to do it."

Another example of applied effect came from Fionnuala Darby-Hudgens, Director of Operations at the Connecticut Fair Housing Center, a statewide advocate against housing discrimination. Her organization submitted the "Eviction Project" proposal to investigate how Hartord residents came to face eviction, their experiences with the eviction process, and the immediate and long-term ramifications of evictions on their families; the proposal was matched with an Action Lab team in Spring 2018. The research team designed a courthouse survey project that involved 22 people facing eviction in Hartford, inspired by sociologist Matthew Desmond's fieldwork in Milwaukee. Darby-Hudgens explained how "the Action Lab [team's] qualitative analysis helped us to ask better questions in a later analysis we conducted" for a project sponsored by a local community foundation. Also, "we were able to use data from the Action Lab eviction interviews" in another grant proposal, since grant proposals often require applicants to demonstrate need through community participation.

In another example, a nonprofit developer, Community Solutions, approached the Action Lab for help analyzing spatial data that they collected during a neighborhood-wide housing survey. They were interested in making the case to funders that improving housing conditions -- a key component of their work -- was crucial to improving the health of neighborhoods, and asked the Action Lab whether their housing data showed any connection between housing conditions and health outcomes. Although the organization had access to an ArcGIS software license, they did not have anyone on staff with experience in GIS. During the semester, Action Lab students learned ArcGIS, cleaned and imported data, and conducted spatial analyses comparing housing conditions to health outcomes in the neighborhood. A representative from Community Solutions attended almost every project team meeting in order to learn ArcGIS alongside the students. Community Solutions' Esri account is the owner of the spatial data created during the Action Lab project, so they retain control over the story maps that are linked to the Action Lab project team website. After the project concluded and the team had created a series of story maps to illustrate the results from the housing survey and the connection between housing conditions and health, this employee continued to edit and update the spatial data to make presentations for funders and better understand the underlying conditions of the

housing market in their neighborhood. She even kept the Action Lab updated as she took more advanced coursework in ArcGIS. These maps continue to be updated for use in presentations and funding applications and remain linked on our website.

5. Strategic effect

We define "strategic effect" as instances in which a community organization takes insights that were created or enriched by an Action Lab project and uses them to inform the broader strategic direction for the organization. A strategic effect implies a longer-term horizon than other effects, which might make this kind of effect more difficult to identify.

Given the nature of an Action Lab intervention, we expect strategic effects to be relatively rare. However, we are already seeing glimpses of strategic effect in our partnerships. For example, in the Fall of 2019, the Absentee Landlord Action Lab project worked with the Southside Institutions Neighborhood Alliance (SINA) to investigate the number of small multi-family homes in three south end neighborhoods that were owned by non-resident landlords. SINA had spent the last 30 years of its organizational history pursuing an acquisition strategy that focused on purchasing distressed and uninhabited properties. These vacant properties were typically distressed because of extreme deferred maintenance or because of financial insolvency leading to foreclosure. SINA rehabilitated these properties and created affordable rental housing or affordable home ownership opportunities for neighborhood residents. After the foreclosure crisis resolved in the neighborhood, policy makers and neighborhood residents began to notice an uptick in the number of investors purchasing small multi-family properties that had previously been owned and operated by owner occupants. Following up on this hunch, SINA asked the Action Lab team to investigate where the investor-owned properties were located in the area and to make a recommendation about whether changing its acquisition strategy to focus on occupied but investor-owned properties would be feasible. The team's work included data analysis and in-person occupancy tests, and the end results were shared at SINA's annual meeting, leading to a months-long discussion about the potential change.

Conclusion

The Action Lab is a unique educational partnership between two very different institutions, and its central goal is to work together with Hartford community organizations on the projects they have identified as most important to the work of the city. We have thought deeply about the mechanisms we use to "flip the script" during the project initiation phase, and remain committed to working on projects that have the capacity to contribute to the ongoing work of our partner organizations. With all that said, the question remains: what role do these educational partnerships play in the broader life of our city? How can we identify the effect of these short-term engagements in the broader institutional and communal landscape? By interviewing our previous partners -- those who had completed a project with us and those who had proposed a project but had not been selected -- we found five central forms of effect present in our work: reflective, discovery, applied, process, and strategic.

After the sum total of this effort for the first three years of Action Lab programming, can we say whether the Action Lab has helped Hartford? In a city facing big, thorny problems that are the result of decades of uneven development, disinvestment, and segregation, the effects of several short-term partnerships focused on research and action may seem like drops in the proverbial bucket. Regardless, it is important to tease out the potential for these collaborations - in a realistic way - and to dissect the contours of effects that are possible within these partnerships. Our discussions with our partners have suggested that the process of applying to work with the Action Lab has had emergent effects, such as the ability to think differently about a problem. Work with the Action Lab has also provided new information about a specific problem, or incorporated new diverse work processes and perspectives into ongoing collaborations. At the most concrete end of the spectrum, we found that our community partners have used Action Lab research projects to apply for funding, share plans with policymakers, and influence the direction of a specific project or organizational policy more generally. At times a new discovery leads directly (and quickly) to application; other times, the project confirms what is already known, but encourages a new strategic direction, the effects of which won't be measurable for years. Each of these possibilities represent seeds of influence and developing partnerships that may or may not fluoresce into more traditional outcomes or impacts.

All that said, another important, concrete, and lasting outcome of the Action Lab is the digital infrastructure of the lab itself, which we designed and constructed to open lines of communication between organizations (community groups and institutions of higher education) that often find it hard to talk effectively with each other. By taking the time to create an accessible and public application process, and by paying for the service of community board members to decide the projects the lab would work on, the Action Lab found ways to operationalize the democratization of research collaborations. None of these 15 week projects, taken in isolation, are intended to be a silver bullet, but the lasting impact of the infrastructure created to connect academic partners and community organizations should continue to produce work that matters to the overall health and wellbeing of the city. By continuing to reflect critically on both our process and our effect, we hope to contribute more to the well-being of Hartford and the communities that comprise it.

Bibliography

Albrecht, Lisa Diane, Rose M. Brewer, and National Women's Studies Association. 1990. "Bridges of Power: Women's Multicultural Alliances."

Bell, Ella Edmondson. 2012. "Infusing Race in the US Discourse on Action Research." in *The SAGE Handbook of Action Research*. London: SAGE.

Bunge, William. 2011. *Fitzgerald: Geography of a Revolution*. Georgia: University of Georgia Press.

Cahill, Caitlin. 2006. "'At Risk'? The Fed Up Honeys Re-Present the Gentrification of the Lower East Side." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 34(1/2):334–63.

Cahill, Caitlin, E. Arenas, J. Contreras, N. Jiang, I. Rios-Moore, and T. Threatts. 2004. "Speaking Back: Voices of Young Urban Womyn of Color. Using Participatory Action Research to Challenge and Complicate Representations of Young Women." Pp. 233–44 in *All About the Girl: Culture, Power, and Identity*. New York: Routledge.

Cahill, Caitlin, David Alberto Quijada Cerecer, and Matt Bradley. 2010. ""Dreaming of . . . ": Reflections on Participatory Action Research as a Feminist Praxis of Critical Hope:" *Affilia*. 25(4):406-416.

D'Ignazio, Catherine and Lauren F. Klein. 2020. *Data Feminism.* Open Access: MIT Press https://data-feminism.mitpress.mit.edu/.

Hoffmann, Melody. 2016. *Bike Lanes Are White Lanes: Bicycle Advocacy and Urban Planning.* Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press.

Janes, Julia E. 2015. "Democratic Encounters? Epistemic Privilege, Power, and Community-Based Participatory Action Research:" *Action Research*. 14(1):72-87.

Martin, Deborah G. 2003. "'Place-Framing' as Place-Making: Constituting a Neighborhood for Organizing and Activism." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 93(3):730–50.

Nagar, Richa, and Sangtin Writers Collective. 2006. *Playing with Fire*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

Sherrod, Lonnie R. 2006. *Youth Activism: An International Encyclopedia*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. 1999. *Decolonizing Methodologies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Stoecker, Randy, Barr, Todd and Skinner, Mark (this volume) "Toward A Community Development Science Shop Model: Insights From Peterborough, Haliburton And The Kawartha Lakes."

Stoecker, Randy. 2009. "Are we Talking the Walk of Community-based Research?" *Action Research*, 7(4):385–404.

Stoudt, Brett G., and María Elena Torre. 2014. *The Morris Justice Project: Participatory Action Research*. United Kingdom: SAGE Publications, Ltd.