

A Retrospective Look at **Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit**

ROUNDS 1-3: 2015–2017

APRIL 2021



Photo: Michigan Environmental Council

THE KRESGE FOUNDATION



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
PROGRAM EVALUATION GROUP
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FOREWORD By Wendy Lewis Jackson

Six years this spring, Kresge's President Rip Rapson, our entire Detroit Program and other foundation staff, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan, a number of other civic leaders, several reporters and a crowd of community supporters gathered at what was then Marygrove College to launch the first dozen-plus grant recipients of Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit (KIP:D).

The Detroit Free Press had broken news of the initiative a few months earlier with the headline "Kresge to help fund the dreams of Detroit neighborhoods." In contrast to the energies invested in downtown and the contiguous Woodward corridor-to-Midtown central city, the paper wrote that the foundation had committed a pilot \$5 million to "help fund projects in neighborhoods across the city whose residents may feel left out."

"So much attention is being paid to Woodward and downtown," Rapson was quoted as saying. "It just seemed to us that we really needed to remind people that the long-term energy of the city is rooted in residents and that we can build infrastructure and scaffolding of all different kinds, but at the end of the day, if residents don't have the tools and resources, they need to determine their own trajectory, this is all built on sand."

In a city where development has too often been seen as a tradeoff between downtown and neighborhoods, here was a program that reached out to neighborhoods, to all of them, beginning with the assumption that all of them have assets to build futures on, the most important of those assets being residents.

The energy seemed to course through the room that spring morning as we announced the projects and applauded



Wendy Lewis Jackson

the leaders of each group as they stood: the expansion of the Detroit Boxing Gym Youth Program, which couples sports and strong academic support for young Detroiters; two projects converting vacant lots into parks, one park helmed by Heritage Works celebrating Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks, the other a series of small lot-sized exercise sites helmed by Central Detroit Christian Community Development Corp; a market garden and nutrition program helmed by Arab American and

Chaldean Council. Some 18 projects and planning efforts were launched that day, 18 awarded organizational partners chosen with great difficulty from more than 100 applicants who responded to our first call for proposals, far exceeding our expectations.

And clearly that day, as the project leader talked over lunch about their hopes and the challenges they foresaw, something else was launched — the beginning of a movement, a powerful network of awarded organizational partners with much in common.

The energy of that first KIP:D event has only been magnified in the annual calls for application and grantee gatherings in the years since which have brought together KIP:D partners old and new. But the magnification goes beyond the simple arithmetic of added grants and groups. We can see a community of practice taking shape, a reflection of collective ambitions, and collective support, and the confidence that grows with the body of achievements.

Even on Zoom in the pandemic year of 2020, there was no mistaking the camaraderie of neighbors and the pride in their collective efforts. The first three-year \$5 million effort was followed by another three-year commitment that in the end we exceeded, granting \$11.1 million for awarded KIP:D partners and \$1.5 million of technical assistance. The initial 18 KIP:D awardees have grown to a collective 78 organizational partners and 127 grants when the sixth round was announced in the summer of 2020, moving us toward a map of Detroit lit up by so many lanterns marking positive change.

And now, thanks to our partners at the University of Michigan School of Social Work Program Evaluation Group (PEG) we have a portrait of the first three rounds of funding.

We commissioned this evaluation because we are committed to learning

from all our work — not just what was accomplished, but how and to what extent. We are committed to learning alongside our partners and expanding our notions of success to ensure they include the voices of our grantee partners and, most importantly, the residents of Detroit. Evaluating this work is also part of our ongoing commitment transparency and knowledge sharing to you — our partners.

The UM-PEG team conducted extensive interviews with over 40 participants across the 56 projects. The interviewees discuss the hoped-for improved quality of neighborhood life that has resulted from projects, from, for instance, the creation of new community spaces replacing blight and increasing community pride and cohesion. And there are important corollary impacts as community meetings brought neighbors together in common purpose, creating bonds of shared commitments and a sense of neighborhood ownership and agency of a project. There were new relationships between individuals in neighborhoods and organizations; residents became empowered co-create solutions for their neighborhood through their KIP:D projects. Projects were avenues through which residents could use their voice.

The UM-PEG team also documents challenges that the KIP:D partners face with their own organizational capacity, with gentrification, with mastering the ins and outs of the city bureaucracy, among them.

A number of the recommendations overlap with the directions that KIP:D has, in fact, pursued in the subsequent three rounds. We have worked, for instance, to streamline the application process and give credit for organizational collaborations. We also prioritized technical assistance: Michigan Community Resources agreed to curate technical assistance based on KIP:D partners' needs and to create a network



Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit (KIP:D) began in 2014 as a way for The Kresge Foundation (Kresge) to invest in neighborhood-based organizations throughout the city. In 2019, the Program Evaluation Group (UM-PEG) at the University of Michigan School of Social Work partnered with Kresge to conduct an evaluation of the first three rounds of KIP:D projects, which took place from 2015–2017.

of KIP:D organizations that can share in common challenges and solutions through capacity-building supports.

We've particularly reached out to engage organizations of all sizes, including what in Detroit we call block clubs, which are community organizations comprising as little as a few city blocks; in addition to planning grants, we now also fund what we might call pre-planning grants, for neighborhood-based organizations to come together to strategize priorities and coalesce around a project to develop.

Notably, as the Detroit Program — and Kresge as a whole — have increasingly focused on racial equity, Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit has become a key embodiment of that commitment, aligning with and supporting the voices and visions of Detroit organizations with BIPOC leadership.

Meanwhile, in 2019, Kresge launched Kresge Innovative Projects: Memphis and Kresge Community Supports:

Fresno, efforts that adapt the learnings of Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit to new cities — and that we expect will have lessons in turn for the mothership initiative in Detroit.

We hope this evaluation and its three ancillary briefs (tailored for past, present and future KIP:D partners; for philanthropy; and for the community development sector) will be widely read and discussed — with advice and recommendations directed back to us as we engage the community in designing what comes next. We hope that you will also send your thoughts to at kipd@kresge.org.

We hope that in reading this you are as inspired by the KIP:D partners as we have been every step of the way.

--

Wendy Lewis Jackson is the managing director of The Kresge Foundation's Detroit Program

Learn more at [Kresge.org/kipd](https://www.kresge.org/kipd)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit (KIP:D) began in 2014 as a way for The Kresge Foundation (Kresge) to invest in neighborhood-based organizations throughout the city. In 2019, the Program Evaluation Group (PEG) at the University of Michigan School of Social Work partnered with Kresge to conduct an evaluation of the first three rounds of KIP:D projects, which took place from 2015–2017.

Through a variety of participatory data collection methods, staff from PEG gathered insights from 45 people connected to KIP:D projects in order to learn about the impact projects had on residents' quality of life; effective strategies for ensuring inclusive engagement; whether and how projects were catalytic; and the ways in which Kresge could further support the initiative. This report summarizes the findings.

PART 1: THE STORY OF KIP:D

In the first three rounds of KIP:D, Kresge awarded over \$5 million to 40 unique organizational partners through 19 planning grants and 37 implementation grants.

The Nature of Project Implementation

KIP:D organizational partners worked with residents to imagine and implement projects related to reclaiming and renovating community spaces. Organizational partners discussed three primary challenges in this work: navigating city bureaucracy; racism and sexism; and limited organizational capacity. Leveraging partnerships with residents, community leaders

and grassroots organizations helped organizations mitigate these barriers.

The Process of Community Engagement

Insights from organizational partners and residents reveal communication tension points, such as navigating visions that differ between residents or between residents and a funder, as well as lessons learned around the need for extensive, continuous and direct community engagement. Our findings also show the importance of three key engagement strategies: building trust; prioritizing relationships; and starting from assets.

PART 2: THE RESULTS OF THE KIP:D INITIATIVE

KIP:D Projects Improved Residents' Quality of Life and Fostered Community Cohesion and Ownership

KIP:D projects improved residents' quality of life by creating new assets, fostering a greater sense of safety and increasing community vibrancy.



Photo: Ebony Reddock

Residents and organizational partners often felt their communities were more cohesive after a project was implemented. As KIP:D projects created space for residents to see their neighborhood visions come to fruition, they helped nurture a sense of community ownership over projects and the neighborhood more broadly.

KIP:D Projects Built Organizational Capacity and Point to Broader Community Impacts

KIP:D projects increased organizational partners' ability to serve residents both in the short term, through the immediate impact of the projects, and long term, through increased organizational capacity and stability as well as the ability to advocate for system change. Our findings reveal early examples of ways project impacts can ripple out to communities more broadly, such as organizations having greater power in policy decisions.

PART 3: THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF KIP:D PROJECTS

There Are Barriers to Both Project-Level Sustainability and Community-Level Sustainability

Some organizational partners were reaching project-level sustainability by securing community buy-in and stable funding while others were struggling with the need for ongoing support and maintenance. However, our findings point to multiple barriers to scaling up development projects to meet the community's needs, including the need for more capital, greater cross-sector collaboration and strategies to mitigate the harmful impacts of gentrification.

Organizations' Responses to the Crises of 2020 Showed Resilience

The COVID-19 pandemic and racial justice uprisings of 2020 highlighted the critical role that community-based organizations play in times of crisis and change in helping to ensure that the physical, informational and emotional needs of residents are met. In stepping up to serve in these roles, organizations showed their resiliency.

PART 4: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KRESGE

Continue to Nurture a Culture of Authentic Engagement

The ways in which Kresge staff are embedded in Detroit helps to ensure that funding decisions reflect community priorities. Furthermore, the emphasis that Kresge places on engagement and racial equity encourages organizational partners to emphasize these values in their work.

Help Organizations Navigate City Bureaucracy and Provide Access to Technical Assistance

While Kresge has significantly increased opportunities for technical assistance since the first three rounds of KIP:D, our findings indicate that further opportunities to connect organizational partners to the expertise they need could be developed, such as pairing organizations in mentorship relationships.

Strategically Connect KIP:D and Kresge's Operating Support Initiatives

Our findings point to a natural synergy occurring between KIP:D organizational partners and the Detroit 21, a group of Kresge-supported community development organization leaders. Linking these initiatives together in a broader theory of change may have greater impact on strengthening the community development system in the city.

Continue to Fund Projects that Add Value to the Neighborhood and, at the Same Time, Think Regionally

Many organizational partners were eager for more collaboration within regions of the city that can ensure new KIP:D projects build on existing projects and help organizations move collectively toward the infrastructure and policy changes needed for long-term sustainability.

Photo: Michigan Environmental Council



CONCLUSION

In its first three rounds, KIP:D set a foundation for equitable community development that invited neighborhood residents to articulate their visions for community spaces and provided the resources to make those visions reality. Our findings show that both the process and result of implementing these neighborhood visions have been

impactful in the lives of residents and in the work of organizational partners. By creating opportunities for residents to increase feelings of connectedness and organizations to access new resources, KIP:D is building capacity for neighborhood change block by block, cumulatively paving the way for equitable development across the city in lasting and powerful ways.

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INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 2019, the Program Evaluation Group (PEG) at the University of Michigan School of Social Work partnered with The Kresge Foundation (Kresge) to conduct an evaluation of the first three rounds of the Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit (KIP:D) initiative. The goals of the evaluation were to learn about the impact projects had on residents' quality of life; effective strategies for ensuring inclusive engagement; whether and how projects were catalytic; and the ways in which Kresge could continue to support the initiative's implementation, now in its sixth round of funding.

From October 2019 to September 2020, staff from the PEG gathered experiences and insights from 45 people involved with or connected to KIP:D projects. We talked with residents from a number of Detroit neighborhoods who had direct connections to a KIP:D project. We also met with community leaders to develop a shared understanding of residents' stories. And we interviewed people from organizations that received one or more KIP:D grants from 2015–2017. Finally, after pausing data collection in the spring of 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we circled back to a subset of organizational partners to reflect with them on themes that had emerged to date, and to learn about how the pandemic and growing calls for racial justice were impacting their work.

This report summarizes our findings.¹ We selected the stories and experiences shared here because they: 1) spoke to our evaluation questions; 2) were meaningful to the speaker in our judgment, based on factors such as tone of conversation and length of discussion; and 3) represented common themes, though not necessarily common experiences, across all of the

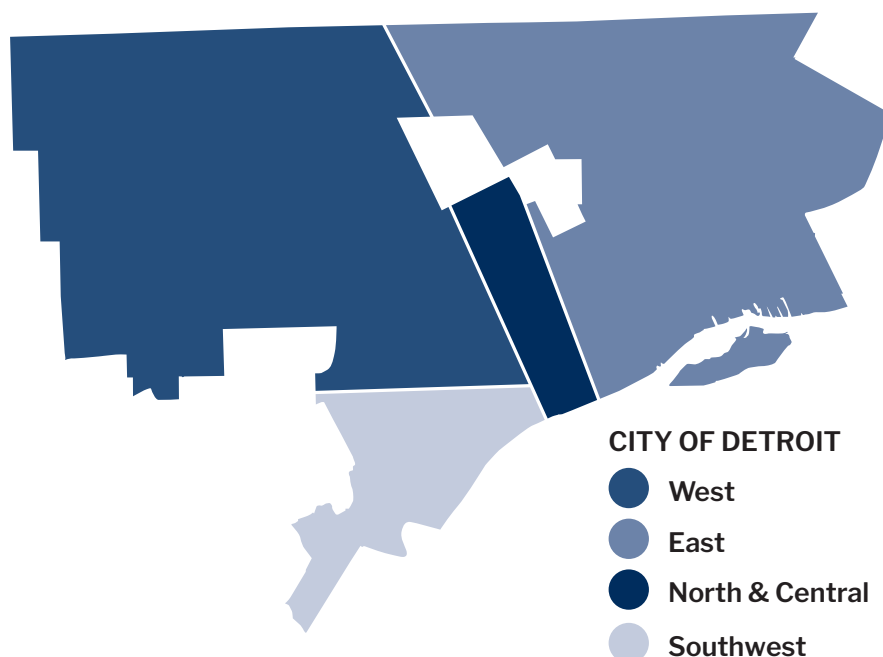
interviews. Our analysis also takes into account what we know about community development in a general context, and in the Detroit context specifically. (See *Figure 1* on the next page for a methodology summary.)

- **PART 1** describes **The Story of Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit**, including background on the initiative and grant projects, the experience of implementing projects and the process of community engagement.
- **PART 2** discusses **The Results of the KIP:D Initiative**, including impact on residents and organizations.
- **PART 3** explores **The Long-Term Sustainability of KIP:D Projects**, including community level impact of the projects and long-term potential for community development.
- **PART 4** offers **Recommendations for Kresge** based on our findings.

¹ A complementary set of briefs highlighting lessons for grant partners, the community development sector and the philanthropic sector are available on The Kresge Foundation's website: kresge.org/resource/kipd-evaluation

FIGURE 1: Summary of Methodology

Our findings draw from 42 interviews and five group conversations with 45 different people over two phases of data collection. We spoke with residents and organizational partners in all four Detroit regions: Southwest, North and Central, West and East.



PHASES

Phase 1:

October 2019–February 2020
39 interviews

Phase 2:

May–September 2020
Five group conversations and three interviews

STAKEHOLDERS

RESIDENTS: individuals familiar with and living in the neighborhood of one or more KIP:D project(s)

COMMUNITY LEADERS: individuals familiar with and living in the neighborhood of one or more KIP:D project(s) and nominated by an organizational partner because of their connections and respect in the community

ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS: organizations that received one or more KIP:D grant(s) between 2015-2017



18
Residents

We partnered with and trained four community leaders who conducted interviews with 16 residents connected to KIP:D projects. PEG staff conducted two resident interviews.



3
Community Leaders

We hosted **group conversations** with three community leaders to discuss themes from resident interviews.



20
Organizational Partners

We conducted **project interviews** with 20 organizational partners about their experiences with KIP:D projects.



4
Organizational Partners

We conducted **oral history interviews** with a subset of organizational partners about the evolution of community development in Detroit and the role of KIP:D projects.



11
Organizational Partners

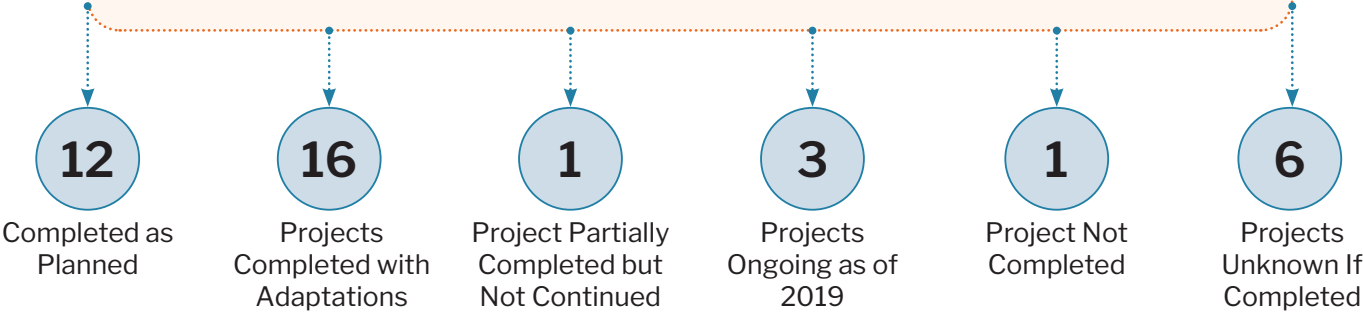
We hosted four **group conversations** with 11 organizational partners to reflect on initial themes and discuss new developments in 2020.

PROJECT SUMMARY

56 KIP:D grants in Rounds 1 – 3 supported **47 projects** at 40 different organizations

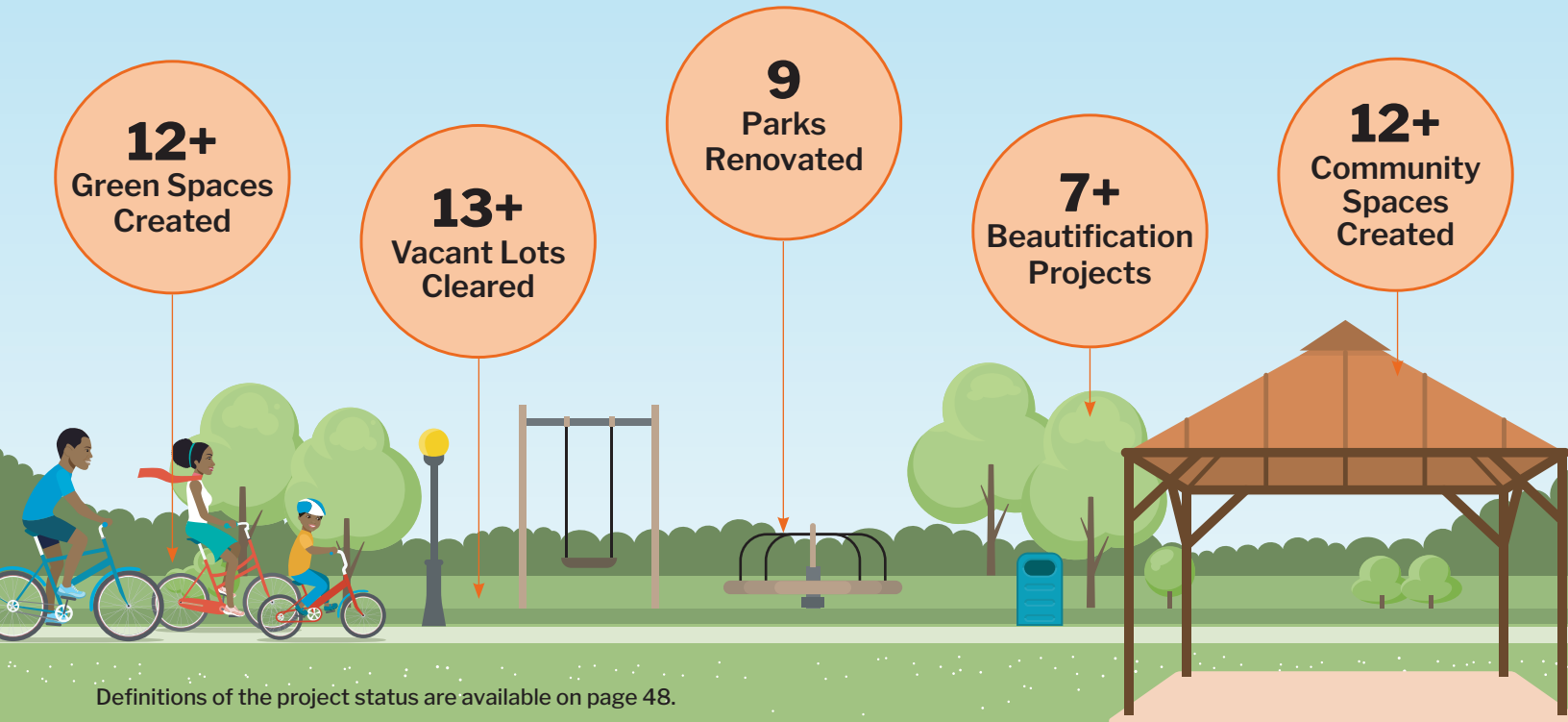
47 PROJECTS PLANNED

39 PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED



Of the eight projects that did not move to implementation, two moved in a different direction based on feasibility study results, and one organization was unsuccessful in securing implementation funding. The implementation status of the other five projects is unknown.

THE 39 IMPLEMENTED PROJECTS RESULTED IN:



Definitions of the project status are available on page 48.

PART 1

THE STORY OF KRESGE INNOVATIVE PROJECTS: DETROIT

Kresge has a long history of supporting Detroit's community development sector. In 2008, in conversations with city government and major foundations across the United States, Kresge identified land use as the top priority for deepening their work in Detroit. This led the foundation to invest in a three-year strategic planning process that resulted in Detroit Future City (DFC), a 50-year vision for the city.²

The KIP:D initiative, announced in 2014, was a way for the foundation to support implementation of DFC priorities, including transforming vacant land into an innovative open-space network and stabilizing neighborhoods. In a context where neighborhoods were not receiving sufficient attention from philanthropy, KIP:D was designed to broaden investment across the full span of the city, and catalyze equitable neighborhood development by empowering residents and neighborhood-based organizations.

KIP:D grants were open to nonprofit organizations located in and primarily serving Detroit with at least two years of operational history. Organizational partners were selected based on sufficient organizational capacity, a history of community engagement and a track record of executing projects that support community goals. Projects were required to demonstrate a transformative impact in a Detroit neighborhood and to use inclusive, collaborative processes for design, development and implementation. The first two rounds of funding asked projects to extend benefits to a broad set of stakeholders.

The third round of funding asked projects to specifically benefit low-income individuals and people of color.

Kresge offered two types of grants under the KIP:D umbrella: 1) planning grants intended for projects requiring additional time and resources to solidify designs, timelines and partners; and 2) implementation grants intended for projects ready for execution that could be completed within 12-18 months. Planning grants supported community-driven participatory planning processes; implementation grants funded project implementation activities and materials.

Over six rounds of funding, KIP:D has provided \$11.1 million in grants and \$1.5 million in technical assistance to advance resident priorities through transformative projects that build on neighborhood assets. In this report, we focus on the first three rounds of KIP:D grants, which took place between 2015–2017. KIP:D cohorts 1-3 consisted of 56 planning or implementation grants to 40 unique organizations. Table 1 provides a summary of each project and Figure 2 shows the number of each award type in each year.






























²For more information on the Detroit Future City Strategic Framework, see: detroitfutureCity.com/strategic-framework

TABLE 1: Summary of KIP:D Projects 2015–2017

2015  Planning
 Implementation

2016  Planning
 Implementation

2017  Planning
 Implementation




























ORGANIZATION	YEAR/TYPE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Aadizookaan & Allied Media Projects*		Rehabilitating a vacant building in Southwest Detroit into an innovative space for community-based artists.
Arab American and Chaldean Council		Providing residents of the Penrose Village Housing Development in Chaldean Town with enriching community spaces, resources and programs.
Auntie Na's House & Georgia Street Community Collective*		Rehabilitating houses to create a medical clinic, community food hub and residential space for community members.
Black Family Development*	 	Securing side lots available for purchase. Transforming vacant lots and beautifying the Osborn community.
Burnside Farm & University of Michigan		Repurposing an abandoned home into a passive solar subterranean greenhouse for growing food year-round.
Central Detroit Christian CDC	 	Transforming seven vacant lots into pocket parks. Renovating a property on Clairmont into an Art House.
Corktown CDC		Installing planters along bike lanes and enhancing walkability and bikeability.
Detroit Abloom & Michigan Community Resources*	 	Adapting vacant lots to establish a cut-flower business.
Detroit Eastside Community Collaborative		Building a greenway out of an abandoned rail line.
Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation*		Planning for a neighborhood-based center to provide housing resources and job training opportunities.
Detroiters Working for Environmental Justice*		Examining the use of vacant land to buffer residential areas from industrial facilities.
Downtown Boxing Gym*		Renovating a nearby facility in order to accept more Detroit youth into the program.
Eastside Community Network*	 	Exploring green infrastructure options. Installing a learning lab and rain garden for students and adults to gain master rain garden certification.
Ecoworks	 	Renovating Hope Park as an outdoor classroom/community space for Cody High School and the surrounding community.
Focus: Hope*	 	Transforming an abandoned home into a LEED-certified community center. Determining the feasibility of transitioning from the electric grid.
Global Detroit*		Neighborhood planning to make the region more welcoming for the Banglatown immigrant community.
Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation*	 	Developing a green parking lot and outdoor public space. Transforming a vacant commercial storefront into a new community hub for arts, culture, food and entrepreneurialism.
Heritage Works*	 	Creating a pocket park commemorating Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks. Transforming vacant lots into a community-centered park.
Joy-Southfield CDC		Improving a park through increased safety, walkability and reduced pollution.
Land, Inc.	 	Assessing the feasibility of remediating a site for a renewable energy solar array. Converting a blighted commercial corridor into a productive green byway.

* These organizations received either a KIP:D grant or another grant type from the Kresge Foundation in 2018, 2019 or 2020. Many of the organizations in this table also went on to secure funding from other sources.

2015  Planning
 Implementation

2016  Planning
 Implementation

2017  Planning
 Implementation

ORGANIZATION	YEAR/TYPE	PROJECT DESCRIPTION
LifeBUILDERS	 	Rehabilitating a park to create community spaces for health and wellness. Sealing abandoned buildings and beautifying empty lots.
Mack Ave. Community Church CDC*		Renovating a vacant commercial building as a community center.
Metropolitan Organizing Strategy Enabling Strength		Mapping the community's vision for a healthy, sustainable neighborhood and planning for a transformative neighborhood project.
Michigan Environmental Council*	 	Developing a strategic plan for a Denby High School program. Implementing a curriculum at Denby that incorporates Detroit Future City Framework Plan and projects planned by students.
Oakland Avenue Artists Coalition		Creating an artistic pavilion, arboreal garden and rain catchment system in a community park.
Osborn Neighborhood Alliance & Matrix Human Services		Transforming vacant and underutilized land into productive green spaces offering economic and educational opportunities.
People for Palmer Park		Developing a plan for the revitalization of Lake Frances and surrounding grounds.
Ponyride		Bringing together college and high school students to transform shipping containers into retail space for entrepreneurs.
Powerhouse Productions*		Supporting park enhancements and creating a four seasons public play space to increase cultural exchanges.
SER-Metro Detroit		Developing a youth-led community engagement and planning project to improve the quality of life for residents.
Sidewalk Detroit & Brightmoor Alliance*	 	Improving the Eliza Howell Park to engage residents in artistic and recreational activities.
Southwest Detroit Business Association*		Renovating the second floors of commercial buildings to create housing units.
Southwest Detroit Community Benefits Coalition		Implementing an air quality monitoring data collection system.
Southwest Housing Solutions*		Transforming a historic vacant church into a Center for Resident Engagement and Development.
U SNAP BAC	 	Repurposing vacant land for green uses to benefit residents.
University of Detroit Mercy*	 	Implementing open space programming and creative alley revitalization.
Urban Neighborhood Initiatives*		Renovating a building and establishing community safety and justice services organization with a community court.
Vanguard CDC*		Planning the expansion and long-term stewardship of a park.
Woodbridge Neighborhood Development Corporation*	 	Redesigning two major thoroughfares to be safe, walkable and bikeable.
Young Nation*	 	Transforming a vacant lot into a community space and creating an arts-infused plaza and artists' market.

* These organizations received either a KIP:D grant or another grant type from the Kresge Foundation in 2018, 2019 or 2020. Many of the organizations in this table also went on to secure funding from other sources.

KIP:D organizational partners worked with residents to imagine and implement diverse projects, such as improvements to public parks, renovation of old buildings to create new housing and the creation of sites for new community-based businesses. Projects also included the creation of organizations, working groups and opportunities for community member involvement; all efforts to increase the strength and functioning of residents in creating, sustaining and improving community. Examples include the formation of planning and management groups for capital improvement, development of programs to encourage residents' participation in the community and youth-led neighborhood projects.

While KIP:D projects often looked different at completion than originally planned, partners and residents achieved immediate wins in various

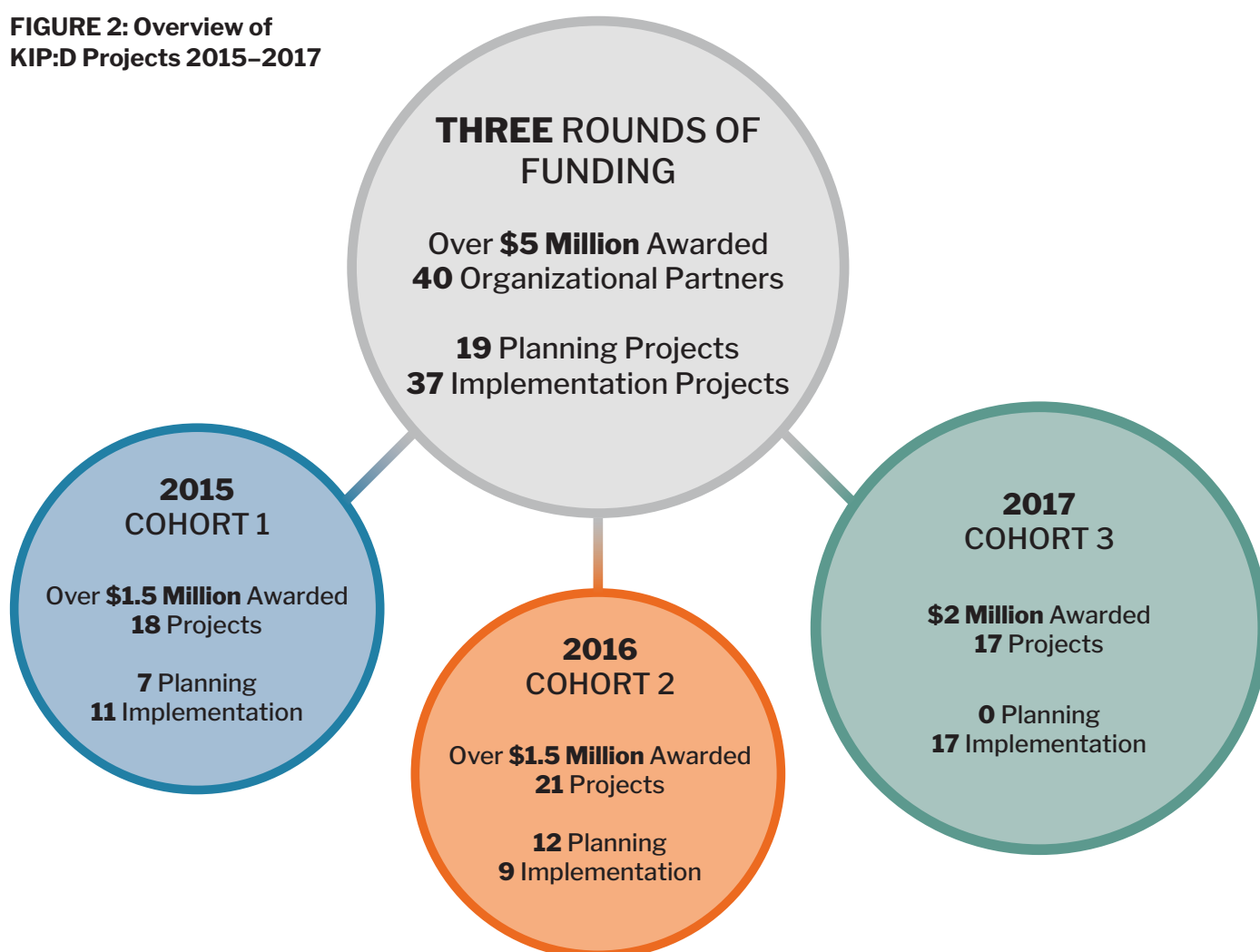
ways. One area was in community involvement in planning and implementation. For some projects, organizational partners and residents established planning and working groups. Organizational partners also planned for the continuation of these organizational innovations to provide project stability and to increase the active presence of civil social groups in the community.

Organizational partners also worked to provide access to skill development for community residents and to increase the overall human capital in the community in the areas of plant nurseries, small business management and community organization and advocacy. Partners also provided education and training directly through their own organizations or through programs offered at schools and other community organizations.

Photo: Michigan Environmental Council



**FIGURE 2: Overview of
KIP:D Projects 2015–2017**



In the next two sections, we focus on the experience of KIP:D organizational partners in executing projects, including the nature of project implementation and the process of community engagement.

THE NATURE OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Both anticipated and unanticipated challenges were common in implementing projects. For example,

organizational partners spoke about project timelines extending beyond their expectations. They also shared experiences in navigating three primary challenges: 1) city bureaucracy; 2) racism and sexism; and 3) limited organizational capacity. These challenges are particularly illustrative of how Detroit's past (e.g. economic instability, housing discrimination and racial tensions) have surfaced in its present community development efforts. Leveraging partnerships helped organizations navigate and mitigate these barriers.

Navigating City Bureaucracy Was a Barrier to Implementation

While navigating city bureaucracy is not a new challenge for a number of organizations, it impacted partners' and residents' ability to complete KIP:D projects. Many organizations found it challenging and time-consuming to navigate different governmental units. In fact, due to challenges navigating the various city departments, four organizations were not able to accomplish their original goals, as they were ultimately unable to secure city permits. Strategies for mitigating the challenges of city bureaucracy included hiring an individual to specifically manage working with the city and developing relationships with selected people. Some organizations, however, found that frequent administrative transitions and turnover of city personnel made this approach less effective.

"There was a lot to learn about working with the land bank and other city agencies. Sometimes it felt like we were getting different information at different points. So, it just took a lot more follow-through and a lot more time than we had planned on," mentioned one organizational partner.

Racism and Sexism Show Up in the Work

Organizational partners are well aware of the impact of racism on their work, including how it has shaped their neighborhoods historically, and the ways in which it influences how they

engage in the neighborhoods. Tension points around race and gender can undermine an organization's work in facilitating development projects or promoting community cohesion. This is especially relevant in the context of longtime racial tensions, as well as perceptions that wealth and Whiteness determine who receives more attention from municipal and state governments (Griffin, *et al.*, 2014).

A few organizational partners talked about experiencing racism and sexism in their professional roles. One female partner, for example, reflected on the perceptions of city staff who did not expect a woman to be working in the development space. Another partner noted that they fought against racist attitudes by partnering with a white architect to leverage "the privilege of the White male" to more easily navigate city bureaucracy. Other organizational partners talked about the challenges of communicating across different racial groups, particularly in fields essential to physical development projects, such as contracting, which is disproportionately White-represented, even in the city. While these examples did not come up often, they raise the question of the extent and impact of disparities in the development sector.

Interviewees also lifted up instances of tensions rooted in cultural differences surfacing as a neighborhood became more gentrified and newer residents moved in. One person observed, "you've got all the neighborhood people, you know, we're loud. . . playing music, you

KIP:D OVER TIME: INCREASING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Kresge has heard and responded to the need for more technical assistance. Beginning in round 4, Kresge contracted with Michigan Community Resources to provide regular technical assistance sessions to organizational partners, including navigating city bureaucracy.

“There’s a lot of talk about equitable development. It is the buzzword and has been for some time. But I can tell you, as a woman of color, and a developer, that it is still a very male-dominated, very White world. And the people that operate in it have very big egos. It’s more about power than it is about justice. And so it is challenging to push back against.” — **Organizational partner**

got big families, everybody’s out. And then you got this White couple from Grosse Pointe that moves in two doors down and they hear and see all this stuff. So they call the police because they don’t like what’s going on, what’s been happening in our communities for generations.”

Project Implementation Is Harder for Organizations with Limited Capacity

KIP:D encourages applications from small organizations with limited resources. This can mean, however, that some organizations struggle to execute what might be their first major project. Low-resource organizations commonly face challenges related to over-

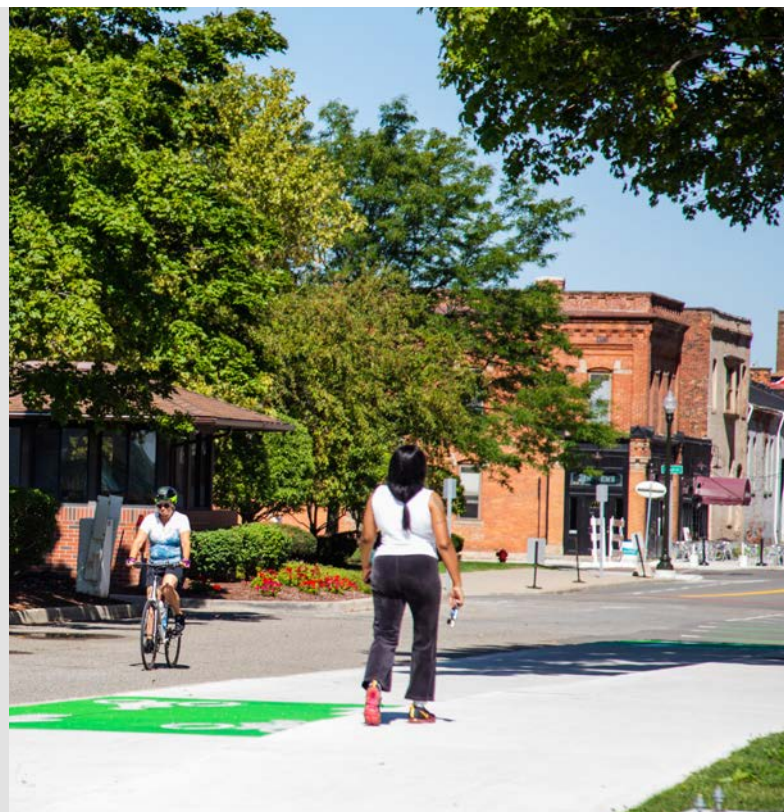
reliance on external funding, clarity of purpose, balancing funder expectations with internal needs and cultivating community leadership (Sontag-Padilla, Staplefoote & Morganti, 2012).

Some of the organizational leaders we spoke with felt that funders expect too much from low-resource organizations, and the grants essentially set small organizations up for failure by expecting more than is reasonable. Until small organizations are given the opportunity to manage a large grant, they struggle to show they have adequate capacity to do so. This can lead to a vicious cycle in which funding consistently goes to high-resource organizations.

Photo: City of Detroit

KIP:D OVER TIME: INTEGRATING ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Kresge has recognized that there are many organizations that are doing great work but are not ready to apply for a KIP:D grant. In round 5, the foundation offered several organizations a smaller award to focus on capacity building. In round 6, they built capacity building grants into the RFP.



SPOTLIGHT ON ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING: WOODBIDGE NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT

For some organizations, as the following story illustrates, KIP:D was an opportunity to break the cycle. Woodbridge Neighborhood Development (WND) is a community development organization located in Woodbridge, a neighborhood west of Midtown near Wayne State University. Their mission is to create a diverse, vibrant residential and commercial urban environment in Woodbridge. Led by Angie Gaabo, WND secured a KIP:D planning grant in the second round (2016). At the time, WND looked more like a neighborhood civic group than a community development organization.

“We were an all-volunteer organization at the time we applied for the first planning grant and hadn’t had significant grants. We had been sort of shut down for a couple of years, kind of operating in a little low hum, just with volunteers. And the planning grant has built momentum for us.”

WND’s first proposal focused on building community engagement and conducting a technical feasibility study to redesign two major thoroughfares in the neighborhood. Through the planning grant, the organization began to capitalize

on the interest of residents in safe, walkable spaces. The neighborhood’s proximity to Warren and Trumbull, two busy main streets running east to west and north to south, respectively, made navigating to parks and green spaces near the university dangerous. In engaging residents, WND learned about new and unexpected community desires.

While WND had deep relationships in the community to draw from, they would not have captured as much about what residents wanted without the KIP:D grant resources. Because the organization had capacity, it was especially important to them to learn more about how to support community efforts to make the project a reality. The organization continued its work by applying for and receiving an implementation grant in round 3.

To be responsive to community desires, WND took advantage of numerous capacity-building opportunities during and after the KIP:D grant periods. For example, Gaabo sought out mentorship and advice from other KIP:D grantees she connected with during informal grantee convenings. The organization also leveraged support from Kresge

Photos: Woodbridge Neighborhood Development





Photo: Woodbridge Neighborhood Development

in navigating the city's planning department. This was helpful since they had minimal experience working with the city before the KIP:D project.

Reflecting on the process four years later, Gaabo pointed out that, while they did not accomplish everything they wanted, engaging residents meaningfully led to multiple positive organizational outcomes.

"Through this process, we had to have some unusual partnerships that we definitely would not have had. And that was because we were trying to figure out how we should be getting to know people. There was this obvious connection and that turned into some other kinds of relationships for us. One thing led to the next," said Gaabo.

Additionally, Gaabo noted that receiving Kresge support positioned them to build their financial capacity.

"Kresge in particular helped us to be a much more sustainable organization that gets larger resources, many of which we would not have even looked at or looked for," she said.

Today, WND is well positioned to continue its work in facilitating the community's vision for the neighborhood. Not only do they have a long-term vision that informs their grant-seeking and partnership development; they have the capacity to manage larger grants and projects to see that vision to fruition.

Partnerships Were Key to Navigating Challenges Around Project Implementation

Partnerships with other organizations were a key facilitator for responding to the challenges above. The complexity of community development work, as one organizational partner noted, makes partnerships particularly important. “The issues that we’re dealing with are too complex to try to do by ourselves. We have to have people across different sectors with different levels of experience and different tactics that are able to work together.”

Partnerships allowed organizations to expand their capacity, facilitate projects that reflected residents’ visions for their neighborhoods and find moral support and mentorship from their peers. Some partners, such as financial institutions, brought long-term stability, as well as avenues toward financial support. Some partner organizations brought specific skills and knowledge to the joint effort, including information on curriculum, expertise on planting and urban design. Other partners enlarged the potential user base for new programs.

In the process of implementing KIP:D projects, organizational partners strengthened many existing partnerships, particularly with other neighborhood-based organizations. They also formed new partnerships, many of which would likely not have happened outside the context of the grant. Organizational partners often included in their plans the recruitment of new partners for their funded efforts, and possible future efforts as well. They saw the presence of multiple partners as supportive of their projects’ sustainability and longevity, and also as potentially contributing to overall resources for the community.

Organizations also drew on a variety of volunteers, from corporate employees helping with landscaping, neighbors

offering to keep an eye on things and building consultants providing technical assistance. Several organizational partners noted they expected these partnerships to be maintained and to increase their organizational capacity long-term.

KIP:D OVER TIME: FOCUSING ON PARTNERSHIPS

Recognizing the importance of partnerships, Kresge has begun to add a focus on collaboration into the KIP:D application process.

THE PROCESS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is at the heart of the KIP:D initiative. Kresge asks grant recipients to meaningfully engage local residents in the process of designing and implementing their projects with the belief that insights from organizational partners and residents from the first three rounds of KIP:D reveal communication tension points and lessons learned as well as the importance of three key engagement strategies: 1) building trust; 2) prioritizing relationships; and 3) starting from assets.

Organizations Navigated Communication Tension Points and Lessons Learned

Resident engagement, particularly in light of Detroit’s historic racial dynamics and tension, is essential to community change efforts for multiple reasons, including delivering solutions that consider local culture and assets, improving the likelihood that the community will embrace reforms and developing the community’s civic

capacity (Geller *et al.*, 2014). Many organizational partners described lessons around the need to engage more people, more frequently. Organizational partners utilized several strategies to ensure their communications were extensive and continuous, such as being available and accessible to residents, reaching out to people beyond those most likely to show up, keeping residents updated throughout a project, engaging residents directly rather than relying on others to spread the word and finding ways to accommodate different views and preferences.

Organizational partners also faced challenges in addressing and incorporating the input they received from residents. For example, sometimes the input given pointed in a different direction than the funding. For one organizational partner, allowing community members to dictate priorities created tension with some

funders (not Kresge). There were also instances where community members had different visions for the project. Finally, there were challenges in balancing openness to community ideas with realistic expectations.

Another tension point was how much input to gather from residents. Most organizational partners and residents felt there were opportunities to expand community engagement. However, one organizational partner from a Detroit community with well-established social service agencies felt that residents were overburdened with engagement requests.

This organizational partner remarked, “[Community organizations] are constantly asking residents to engage in different things, and there is definite engagement fatigue. And so we were always pretty conservative about how many meetings we called with people and what we were asking them to do.”

Photo: City of Detroit





SPOTLIGHT ON COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: MICHIGAN ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

An organization with expertise in environmental justice and health engages youth in creating the neighborhoods they want to see. In the process, they nurture a model where Detroit youth come back to the city to mentor the next generation and facilitate neighborhood development.

The Michigan Environmental Council (MEC) is a coalition of Michigan organizations leading Michigan's environmental movement in achieving positive change through public policy solutions. Sandra Turner-Handy, Community Engagement Director, MEC, led two projects at Denby High School and the surrounding neighborhood on the East Side of Detroit. MEC received a planning grant in round 1 to design a program that engages students in community revitalization and neighborhood improvement projects. This led to an implementation grant in round 2 for the implementation of a four-year curriculum and completion of neighborhood revitalization projects.

Turner-Handy was eager to implement projects with youth in the Denby neighborhood. This urgency was rooted in her sense of the “endgame” of community engagement, which was designing a neighborhood where young people wanted to stay. As a Detroit

resident, Turner-Handy knew many youth had a powerful desire to leave the city when they reached adulthood.

At the onset of the program, she asked youth to write about their community to someone outside of Detroit. Some of the responses included, “Do not come to Detroit. You will get shot. You will get robbed. It’s all about drugs. You might get raped. The houses are all tore up.”

Turner-Handy responded, “I mean the youth talked about this city so badly that I literally cried. To convince them to stay, they would need to see improvements in their neighborhoods. And in order for them to see improvements, they would need to speak up about what they needed, and to know that they are a valuable part of the community.”

While physical development was a key outcome for the project, just as important was inspiring youth to implement their vision for their neighborhoods. A best practice in youth development is engaging youth in hands-on activities where they can apply the skills they are learning. In this project, neighborhood youth were involved in the process from beginning to end. This highlights one pathway by which community engagement can nurture community ownership. Because the youth designed and built what they wanted to see, they were invested in its upkeep.

Turner-Handy also wanted to encourage youth to stay in their neighborhoods by presenting them with examples of neighborhood youth who had left to pursue post-secondary education, and then returned. “They’re working with these kids and I love it. I’m not trying to design a community for me. I need a community that the youth really want to stay in,” she explained.

One challenge Turner-Handy and the MEC faced in conducting youth engagement was working with the Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD). At the time, some schools were removed from Detroit Public Schools (DPS) and placed under the Education Achievement Authority (EAA); later these were placed under DPSCD, the successor to DPS.

As schools transitioned from one leadership model to another, Turner-Handy and the MEC needed to reestablish relationships and commitments to work with kids, which slowed the work down. She managed this challenge in multiple ways, depending on the context and what was possible. For example, Turner-Handy served on Denby’s leadership teams or ran out-of-school time or summer programs. Her experience points to the value of organizational partners residing in and being involved in their communities, as this helped facilitate access to youth.

In 2020, Turner-Handy and the MEC continued their work with Denby youth. In the COVID era, this looks a little different, which does not always sit well with her, as one who enjoys partnering with youth. Despite this, the MEC engaged youth in recent projects, including painting a mural. Most importantly, Turner-Handy led a process that allowed youth and other Denby residents to bring their visions to fruition. Reflecting on her experience, she notes how implementing the KIP:D project set her on a solid path to develop youth engagement skills. “I’ve done this for 20 years, but with this particular project it’s been since 2013 and my skills have really sharpened.”

Build Trust

Residents saw building trust with organizations as an essential prerequisite to implementing change. This idea aligns with literature that indicates civic mobilization is motivated by trusting relationships (Geller *et al.*, 2014). One resident in particular, speaking as someone helping to engage community members in KIP:D and other grant projects, emphasized the ways that trust was vital to having community support. His strategies for building trust included meeting at consistent times and places, listening to community members and focusing on their expressed needs, being transparent in decision-making and following through on commitments made.

“You cannot walk into a community and say, ‘I’m here to save you. I’m here to comfort you. I’m here to do this with you.’ You’ve got to be engaged with them, and this is why: because in the community, what is a high priority for people living there is that they trust you. And so you have to take the time to build the relationships needed to form the trust that’s needed to get the work done. Because it’s not about you doing work, it’s about you engaging the community,” said one organizational partner.

Building and maintaining trust also requires navigating residents’ expectations. One leader we spoke with cautioned against creating unrealistic expectations by making promises that may not be fulfilled. This is of particular concern for planning processes that are not later implemented. This same individual expressed frustration that after asking people to volunteer and work for a year to help design a plan and then not receiving an implementation grant, they ended up disappointing people and creating hurt feelings. Grantmakers should be cognizant of the community-level implications of funding decisions and organizational leaders should strive to be

transparent about the likelihood of future funding.

Prioritize Relationships

Another strategy used was prioritizing relationships. Residents saw the KIP:D projects as an opportunity to build trust and relationships with organizational partners and with other neighbors.

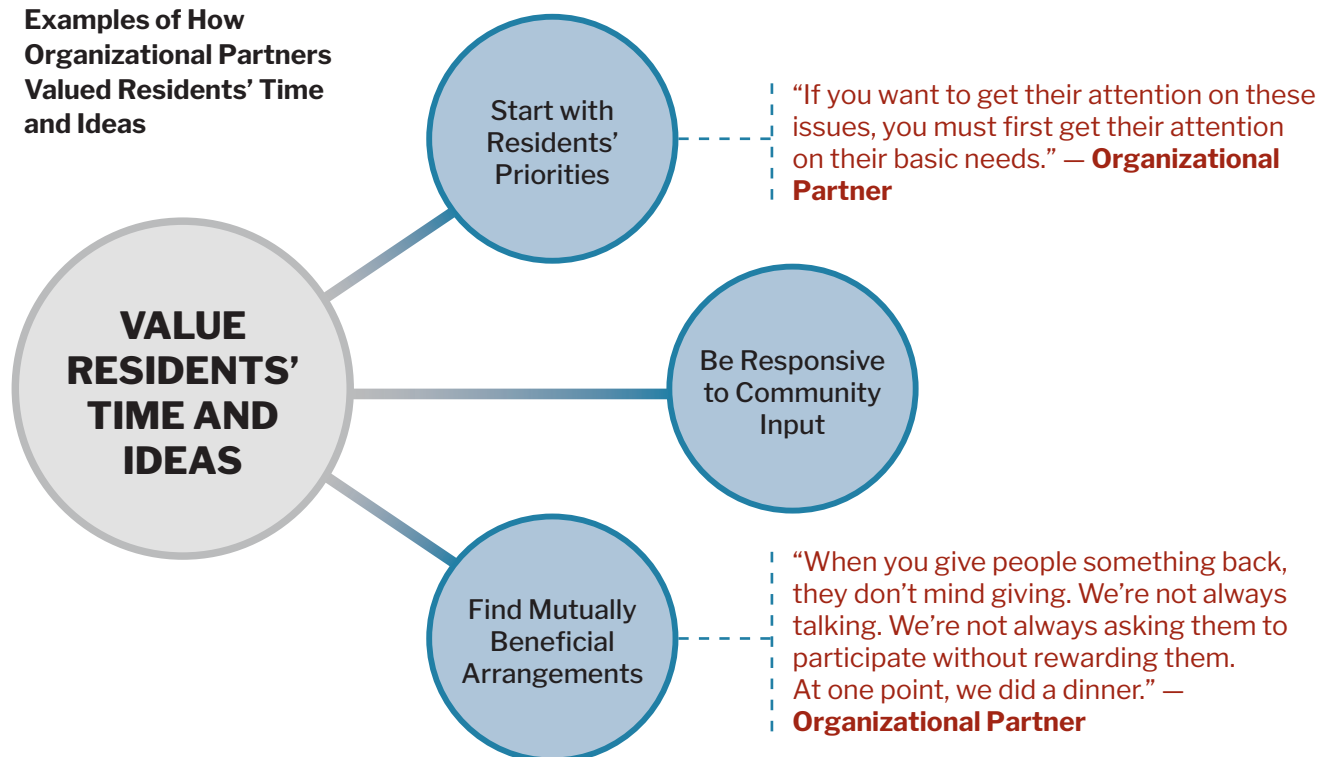
One resident said, “It’s meeting new people. It’s sharing stories. It’s bringing others. With some of the work, there’s the shared accomplishment and legacy.”

Many organizational partners recognized that building trust takes time and requires a long-term commitment to relationships. For one partner, this meant the “cumulative effort of 14 years to finally get people comfortable with seeing us around.” While communication and creating space were helpful strategies for organizations, they do not take the place of relationship building.

“[Community engagement] is not as easy as we thought. I mean, we had visions of, ‘Oh, put a flier up and all the people in the neighborhood will want to work with us.’ It doesn’t really work like that,” mentioned one organizational partner.

When looking at the strategies that organizational partners used to ensure authentic, inclusive engagement, we saw how valuing residents’ time and ideas served to build relationships. Starting with residents’ priorities meant letting community members’ concerns and ideas guide the conversation. Sometimes it meant meeting immediate needs first, then turning back to project planning later. To be responsive to community input, organizations incorporated and shared back out the feedback received. In finding mutually beneficial arrangements, one organizational partner provided meals at community meetings; another offered to host residents’ events in exchange for cutting the grass and taking out the trash.

FIGURE 3:
Examples of How
Organizational Partners
Valued Residents' Time
and Ideas



Start with Neighborhood Assets

Interviews with organizational partners showed that they were most successful in ensuring authentic engagement when they built on the existing assets and social fabric of the community. This meant, for example, utilizing the spaces that community members are comfortable in when hosting a meeting, understanding who neighborhood leaders and influencers are and recognizing the ways that people are already engaging in the community.

One organizational partner spoke of benefiting from the deep connections that longtime residents have and the different opportunities they see. Others spoke of hiring or building relationships with people in the neighborhood

who have large social networks. For some organizational partners, first securing buy-in from a small group of key neighborhood stakeholders paved the way for engaging larger groups of residents. To build engagement into community rhythms, organizational partners looked first to the existing leadership and engagement structures in the neighborhood, as well as the informal ways in which residents were already interacting.

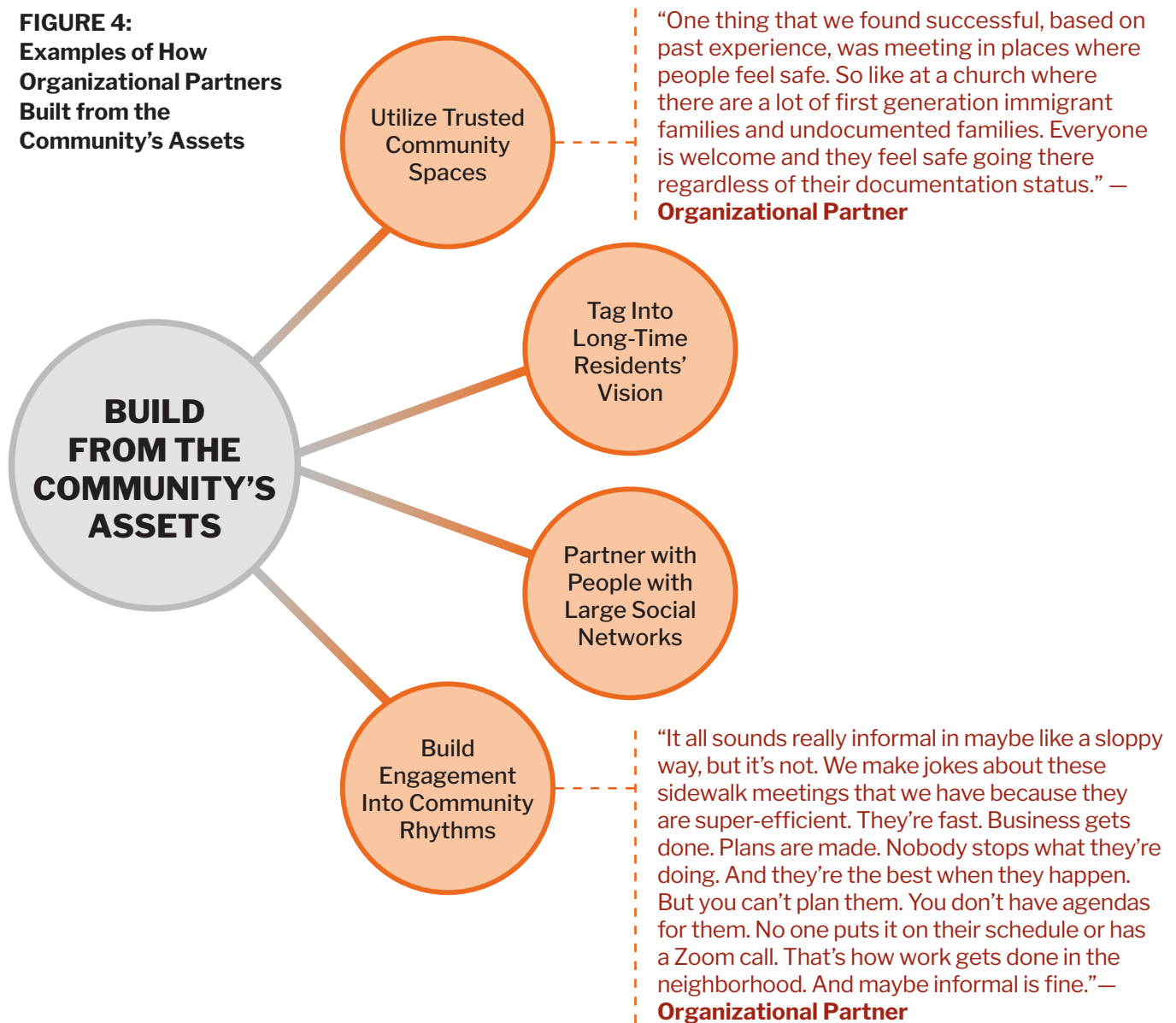
Another organizational partner engaged in youth development described how they were able to reduce the level of youth crime in their community because they had staff who recognized teenagers on the street and could get them back into school.

“So all of those things make a difference when you have people who are invested in that community, who live in that community and who create networks of support for young people and their families. It makes a huge difference,” mentioned an organizational partner.

Bringing staff who had large social networks into the neighborhood helped

to increase community engagement and facilitate trust. In some projects, having staff that knew local residents was especially critical. Regardless of the approach used, the strategies of valuing residents’ time and ideas and building on community assets helped organizational partners strengthen and maintain the trusting relationships that residents prioritize.

FIGURE 4:
Examples of How
Organizational Partners
Built from the
Community’s Assets



PART 2

THE RESULTS OF KIP:D PROJECTS

While project implementation did not always proceed as planned, KIP:D projects brought positive outcomes related to residents' quality of life, community cohesion and community ownership. KIP:D projects also appeared to be catalytic for organizations in numerous ways and pointed to broader community impacts.

KIP:D Projects Improved Residents' Quality of Life

The most visible goal of KIP:D was to transform vacant land into spaces that brought more stability and vibrancy to Detroit neighborhoods. In our analysis, we saw several ways in which projects contributed to improved quality of life for neighborhood residents. Replacing blighted property with spaces that were maintained and cared for was encouraging to residents. The creation of new community spaces was even more

meaningful. Not only are these spaces new assets, whether it's a place to gather or a new service, but they also foster an overall sense of community vibrancy. Residents also frequently mentioned the ways in which their neighborhoods felt safer due to the investment in the community. Residents discussed safety as a foundational need. They also described their appreciation for changes in sensory observations about their neighborhoods, such as seeing more people out, the sound of children playing and the smell of barbecues.

Photo: City of Detroit



Residents' Perspectives on Improved Quality of Life

CREATING NEW COMMUNITY SPACES

“The fact that we have a space that was renovated, rebuilt and made for the community to utilize is just phenomenal. It’s what we need. We need more of it.” — Resident

GREATER SENSE OF SAFETY

“It’s kind of shifted from a place where there’s palpable fear and distrust of the street. By the street I mean the public spaces in between our personal protective houses that just felt distrusted. No one really wanted to have kids playing out on the streets. Now our kids are just all over the place on our block.” — Resident

SENSE OF COMMUNITY VIBRANCY

“Success is seeing a vibrant community where people are just enjoying themselves working or playing in the community. And that, again, was the purpose of the park and the community garden. We see the vibrancy of people coming out and feeling safe and just being alive.” —Resident

CHANGE IN SENSORY OBSERVATIONS

“When I first moved here I used to hear a lot of ambulances and police sirens. And then there was a period I would hear buzz saws and pounding nails. It was the sounds. And I don’t hear so many ambulances now.” — Resident

KIP:D Projects Helped Foster Community Cohesion

Residents and organizational partners often felt their communities were more cohesive after what they considered successful implementation of a KIP:D grant. While Kresge-funded projects are not the sole cause of neighborhood structural changes, residents made clear that they saw connections between KIP:D efforts and broader changes in a variety of ways.

For residents, community meetings served as opportunities for people to come together. And if residents feel welcomed into a space, they are more likely to invite others. One resident was invited to the meetings and then went back to her block, shared it with her neighbors and invited them to participate. This kind of ripple is well known in community development. It is a powerful way in which the process of implementing a neighborhood project, and not just the results, contribute to social cohesion and a sense of belonging (Lardier *et al.*, 2019).

Equally important in creating community cohesion is making resources accessible within the neighborhood, which allows people to stay in their own community to obtain what they need. Furthermore, as people with shared interest in the well-being of the neighborhood come together, they gain a sense of collective

power to make further positive changes together (Holmes *et al.*, nd).

For some residents, KIP:D projects created a foundation to pursue their own aspirations, such as growing a permanent collection of student art into a larger children's art museum in the city.

Residents' Perspectives on Stronger Community Cohesion

COMMUNITY MEETINGS BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER

"I sense more trust as I've been attending the block club meetings. I just get a sense of things moving in a good direction and people starting to find ways to come closer together." — Resident

ACCESS TO RESOURCES

"We know everybody; there's a level of comfort in your own community. What makes a community sustainable is that you can get access to food. You can get access to health care. You can get access to legal services." — Resident

SHARED COMMITMENT TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD

"I think the biggest step forward in our community with regard to this building is the project that we've all committed to. We have these relationships now and we are committed to the relationships and to seeing this neighborhood come together in real ways. It has brought people together who are deeply invested in the neighborhood, and started to build a really strong network of trust which has already shown itself in shows and events and different groups of people coming together." —Resident

FOUNDATION FOR FURTHER INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

"And so in the last few years, I started a garden club called the North Corktown Garden Club. It is specifically to start maintaining these open spaces, and share the legacy that will continue as we manage our own community park spaces." — Resident

Organizational Partners' Perspectives on Stronger Community Cohesion

COMMUNITY SPACES FACILITATE NEW GATHERINGS

“What we didn’t anticipate was a three-generational community space where the moms that were coming would bring their kids and often bring their moms [the grandmas] to help watch the kids. And from that came other events and other ideas and solutions to other things. We didn’t anticipate that when we started.” — **Organizational partner**

RESIDENTS BECAME MORE EMPOWERED

“The community came together in a way they had not done before. So that’s some success from a community aspect. And the residents felt the impact. They had a better understanding. They knew how to overcome hard times, so that was a success.” — **Organizational partner**

Several organizational partners also described stronger community cohesion stemming from the KIP:D projects. In one example, a project had secondary impacts of creating social space and supporting community organizing. In another example, residents came together in new ways and learned to overcome challenges.

Our analysis indicates that organizational partners’ commitment to community cohesion, even to the point of prioritizing this outcome over accomplishing original project goals, related to the ability of projects to achieve this result. While having funding that requires and emphasizes community engagement is meaningful, an organization’s approach is even more significant. Each successive project organization increases engagement skills.

“We built our skills in engaging community members. But that’s not because Kresge paid for it; it is because of how we approach our work,” said one organizational partner.

KIP:D Projects Helped Foster Community Ownership

Our conversations with organizational partners also revealed that KIP:D projects were still able to create space for residents to see their neighborhood visions come to fruition, which leads to a sense of community ownership over, and not just contribution to, development in their neighborhoods (Griffin, Cramer and Powers, 2014).

“Including things like art, I think, has been really critical, especially public art murals and those kinds of things. Also, music in cultural celebrations. All have been very important in the community development field because it lifts up and celebrates the cultures of people, especially people of color. That didn’t exist before. When community residents see things that reflect who they are and value who they are, it changes. It gives community ownership,” an organizational partner said.



Photo: Lon Horwedel for The Kresge Foundation

For several organizational partners, seeing community members continue to support and maintain projects beyond the grant period was the hallmark of community ownership. **As one organizational partner said, “Once you engage the community, you get a buy-in from them. Even when the funding ends, they continue to work.”**

On the other hand, our conversations illuminated how housing and economic instability in the city can undermine efforts to promote community ownership. In some Detroit neighborhoods, residents move in and out frequently, which undermines efforts to build and maintain community ownership of projects. Several of the residents we spoke with described how renters and other short-term neighborhood residents are less invested in the community. They observed that renters are not only less committed to things like lawn maintenance and the appearance of the neighborhood; they are less willing to participate in the neighborhood

groups that are needed to help maintain community development efforts. Some organizational partners made the same observation.

“So we were organizing block clubs, because we knew that for this work to be sustained, you need strong active community members who are invested in their block and enable it to happen, right? And some of that fell through,” said one organizational partner.

KIP:D Projects Built Organizational Capacity

KIP:D projects built organizational capacity in multiple ways. We found evidence that implementing KIP:D projects increased organizational partners’ ability to serve residents both in the short-term, through the immediate impact of the projects, and long-term, through increased capacity for new projects, organizational stability and the ability to advocate for system change.

“So [KIP:D] was a catalyst for us to be able to get our name and organization out there, to make partnerships and to show people that we could build some capacity together with residents. [Capacity building] wasn’t written into the proposal, but it definitely catalyzed where we are now in just having that grant and having that ability to do the work, because that matters to people, right, that you are actually getting something done,” one organizational partner mentioned.

One of the reasons for this is that, in partners’ minds, KIP:D grants are an opportunity to innovate and undertake projects that few funders traditionally support. Kresge’s willingness to invest in nascent, and potentially risky, projects allowed organizations to step into new territory, which in turn opened new

doors for organizations. A number of organizational partners talked about how the opportunity to accomplish something tangible helped them gain personal and organizational credibility.

For some organizations, expanding their physical space meant they could expand their programming and serve more people. Other ways in which the KIP:D projects helped organizational partners increase resident engagement included hiring staff, expanding into new organizational roles and reaching new community groups. Organizational partners also mentioned that the projects built their overall capacity to lead future development and renovation projects and increased their skills in areas such as engagement, advocacy, navigating city bureaucracy and meeting building department standards.

One of the factors that helped the KIP:D grants build organizational capacity was the way in which the projects leveraged

other resources. For organizations that were new at the time of the first three grant rounds, partners said they leveraged other funding through the grants and several attributed this to the respect that other funders have for Kresge. Partners also described new partnerships formed through the grant projects. For example, one organization mentioned that the new partnership formed through the KIP:D project allowed for more robust data collection on community outcomes that became the basis of advocacy and then policy change.

KIP:D Projects Point to Broader Community Impacts

Investing resources in a community leverages existing resources and catalyzes new resources, resulting in an upward spiral of increased community capital (Emery and Flora, 2006; Magis, 2010). Our findings reveal early examples

Examples of Ways KIP:D Projects Built Organizational Capacity

GREATER RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

“I think it directly unlocked the door to a huge amount of resident participation and engagement.” — **Organizational partner**

NEW PARTNERSHIPS

“[The KIP:D grant] was a real catalyst for us to reach out to a number of other organizations, institutions and professional groups that we had never worked with before to try to get a project like this done. That has sort of had a lasting impact for us and for the neighborhood.” — **Organizational partner**

LEVERAGED FUNDING

“Kresge is a confidence builder among other funders because they are leaders.” — **Organizational partner**

of ways in which projects can have impacts that ripple out to communities more broadly. First, as organizational partners build their skills, they are able to take on mentorship roles with other organizations, which in turn increases other organizations' capacity.

In another example, as grant projects build social cohesion in the neighborhood, residents are better positioned to express their vision for the neighborhood to city developers. This type of cohesion can also improve relationships between the community and other institutions. One organizational partner talked about how the neighborhood's relationship with the Detroit Police Department had improved. "The grantee's efforts to organize the community and identify key issues in the neighborhood made it easier for them to

police in the community going forward," said the organizational partner.

As organizations build their capacity, they also have more power in policy decisions. One partner described how having control over the funding offered leverage to ensure the community voice was included in decisions in ways that had not been possible before. These impacts together strengthen the system of community development organizations across Detroit. As KIP:D acts as a catalyst to bring residents into relationship with the organizational partners, the Detroit 21 and similar organizations are able to mobilize around higher systems-level policy change work, informed by the work of community-based organizations like the KIP:D organizational partners.

Early Examples of Ways KIP:D Projects Contribute to Community Impacts

COMMUNITY RESIDENTS HAVE A VOICE IN POLICY DECISIONS

"We're organized and we're trying to express what we want." — Organizational partner

ORGANIZATIONS HAVE MORE POWER IN POLICY DECISIONS

"I always thank Kresge privately for giving me a position of power in the project." — Organizational partner

SYSTEM OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS IS STRONGER

"I think community development looks very different now, especially with the Detroit 21 forming together, which is I think the first time the nonprofit CEOs are developing a really strong voice. For the first time we've got the city council and the mayor listening to a CEO's voice and opinion on policy issues. And we're really pushing back at being the ones at the table. Developers need to come to us, rather than the other way around, if they want to build in our community. They need to do things in a way that is going to be equitable and add value for community residents." — Organizational partner

PART 3

THE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF KIP:D PROJECTS

After our initial round of data collection, we revisited organizational partners and spoke with other residents to learn more about how the work in the first three rounds of KIP:D funding is being sustained and the role of KIP:D projects in the COVID era. We found evidence of multiple barriers to sustainability, but we also found that organizations showed resilience in response to the crises of 2020.

There Are Barriers to Both Project-Level Sustainability and Community-Level Sustainability

Not all projects can or should be sustainable. Some projects, like a planning process for a community or the hire of a community liaison, are stepping stones with a finite lifespan. Others, like the creation of a park or community center, are services that require ongoing investment. For projects that are striving for sustainability, our findings point to several types of barriers. We classified organizational partners' discussions about sustainability at two

levels: 1) project-level sustainability, which involves strong community buy-in and stable funding; and 2) community-level sustainability, which involves scaling up development projects to meet the community's needs in ways that benefit residents in the long term.

Many of the organizations shared that they are reaching project level of sustainability, not only successfully maintaining but also building on and expanding the KIP:D projects. Other organizations experienced challenges with project sustainability, all of which related to the sustainability of funding in some way. Challenges included the fact that securing funds for maintenance is harder than for new projects, the need to learn about successful funding models from other organizations and the need for contingency funds when unexpected challenges arise. For example, many of the organizational partners rely heavily on donations and volunteers, both of which dropped off sharply when the COVID-19 pandemic emerged.

One organizational partner argued that some projects, by nature, require ongoing support and the expectation that they will become self-sustaining is unrealistic. We should note that while Kresge does not provide funding for KIP:D projects

Photo: City of Detroit



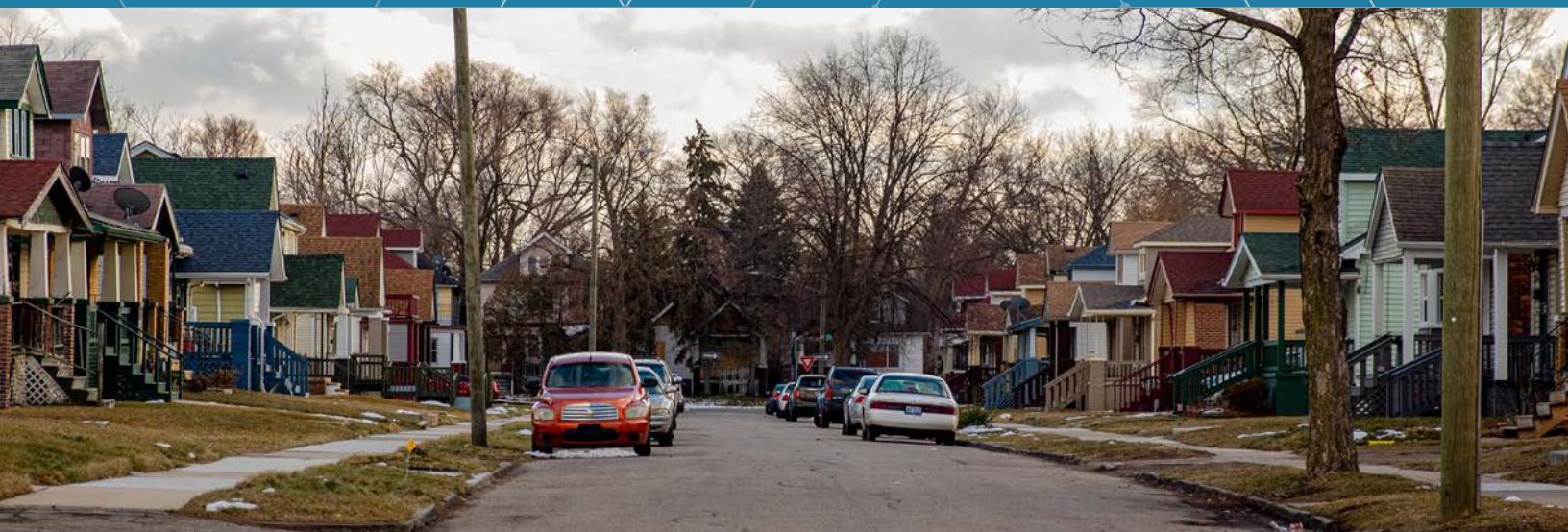


Photo: City of Detroit

beyond the 24-month grant period, they do provide other grant mechanisms for Detroit-based organizations. Several former KIP:D recipients have gone on to participate in Kresge's cohort of organizations that receive operational funds as well as participate in the Detroit 21, a group of Kresge-supported community development organization leaders that advise city stakeholders on community development.

With regard to community-level sustainability, we identified several different challenges. Partners felt that the level and type of capital available is far short of what is needed for large-scale equitable development. One organizational partner talked about needing to increase resources for affordable housing by at least 20 times over what is currently available. Also related to capital is the fact that existing financing mechanisms are not feasible in neighborhoods where residents cannot pay market rates, which impacts many of the neighborhoods where KIP:D partners work.

Another challenge to community level sustainability is the need for more collaboration across sectors in order to achieve the infrastructure change needed to create more affordable and stable neighborhoods. While the physical development projects KIP:D partners lead increase neighborhood social capital and create access to

new resources, they are not sufficient to eliminate the structural challenges that residents face, such as poverty, unemployment and violence.

Socioeconomic dynamics also create barriers to community-level sustainability. Communities are not as cohesive as they once were because they are less dense, people are more transient and economic and educational opportunities are more limited. Yet projects are only sustainable when the community is stable. If projects are not building community wealth alongside beautification projects, their efforts will likely be in vain.

A related, but significant, challenge to long-term community level sustainability is gentrification. One organizational partner in Southwest Detroit shared how the unintended consequence of the community development work in her community resulted in residents getting pushed out by rising housing costs. As community organizations addressed neighborhood violence, and its causes, the community became more attractive to outside investors and people moving in from the suburbs. The impact of this outside investment has been particularly problematic for the immigrant population. As neighborhoods in other parts of the city become more gentrified, other organizations are experiencing increasing challenges scaling projects in ways that address diverse resident needs.

Examples of Barriers to Community-Level Sustainability

LACK OF AVAILABLE CAPITAL

“If we want to get some of these redevelopment projects across the finish line and really be sustainable, then there just needs to be cash from others. And philanthropy is right now still the only game in town there.” — **Organizational partner**

LESS NEIGHBORHOOD DENSITY

“Historically, 25 years ago, there was definitely more density. There were definitely more children. There was definitely more of a sense of neighborhood and community.” — **Organizational partner**

RESIDENTS LIVING IN SURVIVAL MODE

“I don’t think that people don’t care in Detroit, but a lot of people are living in survival mode because they don’t have the income to have the luxury of going to a meeting.” — **Organizational partner**

GENTRIFICATION

“So it’s pushing people from our community out and moving them down river, and especially the immigrant population. Ironically, surrounding suburbs become more affordable than the city. But there are no bilingual services. And they’re being racially profiled and targeted. We’ve had several occasions where families were detained by White folks, just civilians, who said that they looked like they didn’t belong there, and kept them captive while they called ICE to come and pick them up.” — **Organizational partner**

Organizations’ Responses to the Crises of 2020 Showed Resilience

Resilient communities have the capacity to overcome adversity (Magis, 2010) and have structures that help residents access resources in alignment with their needs and values (Ungar, 2011). Our conversations made clear that, because organizational partners serve as community connection points, they were well-positioned to respond to the tumultuous events of 2020.

An organizational partner noted, “Part of our role changed in the beginning trying to help influence policy decisions around COVID to make sure that the most vulnerable residents in our area were not left out and were being appropriately addressed.”

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, because organizations were in touch with residents and were trusted in the community, they were able to respond by identifying needs, connecting people with resources and providing access to information. For example,

one organizational partner convinced the city to hold an outdoor meeting instead of a virtual meeting, since many residents would not be able to participate in a Zoom meeting. Another organization started hosting weekly town hall events livestreamed on Facebook to provide direct information. Each week between 5,000 and 17,000 people have tuned in.

The way that organizational partners responded to the surge in racial justice protests over the spring of 2020 also shows the degree to which they are trusted by residents. Many organizations were able to host gatherings for community members to process their thoughts and emotions around the racial justice protests. For example, one organization hosted a Black Lives Matter solidarity barbecue. Another hosted an open mic night for people to talk about how their lives have been impacted by racism.

Although the organizational partners we spoke with did not describe their work as explicitly racial equity work, many are starting to intentionally incorporate this language and framing. Several people stated their appreciation for having

racial equity as an explicit part of KIP:D application and reporting materials. They shared that this has helped to push their thinking as a staff and as a board.

Organizational partners described Kresge as an early leader in the push to integrate “racial equity.” In addition to Kresge’s leadership, the recent groundswell behind racial equity has pushed many organizations to move faster and address racial equity more intentionally and explicitly. As an example, when one organization released a request for proposals for vacant land, only White applicants responded. Rather than moving forward, they made the decision to pull the property off the market and wait until they could identify an opportunity to instead support a small, black developer.

In short, the events of 2020 have highlighted the critical role that community-based organizations play in helping to ensure the physical, informational and emotional needs of residents are met in times of crisis and change. And in their responses to these events, organizations have shown themselves to be resilient, which is an indicator of sustainability (Magis, 2010).

Photo: City of Detroit



PART 4

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR KRESGE

In this final section, we offer our recommendations for strengthening the initiative's impact across the city and region.

1

Continue to Nurture a Culture of Authentic Engagement. It is clear that the ways in which Kresge staff are connected to and in touch with Detroit community dynamics, as well as the ways in which they demonstrated flexibility and a willingness to listen to organizational partners' ideas, helped support the success of the projects. Kresge's credibility with other funders helped to leverage other project funding. Furthermore, the value that Kresge placed and still places on community engagement and racial equity encourages organizational partners to emphasize these values in their work. For example, we heard from organizational partners that making community engagement a requirement within the grants helped push them toward more genuine engagement.

They also appreciate that the foundation's commitment to community engagement allows them to invest the time needed in community relationships. Organizational partners also shared that the KIP:D initiative benefits from Kresge staff's direct knowledge of Detroit communities. Kresge staff attend clean-up events, community meetings and sit at policy tables. The knowledge they gain from being in those spaces informs their strategies. They can also be in those spaces without forcing an agenda. As a result, the Kresge agenda commonly reflects the community agenda.

One partner recommended that Kresge maintain its presence in the community development space as observers, not conveners or moderators. While for the most part partners appreciated Kresge's role in their project, one comment suggests that there may be room for further examination in how Kresge navigates their relationship as liaison between community and city (including developers in the city). This partner felt that Kresge could leverage their relationships in support of partners receiving KIP:D grants. While we did not hear this often, given Kresge's commitment to community ownership and relationship building, this might be an area for further introspection.

2

Help organizations navigate city bureaucracy and provide access to technical assistance. For many of the organizations interviewed, the KIP:D projects were their first foray into building or landscaping projects. They had to learn as they went along how to make it work. Several people admitted that they did not fully understand what they were getting into. Some organizations had access to technical expertise through existing relationships. Many, however, wished they would have known where to find professional guidance to better understand the relevant processes, such as what permits were needed at what point or the appropriate order of renovation projects.

Advice on technical considerations could help grantees implement projects more efficiently, avoid expensive mistakes and focus their energy and attention on community engagement. Technical assistance can also be helpful in supporting KIP:D partners' efforts in collective infrastructure change (Anderson-Carpenter *et al.*, 2017). Several partners described a desire for, at a minimum, a general roadmap outlining what issues to consider at which stages of a project and where to go with what questions. Figure 3 shows examples of technical assistance that organizational partners mentioned needing to seek out during the course of their KIP:D projects.

Organizational partners' ideas for Kresge included helping point people to the different types of expertise represented among past and current grant recipients, and establishing mentorship relationships between

organizations. These ideas are supported by other evaluation work that indicates collaborative learning and mentorship increases skills learned, generates best practices and helps develop innovative ideas (Dehab *et al.*, 2015).

Partners offered two ideas for providing support to organizational partners. The first was the idea of utilizing the cohorts as a space to learn what other people are doing, find technical assistance and share and solve challenges together. One concern was that partners did not want that information to live in the foundation, but to be a more open-access resource. Kresge has already acted on a similar recommendation. Beginning with the fourth KIP:D cohort, Kresge partnered with a local nonprofit support organization, Michigan Community Resources, to provide more extensive technical assistance to KIP:D recipients.

FIGURE 5: Examples of Technical Assistance KIP:D Projects Needed

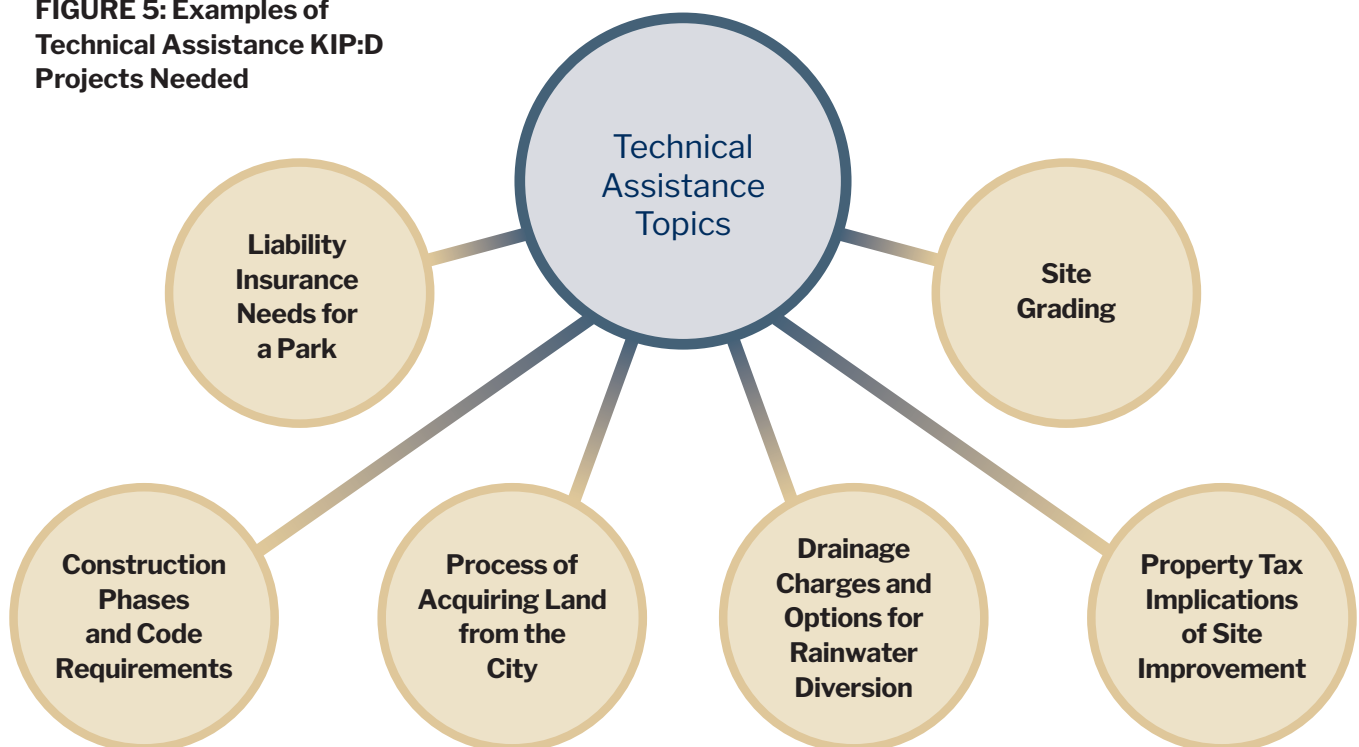




Photo: Ebony Reddock

The second idea for supporting organizational partners is to formalize mentorship relationships. Many of the organizational partners we spoke with stated that they would be happy to share the lessons they have learned along the way with other organizations. Some people are already offering informal mentorship when approached for advice. But more formally pairing organizations based on project types or growth areas could extend the benefits of mentorship to more organizations and tap more deeply into existing expertise. This work could be structured into a formal, opt-in mentorship component in which partners newer to community development work could be paired with mentors based on characteristics such as geography, expertise and project area. Given that a number of partners appreciated less structured opportunities to work with their peers, we would advise that this mentorship opportunity also be less structured and not required.

3

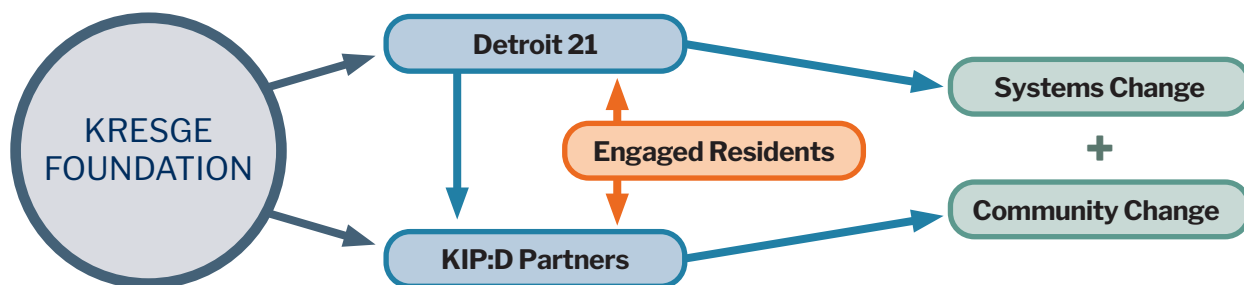
Strategically connect KIP:D and Kresge's operating support initiatives to make a collective impact on Detroit community development. While separate initiatives, KIP:D and Kresge's operating support initiatives share similar goals related to facilitating change in

Detroit neighborhoods, linking these initiatives together in a broader theory of change may have greater impact on strengthening the community development system in the city.

A broader theory of change can also be leveraged to make the initiatives' contributions to racial equity more explicit and deliberate. Organizational partners shared their thinking about this during our conversations. We have drawn their insights into a potential model for understanding how the Detroit 21 members work and KIP:D projects complement one another. A potential benefit of explicitly connecting these initiatives is the opportunity to help organizational partners have a voice in city policy decisions. Several partners made clear that they do not have the capacity to maintain relationships with city officials in the way that larger organizations do and, therefore, are not able to benefit from advance information or advocate for their communities.

Kresge has already established the building blocks for this work in their grant support and encouragement of civic groups (e.g. social clubs, block clubs, neighborhood associations), as well as community development corporations (CDCs) and similar organizations. CDCs are in the position, due to Kresge's operating support, to be an advocacy arm for neighborhoods. Operating support allows them to delve more fully into this work, as well as mentoring to smaller organizations. In turn, smaller organizations and civic groups can concentrate on neighborhood improvement efforts which may serve to retain residents in Detroit neighborhoods.

Figure 6: Conceptual Model for Linking Funding Initiatives



4

Continue to fund projects that add value to the neighborhood and start to think at the regional scale.

Going beyond simply removing negative elements of communities and creating spaces to bring community members together has a significant impact on residents' quality of life and community cohesion. Small changes inspire pride and neighborhood commitment in ways that inspire further changes.

KIP:D has helped organizations be successful at the block level and now many of these organizations are looking to explore how their work, and the work of future organizational partners, can have a cumulative impact and move toward infrastructure change. Kresge has an opportunity to encourage grant recipients in the same neighborhood to work together and to use future funding decisions to strategically build from the existing neighborhood assets. Linking together projects within Detroit's neighborhoods could accelerate the momentum already underway.

When we circled back to organizational partners to review themes that had come from the interviews, one of the major new ideas that emerged was the desire for more collaboration at the neighborhood level. This was discussed, in varying ways, in all four of the group conversations, which collectively represented 11

organizational partners. Organizational partners discussed wanting to align their work strategically and to ensure that new KIP:D projects were building on, adding value and filling gaps of existing projects in order to benefit the community as a whole. They also wanted tangible ways to work with other organizations. Furthermore, organizational partners see this neighborhood-level collaboration as a key step in moving toward the larger infrastructure and policy changes needed for long-term sustainability.

Another way in which cross-organizational collaboration could further sustainability is by helping organizational partners more effectively engage in policy conversations, which supports implementation of the previous recommendation. Several of the partners we spoke with noted that when it comes to city government decisions and events [such as parcels for sale or new developments coming in], community-organizations are often late to the game and not prepared to play. Because they do not have the resources of larger organizations, communication organizations miss out on the opportunity to influence decisions or take advantage of opportunities. A potential way to support partners' efforts at cross-organizational collaboration is to support a long-term community planning process with past and present KIP:D partners to increase the collective impact of Detroit's community development sector.

CONCLUSION

The events of 2020 have shown that community development work is needed now more than ever. In its first three rounds, the KIP:D initiative set a foundation for equitable community development that charged neighborhood residents with articulating their visions for community spaces and giving them the resources to make those visions reality. Our findings show that both the process and result of implementing these neighborhood visions have been impactful in the lives of residents and in the work of organizational partners.

Residents reported feelings of hope and connectedness. Organizations spoke to new opportunities to make change and reach for even larger goals.

The collective wisdom of the residents and organizational partners behind these projects offers many insights for other funders, future grant recipients and the community development sector more broadly. Lessons for organizations include the value of engagement in all forms, the importance of establishing trust, the opportunities within the rich assets of neighborhood residents and groups and the power of incremental change.

Lessons for the community development field include the potential of partnerships with grassroots organizations, the way

physical developments leverage further community action and the opportunity to mobilize across the community development system for policy and structural change. Lessons for the philanthropic sector include the need to authentically partner with communities, the wisdom of grounding initiatives in community organizing principles and the importance of strategically moving beyond safe investments.

In short, KIP:D plays a key role in fostering residents' commitment to their neighborhoods and strengthening organizations' capacity to serve as long-term neighborhood stewards. Together these impacts are helping drive equitable neighborhood development across the city in lasting and powerful ways.

Photo: Michigan Environmental Council



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APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

Kresge identified eight guiding questions for this evaluation:

1. What has been the role of KIP:D projects in improving community connectivity, quality of life and residents' perceptions of their neighborhoods? What types of projects and which projects change residents' perceptions of quality of life? To what extent are these areas of impact aligned with resident desires?
2. Are KIP:D projects accessible to neighborhood residents — not just certain demographics, but the community at large?
3. What perceptions do grantees, stakeholders and, to some extent, residents have about how KIP:D projects have advanced the vision and priorities of neighborhood residents?
4. To what extent have these projects aligned with community priorities? How have community members and stakeholders been involved in the project planning and implementation? What methods were most effective in ensuring community priorities are incorporated?
5. What strategies were most effective in ensuring authentic, inclusive engagement with a broad set of stakeholders?
6. What are some characteristics of project execution, management and implementation shared across the most impactful projects?
7. To what extent is the work of KIP:D grantees catalytic? What elements of the funding approach help or hinder

KIP:D organizations to be catalytic in their community and the field? What have been the key challenges, successes and missed opportunities in the implementation of this initiative?

8. In what ways are these organizations especially effective at addressing racial equity within the organization and within the broader community they serve? To what extent do KIP:D projects support or hinder these efforts? What can we learn about what it takes to advance racial equity in this sector?

We identified a set of qualitative data collection methods to explore these questions from the perspective of multiple stakeholders and that would build on and complement each other. These methods were designed to elicit balanced representation across all four major areas of Detroit: West, Southwest, East and North-Central. Data collection occurred in two phases: September 2019–February 2020 and May–September 2020. We used the following four data collection methods.

Project profile interviews. We first developed a one-page description of each project, providing key information on the nature of the project, progress, next steps and project sustainability. These project profiles were checked with each agency in an interview, which also included questions about barriers and facilitators in project implementation. Because not all projects were responsive to our requests, we completed 37 project profiles and conducted 26 interviews. Of

the interviews, one was incomplete and five were not able to be transcribed, due to the sound quality of the recording, leaving 20 complete transcripts. All of these interviews were completed in phase one.

Participatory video most significant change (PVMSC). PVMSC is a form of participatory monitoring and evaluation (Asadullah and Muniz, 2015). The process involves the collection of significant change stories emanating from the field level and the systematic selection of the most significant of these stories by panels of designated stakeholders (Davies and Dart, 2005). We invited organizational partners to nominate community leaders, whether residents or agency staff, to conduct a small number of interviews with long-term community residents. Community leaders conducted 16 resident interviews in phase one and PEG staff completed two additional resident interviews in phase two.

Oral history interviews. Drawing on our own knowledge of the community, and recommendations from KIP:D organizational partners, we identified four people who were both KIP:D grant recipients and long-term community development professionals in Detroit. We conducted in-depth interviews with these individuals about their experiences with changing communities over time and the role of KIP:D projects in the changes that occurred. Three of these individuals also participated in a project profile interview.

Organizational partner focus groups. We conducted four focus groups with 11 organizational partners in phase two. Ten of the focus group participants also completed a project profile interview. These conversations were designed to elicit feedback on the initial themes we had found from the phase one data collection. The focus groups were also an opportunity to understand how the coronavirus pandemic and racial justice uprisings were impacting community

organizations. Ten of the focus group participants also completed a project profile interview.

Analysis. Once interviews and focus groups were recorded and transcribed, two team members read through each transcript and summarized key themes. These summaries helped draw out sensitizing concepts. We also met with three community leaders who had conducted resident interviews to discuss themes and the interpretation of those themes. Three team members then each coded a subset of transcripts. Team members met to discuss the codes they developed and the way in which they were applied in order to develop a final codebook. The final codebook was then used to code the remaining transcripts. All transcripts were analyzed by code in order to look at topics across the data.

In selecting the stories and experiences to report as findings, we focused on relevance to the guiding evaluation questions and relation to common themes, though not necessarily common experiences, across all of the data. In many cases we highlight perspectives of individual organizational partners because they illuminate the breadth of experiences and offer meaningful examples. We also took into account the topics that were meaningful to the speaker in our judgment, based on factors like tone of the conversation and length of discussion. Finally, our interpretation relies on our knowledge of community development generally and in the Detroit context. To help build this context, we reviewed the [Skillman Foundation's Good Neighborhoods Initiative](#), [Detroit Future City](#), [Building the Engine of Community Development in Detroit initiative](#) and the [Neighborhoods Working in Partnership](#) project.

APPENDIX B: DEFINITIONS

Project Status:	
PLANNED	Project was planned
IMPLEMENTED	Project implementation was initiated
COMPLETED AS PLANNED	Implementation project was completed as planned
COMPLETED WITH ADAPTATIONS	Implementation project was adapted from original plan and completed
PARTIALLY COMPLETED BUT NOT CONTINUED	A portion of the implementation project was completed but is no longer active
ONGOING AS OF 2019	Work on the project was continuing as of 2019
NOT COMPLETED	Implementation project was not completed
UNKNOWN IF COMPLETED	Implementation projects were initiated but the completion status as of 2019 was unknown
Project Results:	
PARK	An outdoor space to be used for recreation and outdoor activities
GREEN SPACE	Land designated for vegetation or other natural elements. This includes gardens, growing spaces and development of ecologically focused infrastructure
COMMUNITY CENTER	Spaces developed for formal community gathering purposes
VACANT LOT CLEANUP	Rehabilitating, cleaning or repurposing at least one neglected parcel of land
BEAUTIFICATION	Landscaping of homes or home repairs

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