

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

1. How has the project impacted the local community?

The impact of the Heidelberg Project on the community can be measured in a number of ways. From a statistical point of view and according to records at the Detroit Police Department's seventh precinct, there have been no serious crimes reported on Heidelberg Street in its eighteen year existence, notwithstanding the fact that the community's African American male mortality rate is 50%.

From a social and economical stance, children and residents within the community have been exposed to over 90 cultures in community that is 99% African American (87% for the city of Detroit). The success of the Heidelberg Project to incorporate cultural diversity into the community is evidenced by the fact that its newest resident is a Caucasian artist who also contributes his talent to the neighborhood. The Heidelberg Project has also become a tourist destination thereby providing an economic benefit to the city of Detroit.

Perhaps the greatest testament to impact of our project on the community is the effect that it has on community children. Consider this story about a boy named Justin:

Justin comes from three generations of drug abusers and was just two years old when he was first introduced to the Heidelberg Project. Over the next nine years Justin would become a regular on Heidelberg Street, participating in various projects and programs. Teachers at his local elementary school were puzzled as to why young Justin was such a thriving child, so eager to learn, in spite of his deteriorating home life and exposure to drugs and violence. Justin would often share his experiences on Heidelberg Street with his classmates and teachers but it was not until the staff at his School saw two-year old Justin featured in a documentary about the Heidelberg Project that they begin to understand that Justin had been nurtured and mentored through the Heidelberg Project programs virtually his entire life. Justin knows that he has choices and believes in himself. Today he is an A and B student, loves classical music, participates in sports, is a champion chess player, and is still a regular participant in the Heidelberg Project's programs.

2. Describe the underlying values of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project?

The Heidelberg Project enhances the quality of life in the neighborhood by introducing residents to the concept of Community Cultural Development. Community Cultural Development combines the elements of neighborhood development by using the culture of society within that community as the vehicle for change. The Heidelberg Project has provided a stage for the community as a means of expressing their culture and improving their lives. For 18 years, the Heidelberg Project has transformed this community at a grass roots level by engaging children in art programs, generating tourism and cultural awareness, and creating an art environment that challenges perceptions of urban blight.

The Heidelberg Project was a provocative and oftentimes controversial commentary on urban blight in the city of Detroit. This became the magnifying focal point for political leaders. Consequently, the Heidelberg Project was partially destroyed in 1991 and again in 1999. The partial demolitions put the Heidelberg Project at a grave disadvantage with plans for development. Over the years political leaders struggled to recognize and value the accomplishments of the Heidelberg Project. The most significant trade-off has been the ongoing effort of the Heidelberg Project to find a common denominator that political leaders could grasp and support. Still an arduous task, the Heidelberg Project finally struck a cord after tracking the number of visitors to the Heidelberg Project and a determination was made that with over 250,000 visitors annually, the Heidelberg Project had become the third most visited (cultural) tourist's destination within the city of Detroit (second to the Charles Wright Museum of African American History and third to the Detroit Institute of Arts). The economic benefits of the Heidelberg Project to the city of Detroit could no longer be underestimated.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)

3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.

The Heidelberg Project began in 1986 and can be best described as an evolutionary process rather than a development process. Tyree Guyton fed up with the negativity that had engulfed his community, says he looked at his neighborhood and saw the possibilities of what it could become. He did not propose or devise a blueprint for creating the Heidelberg Project, he simply relied on his artistic talent and vision to transform Heidelberg Street.

Armed with a paintbrush, a broom and neighborhood Children, Guyton began by cleaning up vacant lots. From the debris and other refuse, Guyton reconfigured the environment. Vacant lots literally became 'lots of art' and abandoned houses became giant art sculptures. By 1991, Guyton had transformed four abandoned structures from found and recycled materials. His work drew such attention until drug dealers and prostitutes had to find a new place to operate. Now residents who were previously afraid to come out of their homes began to engage in active dialog and get in involved. Guyton offered ground-breaking solutions to hard-hitting problems and a microscopic prospectus for urban renewal in his community.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.

The initial phase of the project (under Mayor Coleman Young), 1986-1991 did not call for a formal development plan, consequently financing was not a factor. Determination, courage and vision became the intangible qualities necessary to transform Heidelberg Street. Children, neighbors and supporters also played a key role by donating time, materials and paint. By 1989, supporters formed a non-profit and called Guyton's work on Heidelberg Street the Heidelberg Project. Unfortunately the city of Detroit destroyed 65% of the Heidelberg Project in 1991.

In 1993, (under Mayor Dennis Archer) Guyton began re-building the Heidelberg Project. This time newly cleared vacant lots created a canvas for additional art sculptures. The Project drew the attention of architects, urban planners and other artists from around the world which led to a more formalized development plan. The goal was to somehow appease politicians and expand services to the community. Small grants and private donations were secured and in 1997, the Heidelberg Project secured a grant from the city of Detroit in the amount of \$47,500 for a café and welcoming center. However two members of Detroit City Council did not agree with Guyton's concept of community revitalization and yet another political battle ensued. Once again, in 1999, certain aspects of the Heidelberg Project were destroyed and the majority of funding had to be returned.

Today, (under Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick) the Heidelberg Project continues to grow and is at its best. Although still not always understood or appreciated, The Heidelberg Project's success and longevity despite setbacks has gained respect and is recognized as one of the most influential art environments in the world. The Heidelberg is poised to take the next evolutionary step.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings?

The uniqueness of the Heidelberg Project has been its greatest challenge and its sweetest victory. Not only does it address urban issues, it also has a proven track record of effectively addressing many of these issues by engaging the community. Even those whom society characterizes as renegades have experienced a transformation. Today many assist Guyton with the development and maintenance of the Project. There is also a profound respect for the Project by community residents as evidenced by the mere fact that it is allowed to exist unharmed while the remaining community continue to deteriorate. The Heidelberg Project challenged all notions traditionally attached to urban communities: The notion that a creative spirit could not exist in the ghetto. It challenged the notion that hope and life could not be found from within.

The Heidelberg Project has already become a model for other communities around the world.