

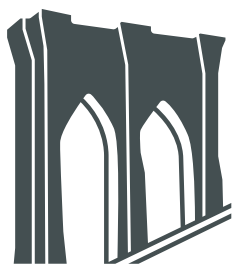


Brooklyn

Insights

FINAL REPORT

A PROJECT OF BROOKLYN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



BROOKLYN
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

1000 DEAN STREET, SUITE 307 BROOKLYN, NY 11238

WWW.BROOKLYNINSIGHTS.BROOKLYNCOMMUNITYFOUNDATION.ORG

TO OUR FELLOW BROOKLYNITES (AND EVERYONE WHO WISHES THEY WERE ONE!)



We are pleased to share this report from Brooklyn Insights, a project that Brooklyn Community Foundation launched in January of this year. This report documents the findings from our conversations with nearly 1,000 residents, advocates, and leaders to discuss our borough's future, and to put their voices and ideas at the forefront of our work.

From the bustling sidewalks of Sunset Park, to the lush gardens and farms of East New York, to the vibrant neighborhood blocks beyond the boardwalk in Coney Island, we learned about the intense challenges facing residents, and the opportunities they see for bettering their lives. Over six months, we discovered more than we ever imagined, and repeatedly heard about five major themes that thread through all of our communities.

We are so grateful to the people of Brooklyn for opening their homes, offices, schools, and places of worship to us, and lending their honesty, optimism, and expertise to this process. We are indebted to the many young people who gave up their free time to make sure that we adults were getting the full picture. And you'll meet many of those who shared with us as you see their photos in this report.

We are privileged to be able to apply these insights to everything we do, so that together we can spark lasting social change in Brooklyn.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "C. Clarke".

Cecilia Clarke
President & CEO
Brooklyn Community Foundation





TABLE OF CONTENTS

5. INTRODUCTION

7. CONTEXT

8. PROCESS

10. MAJOR THEMES

12. NEIGHBORHOOD COHESION

16. YOUTH

20. CRIMINAL JUSTICE

22. IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

26. RACIAL JUSTICE

28. CONCLUSION

31. APPENDIX AND THANKS



INTRODUCTION

In January 2014, the Brooklyn Community Foundation initiated Brooklyn Insights, a six-month project to bring the people and neighborhoods of Brooklyn together to discuss Brooklyn's future - the pressing needs of our communities, opportunities for change and strategies for collective action.

By late June, the Foundation had engaged close to 1000 people in a wide variety of discussions. Participants included leaders in some of Brooklyn's most distressed communities, professionals working in more than 30 different sectors, and residents of a cross-section of the borough's 70 neighborhoods. Educators, entrepreneurs, religious leaders, community developers, teenage students, artists, parks advocates, taxi drivers, journalists, urban farmers, small business owners, public officials and many others joined these conversations, sharing their dreams, their

concerns, and their determination to make Brooklyn a fairer and more equitable place for the people who live here. We started Brooklyn Insights in January's "polar vortex" with sub-zero temperatures and brutal winds, and had our last meeting on a glorious late June afternoon.

The Brooklyn Insights process was an important learning laboratory for the Foundation, and will inform our strategies going forward. This report captures the essence of the Brooklyn Insights process, and the major ideas that emerged from it. Such a summary cannot convey all the nuance of the experience or the variety of inspiring voices and ideas we heard. For more of that texture, detailed information about our conversations, and photo narratives of some of the outstanding community activists we met, visit the project website, BrooklynInsights.org.



CONTEXT

As New York City's most populous and fastest growing borough, Brooklyn is a center of vibrant culture, political power, economic growth and entrepreneurial innovation. In the past decade, Brooklyn has become an international symbol of urban cool and the nation's leading destination for young professionals, artists and creatives of different kinds.

But this image of Brooklyn is a thin veneer on a much more complex community story. Brooklyn is home to 2.6 million residents, the majority of whom are middle income and working class people living "regular" lives in "regular" neighborhoods - raising children, caring for elderly parents, trying to keep up with their bills and contribute as they can to the vitality of their communities. Hundreds of thousands of Brooklynites have lived here their entire lives, and many have Brooklyn roots stretching back to the nineteenth century or earlier.

Overshadowed by Brooklyn's prosperous enclaves, nearly half of Brooklyn's residents live in or on the verge of poverty, according to the New York City Center for Economic Opportunity. More than

8,000 Brooklyn children are homeless. School achievement scores in some Brooklyn neighborhoods are the lowest in the New York City, and other important social measures are trending sharply downward.

Some Brooklyn neighborhoods are enjoying robust prosperity, but many others are literally struggling for survival. These conditions frame the challenge for the Brooklyn Community Foundation - and for anyone who cares about the health, welfare and future of our borough as a whole.

The Foundation is committed to addressing gross disparities in opportunity, and to improving the equity of outcomes for the residents of Brooklyn. The Foundation believes that genuine and sustainable community change occurs when people are engaged in creating and implementing their own solutions. Brooklyn Insights put the voices and ideas of Brooklyn residents at the center of the Foundation's work, ensuring that the community's strengths and experiences will inform our strategies for leadership, community development and grantmaking in the years ahead.

PROCESS



Brooklyn Insights had five major components designed to explore people's perceptions of Brooklyn, their sense of the challenges and opportunities facing the borough, and their wishes for concrete change:

SECTOR-BASED ROUNDTABLES

Thirty in-depth discussions with leaders in different professional sectors identified major issues facing each sector and projects or initiatives that are inspiring forward-looking change. Each session focused on a different field – housing and homelessness, youth development, arts and culture, urban agriculture, business and entrepreneurial ventures, immigrants, community media, and others. More than 600 sector leaders participated in the Roundtable meetings.

NEIGHBORHOOD DIALOGUES

"Deep dives" into three Brooklyn neighborhoods surfaced critical local issues and residents' priorities for change. The Dialogues involved more than 300 people in one-on-one discussions, group conversations and town hall meetings in neighborhoods that reflect the diversity, complexity and changing dynamics of the borough as a whole: [Coney Island](#), [East New York](#) and [Sunset Park](#).

BROOKLYNINSIGHTS.ORG

A website and documentation effort captured activities and learning to share with the public in real time. The site contains distillations of the Roundtable meetings and Neighborhood Dialogues, video profiles of a handful of outstanding community leaders, social media exchanges, and other information.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FELLOWS

The Foundation selected seven high school students to be Community Engagement Fellows, ensuring that young people's voices were integrated into the process, and that young leaders were given an opportunity to sharpen their community organizing skills. These students, many of them residents of our three focus neighborhoods, participated in the Dialogues, planned and led a meeting with teenagers from across the borough, and contributed their own analysis and recommendations for change.

INSIGHT INTO ACTION

Two meetings involving 40 of the leading voices from the Roundtable and Dialogue meetings reviewed major findings from the Brooklyn Insight process, confirmed priority themes and explored possible Foundation strategies.

The Foundation also conducted additional research – talking with other community foundations about the philanthropic practices that are effectively boosting community-driven change, and gathering additional information about current trends affecting Brooklyn.

MAJOR THEMES

Each Brooklyn Insights meeting had its own flavor and produced its own distinct take-aways for the Foundation.

We heard inspiring stories about Brooklyn's unique history and distinctive strengths, the special characteristics of different neighborhoods, and the resilience that sustains communities through the strain of poverty and the impacts of 100-year storms. We heard the perspectives of people whose families have lived in the borough for generations, and from those who have moved here quite recently.

In all these different conversations, **five major themes arose repeatedly**. In slightly different words, and with slightly different emphasis, we heard nearly universal concern about neighborhood cohesion and the consequences of gentrification; opportunities for young people; the criminal justice system; immigrant communities; and racial justice.

These five major themes are vast and multi-layered, with systemic dimensions as well as impacts at the level of lived experience. Each has different implications for every Brooklyn neighborhood and its residents. And of course, they are interrelated. The prominence of these themes in the Brooklyn Insights conversations puts them at the center of the Foundation's future work. Here we briefly summarize the major themes raised during our discussions.



NEIGHBORHOOD
COHESION



YOUTH



CRIMINAL
JUSTICE

IMMIGRANT
COMMUNITIES



RACIAL JUSTICE



NEIGHBORHOOD

“We are so much better at pushing people out than at pushing people up.”

-BROOKLYN INSIGHTS PARTICIPANT

Throughout the Brooklyn Insights process, we heard people express deep knowledge about and pride in their neighborhoods. Among other qualities, people talked about Brooklyn’s distinctive urban fabric and human-scale built environment. We heard from the artists, tradition-bearers and cultural resources that contribute to the identity of every neighborhood. Residents talked about the importance of parks and open spaces to their health as well as to their community’s social fabric and cohesion. We heard about seniors and young people working together to make their neighborhoods better. We learned about hundreds of community leaders and community-based organizations that are mobilizing local efforts for positive change. But we also heard about people’s deep worries.

COHESION



INCOME DISPARITIES

Five of the ten poorest census tracts in New York City are in Brooklyn. In the past ten years, growing income disparity has made Brooklyn the third most economically inequitable county in the state behind Westchester and Manhattan.

GENTRIFICATION

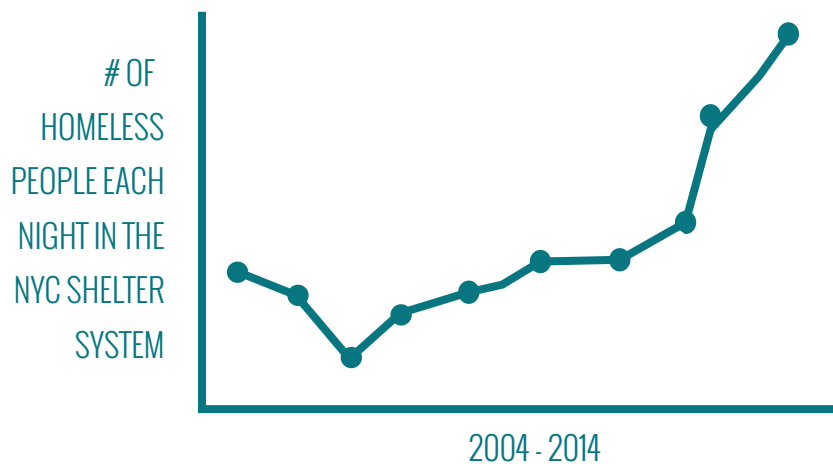
Gentrification is transforming neighborhoods at an unprecedented pace, escalating housing costs and displacing tens of thousands of long-term residents from their homes. These changes make people feel they have lost agency and voice in their own neighbor-

hoods, and are exacerbating inequities in housing, transportation, education, health, public safety and other areas of community life.

REAL ESTATE AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS

The borough-wide explosion of residential real estate development - hyper-active in all but Brooklyn's poorest and most isolated neighborhoods - is squeezing out manufacturing, light industrial and commercial functions. This is making it harder to sustain mixed-use neighborhoods, long the base of Brooklyn's economic power and the source of jobs for neighborhood residents.

HOMELESSNESS



Incomes have not kept pace with housing costs and the number of people in New York City shelters has jumped 54% in the past decade, and 10% over the past year. The lack of affordable housing is a crisis in many neighborhoods.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

There are a variety of ways to diminish the negative impacts of current real estate trends. These include investments in affordable housing, rent stabilization, community benefit agreements, inclusionary zoning, and revision of property tax exemptions among others. Central to any of these strategies is stronger organizing at the community level and more sustained cross-neighborhood advocacy to change public policies.

GREEN SPACES

Disparities in the distribution of parks correlate directly with disparities in diseases such as obesity, diabetes and asthma. Low-income communities have the fewest parks and open spaces, and the parks in poorest communities are the least well resourced. They are unsafe and unclean. Community gardens are essential sources of fresh vegetables in many communities with limited access to grocery stores and affordable fresh food.

ARTS AND CULTURE

Visual artists, musicians, writers, actors, designers, storytellers and other creative people live in every Brooklyn neighborhood and are central to community life and cohesion. But their talents are under-utilized and many are at risk of being displaced. Artist-in-school programs, neighborhood cultural centers, afterschool arts programs, and festivals – as well as access to the city's cultural institutions – are essential to enhancing social capital, sustaining traditions, and boosting the creative potential of both children and adults.

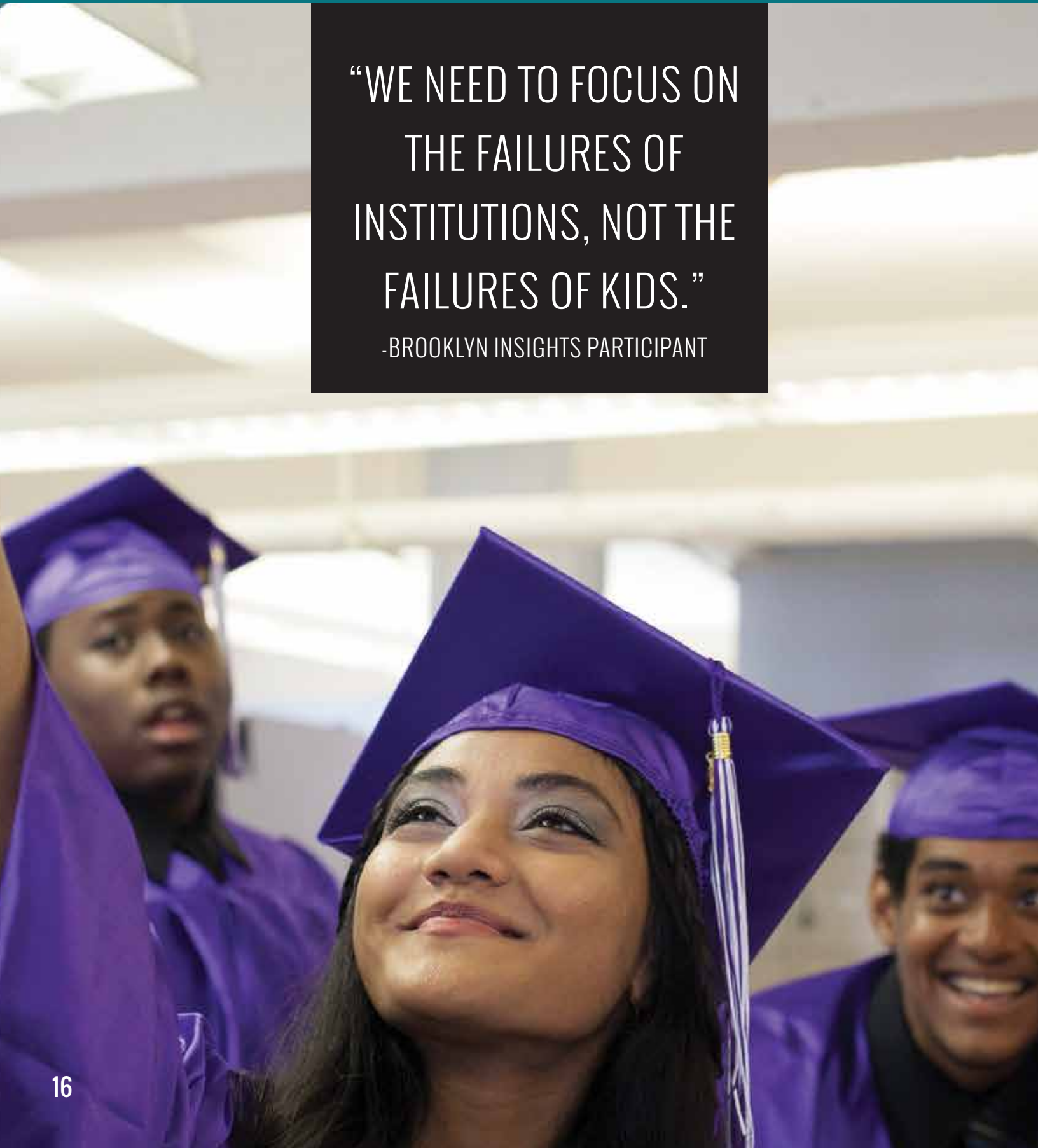
IN EVERY CONVERSATION, PARTICIPANTS TOLD US THEIR SPECIFIC WISHES FOR THE FUTURE:

"Greater access to information via community-based centers open on evenings and weekends."

YOUTH

“WE NEED TO FOCUS ON
THE FAILURES OF
INSTITUTIONS, NOT THE
FAILURES OF KIDS.”

-BROOKLYN INSIGHTS PARTICIPANT



Young people were a priority topic in all our conversations. We heard a great deal about their marvelous talents, their importance to the vitality, spirit and stability of neighborhoods, and their essential role in Brooklyn's future. We also learned about the serious obstacles that hundreds of thousands of them face with schools, social services, jobs, transportation, housing and social stigmas.

POVERTY



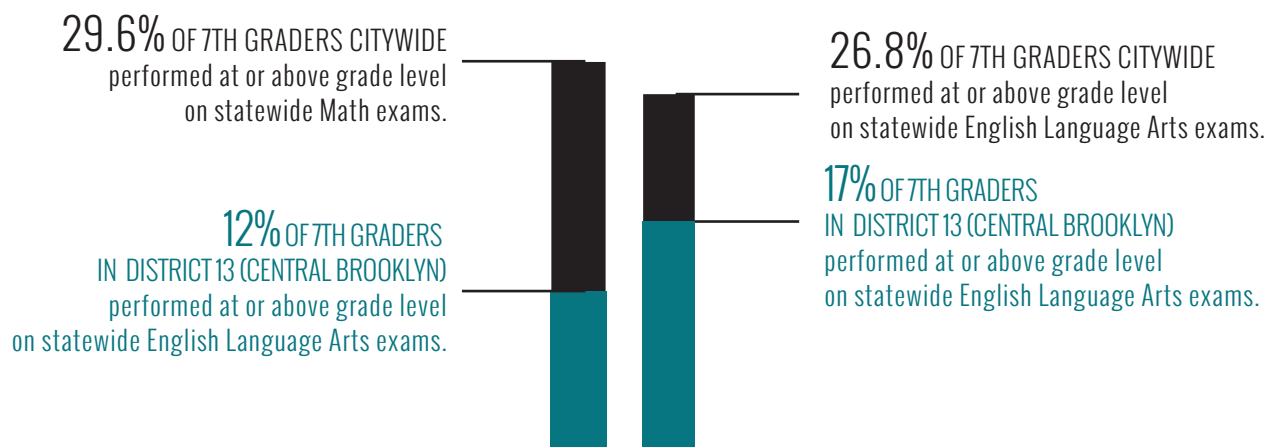
Children and young people, particularly young people of color, struggle here. Nearly 35% (208,253) of the borough's children live in poverty and it's estimated that more than 8,000 of these children are homeless.

OUT OF SCHOOL AND UNEMPLOYED

Boroughwide, the percentage of Brooklyn young people aged 16-24 who are neither in school nor working has declined since 2000, but in many of our low-income neighborhoods the trend is reversed. In Brownsville, for example, close to 30% of youth between 16 and 24 are not currently in school or employed.

EDUCATION

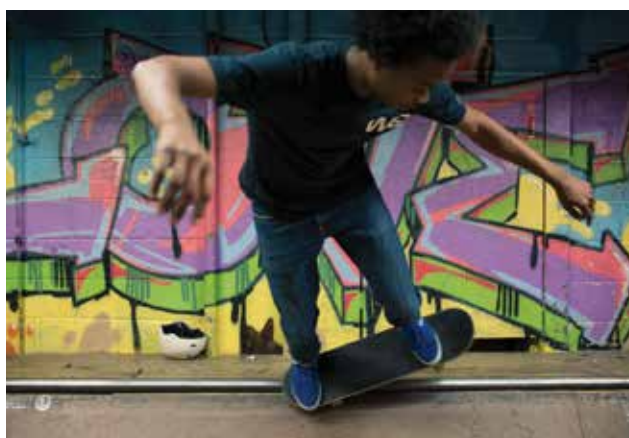
School achievement scores in poor neighborhoods significantly lag those in more affluent parts of the borough. Young people of color report that they feel schools have lower expectations of them than their white peers.





IN EVERY CONVERSATION, PARTICIPANTS TOLD US THEIR SPECIFIC WISHES FOR THE FUTURE:

"Opportunities for youth to achieve small wins, gain voice and agency, and build momentum for bigger change."



OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

WRAP-AROUND CARE

Children need systems of wrap-around care that address academic, psychological, physical and other developmental issues. Many school districts do not discuss these issues comprehensively, nor work collaboratively with other public agencies and community groups to serve children's and families' needs. Community schools have the potential to provide such comprehensive resources to children and their families, but there are not enough of them.

PARENTS

Parents, especially low-income and immigrant parents, need adequate information about schools, after-school programs and other resources for their children. There are few sources of useful information, and poor access to the information that does exist.

YOUTH LEADERS

Many young people are effective organizers and are eager to be part of the transformation of their communities, and many also bear responsibility to contribute to their family's income. Youth

across Brooklyn need access to paying jobs as well as leadership opportunities that can build a strong foundation for their future.

SAFE SPACES

Youth need safe places to hang out - not in school and not on the street - and they need to be involved in shaping programs that serve them. Cultural and arts programs, neighborhood greening projects, and programs that bring kids from different neighborhoods together to perform community service provide important bridging and learning opportunities.

CULTURAL NORMS

Different communities have different norms about young people's behavior based on culture and religion - regarding Internet use, for example, or women's rights or bullying. Schools demonstrate different expectations of children of different backgrounds, and in too many cases are not culturally competent. These differences need to be navigated carefully and with cultural sensitivity.

CRIMINAL



The criminal justice system was a theme that arose again and again in both our sector-based Roundtables and Neighborhood Dialogues. We heard mostly negative reports, especially about the traumatizing and insidious effects of young people's early encounters with the police and the courts, and the shattering impacts that excessive incarceration has on individual lives, families and communities.

EXCESSIVE INCARCERATION

Our criminal justice system spends more on incarcerating people than on programs of prevention and treatment. Community members' experiences, and extensive research, underscore the importance intervening before people are first arrested.

SILOED CITY AGENCIES

The lack of coordination among public agencies is particularly problematic for young people. For example, the Departments of Education and Criminal Justice don't interact effectively, resulting in poor outcomes for schools, kids and communities.

BIAS IN THE SYSTEM

Specific groups, such as LGBT youth and young women, are systematically disregarded or disrespected by the police and the courts. Violence against women and young girls is widely condoned, and sex trafficking and sex slavery is expanding without meaningful police response or public outcry. In too many cases, the victims of these crimes are treated as the offenders.

IN EVERY CONVERSATION, PARTICIPANTS TOLD US THEIR SPECIFIC WISHES FOR THE FUTURE:

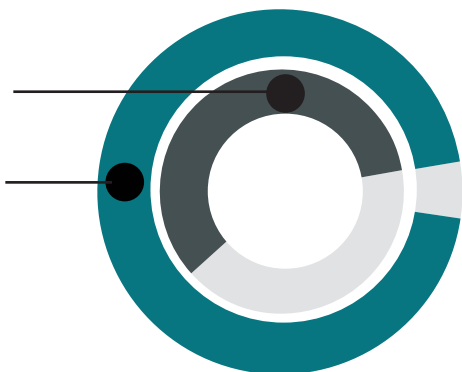
"No incarceration for people under 24 and funding diverted from detention to youth development."

JUSTICE

RACIAL DISPARITIES IN YOUTH INCARCERATION

African American and Latino youth in Brooklyn are significantly over-represented in the criminal justice system.

Black and Latino young people
comprise 57%
of Brooklyn's youth population,
but represented 95%
of the young people admitted to
juvenile detention facilities.



In communities with high populations of Black and Latino youth, police on the street are not making people feel safer. In fact, many young men of color feel actively and systematically targeted by cops, despite the elimination of city-sanctioned “stop and frisk” policies.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Alternatives to incarceration, including restorative justice programs, are essential to changing the long-term negative consequences of imprisonment on individuals, families and communities. Structures to support men and women coming out of prison also need to be strengthened if their chances of finding employment are to improve, and recidivism is to be reduced.

SCHOOL-BASED REFORM

The school-to-prison pipeline is a real phenomenon affecting too many communities, and it needs to be disrupted. Getting police out of schools, expanding preventative justice programs and not incarcerating teenagers are among the keys to change.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Education, employment opportunities and access to social services determine whether people will be involved with the justice system. Comprehensive, neighborhood-based approaches are few and the public agencies involved rarely coordinate their programs or personnel. Sustained investment in integrated services in poor neighborhoods is critical to changing outcomes related to the courts.

"The public has been duped into believing that mass incarceration makes us safer. In fact, it undermines the fabric of communities and pulls away resources."

- BROOKLYN INSIGHTS PARTICIPANT

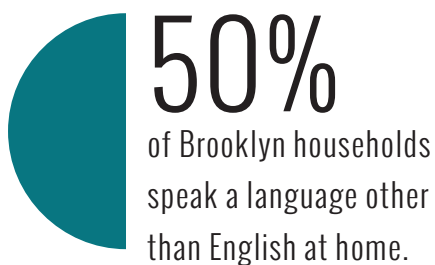


IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES

As many as 200 languages are spoken in Brooklyn and nearly 40% of residents are foreign-born. Not surprisingly, immigrant communities were a frequent topic in our discussions. Today, as in the past, immigrants contribute in essential ways to the borough's economy and its multi-cultural identity. This is a source of energy and pride. But we also heard about the challenges that hundreds of thousands of immigrants face because of language barriers, bureaucratic public agencies and various forms of cultural prejudice.



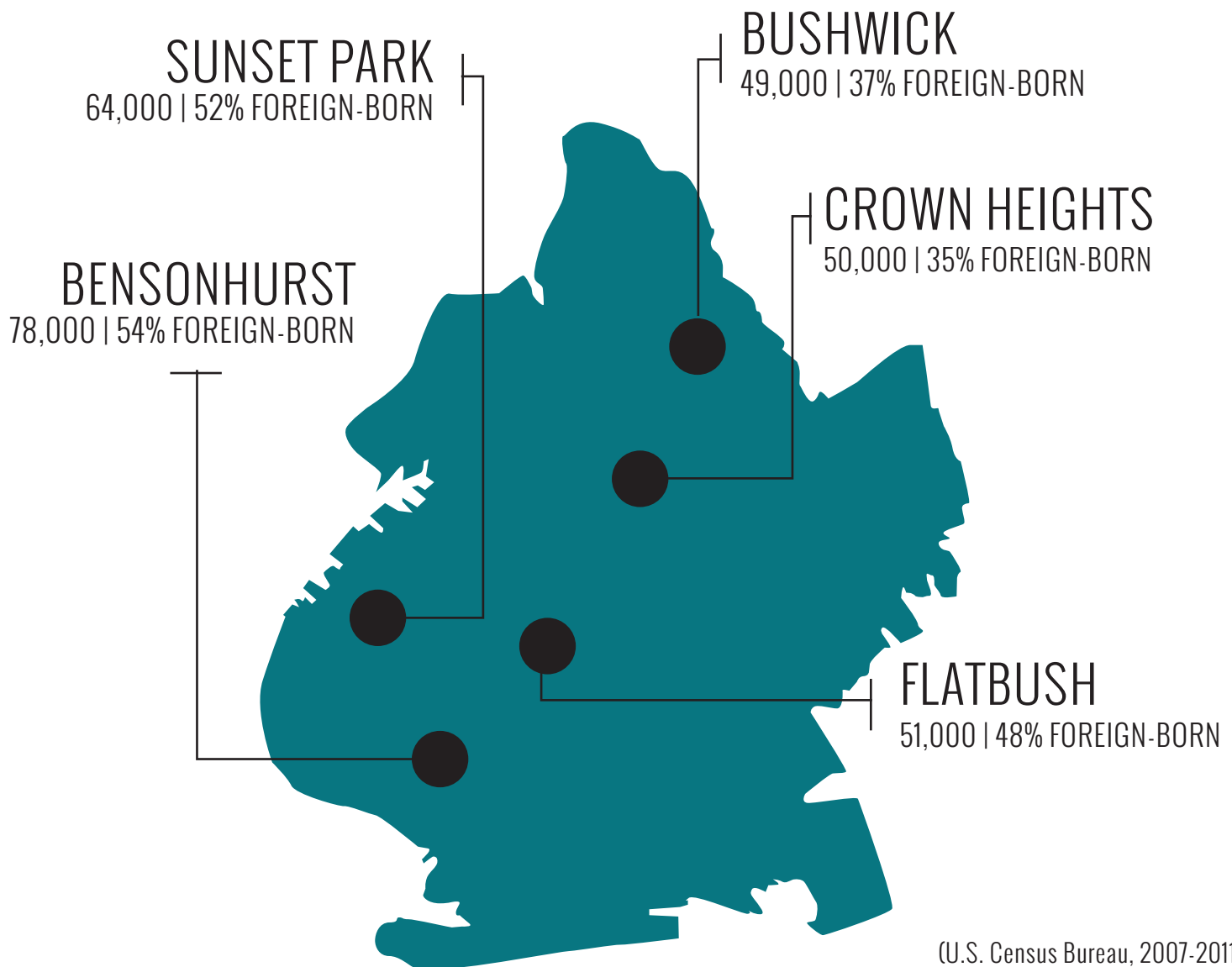
4 OUT OF 10
BROOKLYNITES
ARE FOREIGN-BORN



A substantial number of Brooklyn residents are “doubly illiterate” - linguistically isolated because they are fluent speakers in a language indigenous to their country of origin but are illiterate in that language as well as English.

In many immigrant families, children are mastering English more quickly than their parents and are called upon to navigate various systems for the family - not only schools but also agencies related to social services, employment, transportation, and other needs. Immigrant parents lack access to ESL training, and their children lack advocates for adequate support.

THE HIGHEST NUMBERS OF IMMIGRANTS ARE CONCENTRATED IN FIVE NEIGHBORHOODS:



In all of these neighborhoods, as well as others, the presence of new immigrants is outstripping available social services. The number of new immigrants may be much higher than recorded, because of widespread miscounting by the Census.

IN EVERY CONVERSATION, PARTICIPANTS TOLD US THEIR SPECIFIC WISHES FOR THE FUTURE:

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

LOCAL LEADERS

In many immigrant communities, local business owners, religious leaders and heads of community-based organizations are the people providing critical lifelines for families. Their essential services and financial expenditures need to be recognized and compensated.

COMMUNITY-BASED AGENCIES

Many believe that the City's preference for contracting with larger social service agencies is part of the problem. More than 85% of city funds go to the largest 100 agencies. Hundreds of other, grassroots service providers have closer ties to communities and can reach immigrant populations in ways the larger organizations can't.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable housing is a critical situation for a substantial proportion of immigrants, as many are paying more than 60% of their income for rent. Hurricane Sandy exacerbated the housing crisis for thousands of immigrants, especially undocumented residents in Coney Island, Sheepshead Bay and other neighborhoods devastated by the storm.



RACIAL JUSTICE

"HOW DO WE TACKLE THE SOURCES OF STRUCTURAL
RACISM AND NOT JUST THE SYMPTOMS?

WE CONTINUE TO TAKE BABIES OUT OF THE RIVER
WITHOUT ASKING WHAT IS GOING ON UPSTREAM."

-BROOKLYN INSIGHTS PARTICIPANT

In nearly every one of our Brooklyn Insights meetings, people spoke about persistent inequities across Brooklyn, and the public policies and institutional practices that adversely and unjustly affect people of color.

Described as institutionalized oppression, classicism, "equity instead equality" and racial justice, participants stressed the importance of calling out the underlying causes of the challenges residents are confronting day in and day out.

Structural racism has created insurmountable barriers to

opportunity in many communities – among generations of African American and Latino residents as well as families more recently emigrating from the Middle East and Asia – resulting in widespread disparities in education, health, safety and employment.

Inequality and bias related to race, class, gender and sexual orientation have profound negative effects on all aspects of life in Brooklyn. Confronting their manifestation to level the playing field for all Brooklynites was identified as an urgent priority.

IN EVERY CONVERSATION, PARTICIPANTS TOLD US THEIR SPECIFIC WISHES FOR THE FUTURE:

“Undoing racism’ training for all nonprofits.”

POVERTY

Poverty is highly concentrated in Brooklyn, and has been for multiple generations. Residents of these communities feel they have been written off by the City, and their isolation reflects widespread patterns of racial discrimination.

HEALTH

Health outcomes are correlated with race and wealth. Communities of color have much higher rates of asthma, diabetes, obesity and other diseases that result from pollution, poor access to good food, distance from medical resources – all attributable to racial bias in these systems.

PUBLIC AGENCIES

Patterns of structural racism are evident across public agencies where teachers and public school administrators expect less of children of color than their white peers; police are less responsive to requests for assistance from predominantly African American and Latino neighborhoods; and transportation options are fewer in communities of color.

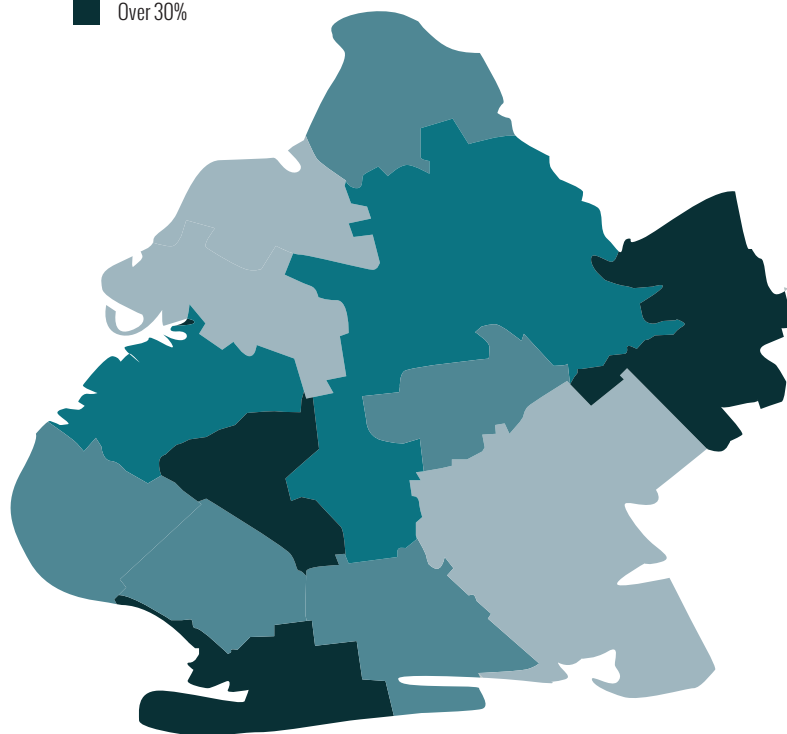
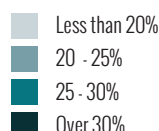
OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

CONFRONTING BARRIERS

Institutional and structural barriers have long prevented equitable opportunities and outcomes for people of color in Brooklyn. By focusing on racial justice and equity, we can analyze and confront behaviors and systems that unfairly and disproportionately impact people of color and contribute to unfair policies and practices for a majority of residents.

BROOKLYN POVERTY RATES BY COMMUNITY DISTRICT

POVERTY RATE



FIGHTING FOR SYSTEMIC SOLUTIONS

The manifold symptoms of structural bias will never be altered if we don't address injustice at the systemic level. This requires supporting both direct services to address immediate needs and effective advocacy for long-term structural change.

BROOKLYN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION'S

KEY FUNCTIONS AND CORE VALUES

Brooklyn Insights was designed to be a conversation with Brooklyn, about Brooklyn. We did not ask people to recommend steps that the Foundation might take, although of course we received many great tips and suggestions. We did ask participants about the functions that the Foundation might play, and what priority they would give to our role as a convenor, advocate, funder, connector or generator of research and information. Throughout the Roundtables and Neighborhood Dialogues, but particularly in the two concluding Insight into Action sessions, we received strongly consistent feedback.

PEOPLE SEE GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE FOUNDATION TO:

- Sustain commitment to engaging local residents, recognizing that the experts on an issue are those most directly affected by it.
- Convene activists and community leaders to formulate strategies for policy change in the areas identified as priorities, and support advocacy campaigns to achieve these changes. Get more grassroots voices at the tables where policy is made.
- Help generate research and information that community and neighborhood leaders want and can use, including through innovative participatory and ethnographic research approaches.
- Fund both direct service and advocacy, addressing both immediate problems and long-term structural change.
- Fund patiently and flexibly, and act as a transparent and candid partner with grantees.
- Broker connections for community leaders to funding sources, potential board members and volunteers, and to other leaders working in aligned fields.

ROLE IN SUPPORTING CHANGE

We also asked about the values that should imbue the Foundation's work – what the Foundation should stand for. The responses were thoughtful and inspiring.

“Be a social justice foundation, focused on moving money and resources across the divide.”

“Be courageous and creative. Experiment. Take risks.”

“Create safe spaces for honest conversations.”

“Be a good partner, build trust and respect your grantees.”

“Be accountable – ask for honest feedback on your own behavior and continuously re-examine the privileges that come with wealth.”

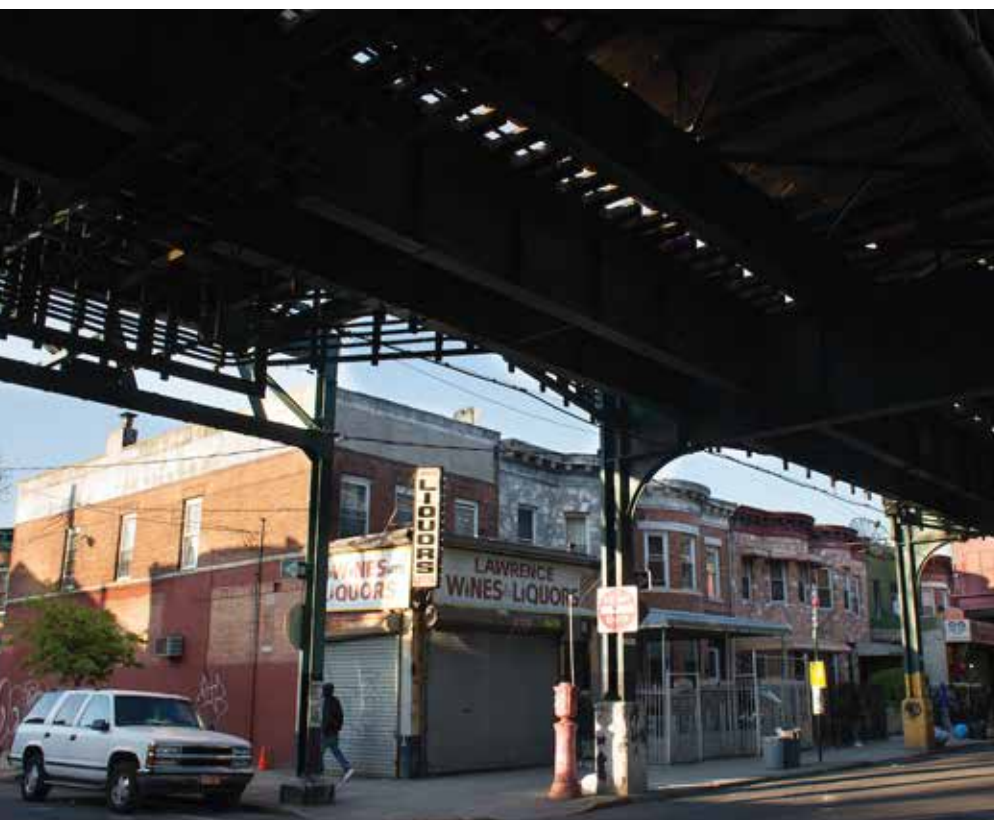
“Involve community members in your decision-making.”

“Be nimble, responsive and on time.”

NEXT STEPS

Brooklyn Insights represents a pivot point in the work of the Brooklyn Community Foundation, and reinforces the unique leadership role the Foundation has to play in addressing the borough's priority issues. The core concepts embedded in the Brooklyn Insights process – engaging diverse perspectives, respecting the expertise of people most directly affected by a problem, and being an

enabler of community-driven change – will extend into the next stages of the Foundation's work in grantmaking, community leadership and fund development. We will support community-led efforts to achieve greater equity, to dismantle structural racism and to improve the well-being and future prospects for young people across Brooklyn. [We welcome partners in this work.](#)



APPENDIX

MARKERS OF CHANGE

In each meeting, we asked Brooklyn Insights participants to share their one wish for positive change in Brooklyn over the next two years. Here is a selection of their responses:

Support both for CBOs ongoing work as well as their collective organizing and policy work,

Create a funders' collaborative to support advocacy

Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) fully funded

Brooklyn Youth Corps, a peer-to-peer model of youth sharing ideas and resources

Raise the minimum wage

More CBOs providing services in schools

'Undoing Racism' training for all nonprofits dealing with youth and communities, and everyone who works in the criminal justice system

College counselor in every high school

Funders fund living wage for the staff of groups they support

More opportunities for seniors and more connections between seniors and youth

Opportunities for teens -- work experience and community service

Database of resources, searchable by age, neighborhood, kind of activity

Better data that reflects neighborhood-level reality

Greater support for participatory planning and participatory budgeting

Brooklyn Immigration Campaign

More housing vouchers and fewer people in shelters

Municipal IDs

Immigrant voting rights for local elections

Brooklyn Community Accelerator to connect nonprofits, residents and resources

Multi-tenant cultural facility in each neighborhood

Every high school requires meaningful, and pedagogically sound, community service

Stable base of funding for parks

More widespread participatory budgeting

Model for fighting displacement

No mandatory minimum; bail at \$250

No incarceration for people under 24;
Funding diverted from detention to youth development

Expand NYPD's contacts in communities, increase the social (vs. straight policing) connections and conversations

Use of unconventional spaces for artistic projects (libraries, schools, parks)

Make 2-6 pm "Creative Time" -- ensure that all children are engaged in some creative activity

Establish standard pay scales for teaching artists working in schools

Newspapers hire more people from neighborhoods

Zoning code changes to protect mix of commercial and manufacturing and residential

More units of affordable housing; NYCHA units for young people aging out of foster care

More community centers to help overcome seniors' isolation

Small Business Bill of Rights

Internships and mentorships for local teens in places like Industry City

Long-term funding, 8-10 years of support to develop real change

Youth at the table of decision-making

A Yelp for foundations

Fund remaining pieces of the Community Safety Act

More respect for women

Restorative justice model in New York City public schools

Mandatory curriculum on healthy relationships in schools

Decline in domestic violence

ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS

ROUNDTABLE GROUP	DATE	MEETING LOCATION
Philanthropy	January 24, 2014	Brooklyn Community Foundation
Brownstoners of Bedford-Stuyvesant	January 25, 2014	Home in Bedford-Stuyvesant
Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce	January 28, 2014	Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce
Youth Development	February 5, 2014	Brooklyn Community Foundation
Workforce/Job Training/Labor	February 07, 2014	Brooklyn Community Foundation
Urban Agriculture/Food Access	February 10, 2014	Brooklyn Community Foundation
Health and Human Services	February 26, 2014	Brooklyn Community Services
Immigrant Rights	February 28, 2014	YWCA
General	March 5, 2014	Urban Glass
Education (Pre K-8)	March 7, 2014	Brooklyn Community Foundation
Youth Voice, Boys	March 12, 2014	South Oxford Space
Youth Development & Arts Education	March 14, 2014	YWCA
Youth Voice, Girls	March 18, 2014	South Oxford Space
Community Organizing	March 20, 2014	80 Hanson Place
Criminal Justice and Courts	March 25, 2014	Brooklyn Community Services
Arts and Culture, Part One	March 27, 2014	Brooklyn Historical Society
Education (HS and college)	April 02, 2014	Urban Glass
Arts and Culture, Part Two	April 4, 2014	Brooklyn Historical Society
Housing/Homelessness	April 8, 2014	Brooklyn Community Services
Artists	April 10, 2014	Urban Glass
Media	April 11, 2014	Brooklyn Community Foundation
Women and Girls	April 24, 2014	YWCA
Environment/Open Space	April 29, 2014	Brooklyn Community Foundation
Community & Economic Development	May 1, 2014	80 Hanson Place
Seniors	May 6, 2014	Brooklyn Community Foundation
Entrepreneurs/Makers	May 13, 2014	BLDG 92, Brooklyn Navy Yard
Youth Development, Part Two	May 14, 2014	Urban Glass
LGBTQ	May 16, 2014	Brooklyn Community Pride Center
Religion/Spirituality	May 21, 2014	Concord Baptist Church
Youth Voice, Part 2	June 2, 2014	South Oxford Space
Charette, Part 1	June 18, 2014	BLDG 92, Brooklyn Navy Yard
Charette, Part 2	June 25, 2014	BLDG 92, Brooklyn Navy Yard

NEIGHBORHOOD DIALOGUES

NEIGHBORHOOD	DATE	LOCATION
East New York	February 14, 2014	Bangladeshi American Community Development
Sunset Park	February 25, 2014	Mixteca Organization
East New York	February 27, 2014	United Community Centers
Sunset Park	March 11, 2014	Brooklyn Chinese American Association
East New York	March 24, 2014	Cypress Hills Community School
Sunset Park	April 2, 2014	Center For Family Life at Sunset Park High School
East New York	April 3, 2014	St. Paul's Baptist Church
Coney Island	April 4, 2014	Coney Island Gospel Assembly
Coney Island	April 29, 2014	HeartShare/ NYCHA Carey Gardens
Coney Island	May 6, 2014	Our Lady of Solace
Sunset Park	May 9, 2014	Home of Community Activists

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Brooklyn Community Foundation deeply appreciates the participants, advisors, and organizers who made the Brooklyn Insights project possible.

This report was written by [Holly Sidford](#), president of Helicon Collaborative, who consulted on every stage of the project and facilitated most of the Brooklyn Insights roundtables and final charettes. [Tynesha McHarris](#) directed the Neighborhood Dialogues and Community Engagement Fellows portions of the project.

The seven Community Engagement Fellows were invaluable to the process and demonstrated the importance of youth leadership and agency: [Gibran Grant](#), [Benia](#)

[Darius](#), [Manuel Ventura](#), [Roxanna Alvarado](#), [Anthony Deng](#), [Mercy Carpenter](#), and [Maria Thomas](#).

The staff of Brooklyn Community Foundation extends a special thanks to the Board of Directors for committing to and investing in this project. The Foundation also recognizes the hard work of its current and former staff, especially [Liane Stegmaier](#), [Toya Williford](#), and [Kavie Barnes](#).

[The Inspired Storytellers Collective](#) produced the website, report design, photography, and audio interviews for the project, going above and beyond to provide an inspiring view into the lives of real Brooklynites.

[And a special thanks to these agencies and individuals who generously helped organize and host Brooklyn Insights meetings:](#)

- Alliance for Coney Island
- Arts East New York
- Bangladesh American Community Development & Youth Services
- Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce
- Brooklyn Chinese American Association
- Brooklyn Community Services
- Brooklyn Community Pride Center
- Brooklyn Historical Society
- Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation
- Brownstoners of Bedford-Stuyvesant
- Center for Family Life
- Concord Baptist Church
- Coney Island Concerned Citizens
- Coney Island Gospel Assembly
- Cypress Hills LDC
- El Puente
- Eleanor Pinckney
- Faith in New York
- HeartShare at the Carey Garden's Community Center
- Linda Tigani, Leticia Alanis, Ivette Carbera, Genisis Aquino
- Mixteca Organization
- Our Lady of Solace
- St. Paul's Baptist Church
- United Community Centers of East New York
- UrbanGlass
- YWCA of Brooklyn

THANK YOU

to the 942 residents, experts, educators, students, artists, entrepreneurs, religious leaders,
and community advocates who participated in Brooklyn Insights, most of whom are listed below:

Mercedes Abrey
Tania Acevedo
Yaniris Acevedo
Melissa Aese
Froylan Aguilar
Ana Aguirre
Chitra Aiyar
Leticia Alanis
Lena Alhusseini
Onleilove Alston
Roxanna Alvarado
Blanca Alvarez
Maria Alvarez
Ty Ambrose
Margaret Ames
Mikal Amin Lee
Zakiya Ansari
Dominique Antoine
Marco Antonini
Genesis Aquino
Kwayera Archer-Cunningham
Leah Archibald
Caron Atlas
Steve Ausbury
Richard Aviles
Maria Baez
Donell Baird
Christopher Banks
Jessica Banks
Erin Barnes
James Bartlett
Elizabeth Basile
Maria Bauman
Eddie Bautista
Jamie Bennett
Andy Birsch
Sarah Bishop
Mackendy Blanc
Yanery Borilla
Martha Bowers
Cathy Bowman
Elizabeth Brady
David Brawley
Will Bredderman
Tiyi Brewster
Joaquin Brito
Julie Brockway
Lesly Bronfield
Karen Brooks Hopkins
Amanda Brown
Isidora Brown
Josephine Brown
Matt Brown
Nina Browne
Dominique Bryant
E Bui
Michael Burke
Alba Burro
Julissa Caba
Waleska Cabrera
Saide Calixto
Patrick Callaghan
Shavonne Campbell
Tracey Capers
Ivette Carbrera
Clementina Cardora
Mercy Carpenter
Gwendolyn Carroll
Dawn Casale
Carolina Castillo
Manuel Castro
Nancy Castro
Rosa Castro
Alda Chan
Jackie Chang
Manolia Charlotin
Sasha Chavchavadze
Cecilia Chaverro
Steven Chu
Kate Collignon
Jessica Colon
Vince Contarino
Amy Crawford

Margaret Crotty
Anastacio Cruz
Rosemary Cruz
Samuel Cruz
Mercedes Cuapa
Benia Darius
Peter Darrow
Michelle de la Uz
Claro de los Reyes
Jenny DeBower
Neil deMaus
Kate Dempsey
Anthony Deng
Carmen Diaz
Elder Kevin Dickenson
Jake Dobkin
Tanisha Douglas
Erin Drinkwater
Dexter Dugar
Benjamin Dulchin
Jeffrey Dunston
Olga Duran
Timothy DuWhite
Sara East Johnson
Harris Edelman
Adrian Edward
David Ehrenberg
Willis Elkins
Amy Ellenbogen
Don Elliot
Vicki Ellner
Althea Erickson
Maria Espiral
Jim Esposito
Teri Fabi
Rachel Falcone
Susan Feldman
Meg Fellerath
Bobby Ferazi
Alexandra Ferguson
Yris Fernandez
Laura Fernandez
Jonathan Ferrer
Maria Ferrera
Alan Fishman
Alison Flemingier
Rosamond Fletcher
Rachel Forsyth
Mark Fowler
Joanna Frank
Adam Friedman
Jenie Fu
Penny Fuijko-Willgerodt
Cruz Fuksman
Mary Gainey
Jennifer Galatioto
Rachelle Gaspard
Heather Gay
Karen Geer
Henry Goldschmidt
Viviana Gordon
Gibran Grant
Justin Green
Catherine Green
Marquis Greggs
Terry Greiss
Annaliese Griffin
Michelle Grimes
Brigitte Griswold
Ligia Gualpa
Josome Guerrier
Violeta Guiterrez
Laurel Gwizdak
Craig Hammerman
Radiah Harper
Tia Harris
Judy Harris Kluger
Heather Hart
Melanie Hart
Kathryn Haslanger
Dozier Hasty
Rebecca Haverson
Anne Heller

Bill Henson
Vilma Heramia
Penelope Hernandez
Elizabeth Hill
Tracy Hobson
Bekim Hoti
Deb Howard
Dwayne Hughes
Connie Hula
Jack Hulla
Kemi Ilesanmi
Jennifer Irwin
Tanwi Islam
Ishmel Islam
Michelle Jackson
Wes Jackson
Diane Jacobowitz
Bonnie James
Clarisa James
Donovan James
Kirk James
Tiloma Jayasinghe
Julia Jean-Francois
Gena Jefferson
Kevin Jeffrey
Edyth Jenkins
Diane John
Clay Johnson
Dedra Johnson
Katrina Jones
Jennifer Jones Austin
Rose Jones-Wilson
Blaze Jones-Yellin
Joseph Joque
Emma Jordan-Simpson
Michael Jukoski
Elizabeth Kahn
Martha Kamber
Robert Kaplan
Elisa Kaplan
Purnima Kapur
Lauren Karchmer
Jessica Katz
Gillian Kaye
Shanti Ketema
Khader Khalilia
Coco Killingsworth
Byron Kim
Janet Kinney
Rasmia Kirmani-Frye
Michele Kirshbaum
Tova Klein
Elizabeth Koch
Nancy Kohn
Lilian Kretzberger
Ailun Ku
Richard Kuo
Dal Lamagna
Steve Larosiliere
Jay Laudato
Amanda Leis
April Leong
Betsy Lewin
Ted Lewin
Lynn Lewis
Isidro Lopez
Jose Lopez
Andrea Louie
Virginia Loulodes
Narcisa Loza
Somu Lromo
Frances Lucerna
Rukia Lumumba
Maria Luna
Dave Lutz
Katie Lyon
Malcolm Mackay
Shreya Malena-Sannon
Joan Malin
Fekkak Mamdouh
Joshua Mandelbaum
Jay Marcus
Sarah Marcus

Eufrosina Martinez
Jimena Martinez
Leonardo Martinez
Leticia Martinez
Pedro Martinez
Ednica Maxineau
Emily May
Simone Mayfield
B. Mayo
Esperanza Mayobre
Suzanne McClelland
Kate McDonough
Tynesha McHarris
Steven McIntosh
Joseph McKellar
Rashad Meade
Scot Medbury
Freddie Melendez
Yamilka Mena
Savannah Mendes
Jennifer Messier
J. Miller
Demetrice Mills
Samantha Mills
Jennifer Mitchell
Regina Mitchell
Esther Monilton
Gilford Monroe
Meledi Montano
Lidia Montilla
Marcus Moore
Michael Morales
Ruth Morales
Nancy Moricette
Joseph Morilto
C. Zawadi Morris
Paul Moses
Joel Moskowitz
Maria Mosquera
Carlos Mosso
Wael Mousfar
Lisa Mueller
Jarrett Murphy
Tawana Myers
Chris Myers
Sharon Myrie
Daphnee Napoleon
Marty Needleman
Jeff Nemetsky
Stephanie Nilva
Mwata Nubian
Nicole Nulton
Sonja Okun
Ira Okyne
Jonae Oldham
Joanne Oplustil
Miguel Orlando
Anna Ortega-Williams
Juan Ortiz
Roberto Ortiz
Cara Page
Posheda Panchoo
Paul Parkhill
Cris Parque
Karen Patterson
Michelle Paulino
Shelby Pearl Chestnut
Ramon Peguero
Emmanuel Perch
Aurora Perez
Stuart Pertz
Alijah Peters
Marlon Peterson
Meredith Phillips-Almeida
Ellie Pinckney
Carmen Pineda
Maria Pintor
Sarah Plowder
Chinita Pointer
Raphael Pope Sussman
Krystal Portalatin
Stuart Post
S. Priman

Ferila Primus
Divine Pryor
Dior Punsammy
Brigitte Purvis
Sonia Quezado
Anna Quinn
Marisol Quinones
Rovika Rajkishunm
Jeanine Ramirez
Angela Ramos
Ninaj Raoul
Audacia Ray
Robin Redmond
Eileen Reilly
Caryn Resnick
Susan Restler
C Reyes
Yan Carlos Reyes
Amali Richard
Sharon Richards
Rosina Riley
Fatima Rivera
James Roberson
Liz Roberts
Esther Robinson
Knigh Rodney
Abdu Rodney
Maria Rodriguez
Aiva Romero
Connie Roosevelt
Tasiya Roseborough
Kendra Ross
M. Ross
JP Ross
Eliza Rossman
Peter Rostovsky
Regine Roumain
Jon Roure
Katy Rubin
Rick Russo
Rebecca Rybaltowski
Guerschmide Saint-Ange
Karina Saltman
Brad Samuels
Nora Samuels
Amy Sananman
Maguly Sanchez
Camida Santana
Lani Santo
Linda Sarsour
Karla Schickele
Julianne Schrader
Lisa Schreibersdorf
Rachel Schuder
Leslie Schultz
Deborah Schwartz
Trina Scotland
Paula Segal
Danielle Sered
Elsa Sevillano
Erin Shakespeare
Lucas Shapiro
Sueli Shaw
Michael Sherman
Emily Sherrrod
Claire Silberman
Alexandra Silversmith
Hildy Simmons
Tulani Sinclair
Cheyanne Smith
Joanne Smith
Terry Smith
Terri Smith Caronia
Jennie Smith-Peers
Michael Sniffen
Greg Snyder
Jennie Soler-McIntosh
Jesse Solomon
Jacqueline Solorzono
Santiago Soriano
Isemene Speliotis
Ellis Stephens
Liz Stevenson

Andy Stone
Jason Storbakken
Martin Stroman
Robyn Stylman
Kajon Suckra
Ann Sullivan
Claire Sylvan
Farah Tanis
Marina Tara
Jasmine Tavarez
Vaughn Taylor-Akutagawa
Lawrencia Terris
Maria Thomas
Timothy Thomas
Tupper Thomas
Hanne Tierney
Linda Tigani
Laura Timme
Maria Toledo
Jasmine Tomerez
Alex Tronolone
Joan Tropnas
Lee Trotman
Renee Turner Gregory
Nancy Umanoff
Nelly Vaca
Veronica Valencia
Jennifer Vallone
Carol Van Atten
Shay Wafer
Steve Waldman
Marya Warshaw
JoAnne Wasserman
Tom Weber
Nancy Webster
Michael Weisberg
Ella Weiss
Charlotta Westergren
Susan Whoriskey
Moshe Williams
Margaret Williams
Judy Willig
Martha Wilson
Alicia Winnnicki
Mark Winston-Griffith
Franz Wisner
David Woloch
Nayiba Wong
Kristin Woods
Caroline Woolard
DeeArah Wright
Tremaine Wright
Peggy Wynn-Madison
Elizabeth Yeampierre
Sondra Youdelman
Lester Young, Jr.
Tamara Zahaykevich
Kate Zidar
Rita Zimmer
Aaron Zimmerman
Christian Zimmerman
Sara Zuiderveen

We want to extend
our sincerest
gratitude to
participants -
especially the
children, young
people, and seniors
whose names are not
captured on this list.

"We are facing an opportunity gap, not an achievement gap." "We need to create opportunities so there can be more Brooklyn-born makers, particularly young people of color." "Brooklyn has 12 school districts but some have been entirely written off. The silence that allows this to exist needs to be challenged." "We need a holistic approach for youth development that recognizes that youngster's success in education is related to strength of their families, welfare issues, poverty, and community health. Healthier communities produce better schools and better schools produce healthier communities." "We need to focus on the failures of institutions, not the failures of kids." "We should all feel safe—guys and girls. We need more places where people can get guidance and feel empowered about themselves." "Kids see pockets of safety but too much of their environment feels insecure." "Gentrification is destroying Brooklyn." "A lot has been lost on Brooklyn's way to becoming a brand." "Gentrification is not a natural process." Gentrification brings disparities. The new people don't say hello. "We are much better at pushing people out than pushing people up." "We need to find commonality. Everyone wants to be safe, have affordable housing, great local schools. We have more in common than we ever will admit." "In Brownsville, public housing is affordable housing." "Anti-black racism has increased with bad policies." "We need more agency for people in communities, not just for people with money. We are giving so much voice to new people moving in." "We need to deal with the issues of equity and inequity in our field: claim the purpose of being part of progressive change." "How do we tackle the sources of structural racism and not just treat the symptoms?" "We continue to take babies out of the river without asking what is going on upstream that causes all these babies to be in the water!" "Racism and classism are issues that must be dealt with. We behave as if we don't want kids of color in our schools." "The face of Brooklyn is changing, but that has not been reflected in the criminal justice system. We are still

courtrooms." "The public has mass incarceration makes us of communities and pulls away infrastructure to absorb people

recidivism by default." "The conversation has to start before young people are arrested—before they are even brushed by the system." "New York City is asking the criminal justice system to make people whole—it's too much to ask. There's always money to incarcerate but never enough to treat or prevent." "Change can't be avoided, but injustice can be." "There are communities of place and communities of interest and they don't always overlap." "The borough and its neighborhoods are culturally divided, not just divided by race." "Artists can do amazing things if they get together as communities." "We need to reposition artists as stabilizing forces in neighborhoods. Artists typically don't receive the benefits of what they bring to neighborhoods." "Artists are incredible amplifiers of community. And they can get things done without a lot of resources." "People who live their lives in 'the audience' don't want to be in the audience anymore." "Neighborhood building is about building trust. It is intergenerational work, and parks and urban farming are sites for building trust between people." "Inequalities in parks and open space are defined by race and class." "I talk about our community gardens work as participation projects, not 'beautification projects'. Gardens are space everyone can build together." "The best gardens are the essence of people coming together." "Poverty is increasing, especially in immigrant communities." "If you call 911, they will not come to your house because they say they could not understand your language." "Unaccompanied minors - immigrant and homeless youth without parents - are a growing population and there is no systematic response." "There's a high dropout rate for immigrant students. We need programs for their parents, to develop guidance at home—programs that are preventative, rather than programs that address only crisis." "There are 70 languages spoken at Maimonides Memorial Hospital." "I have to deal with 9 regulatory agencies in the city...the bureaucracy and the siloed nature of decision-making makes life very difficult for small businesses, and start-ups especially." "The lack of connection between community-based organizations, family court and other agencies serving youth is part of the problem - too much siloing and lack of collaboration especially between larger and smaller organizations." "For the first time in 20 years, we're hearing the word 'community' from City Hall." "Environmental justice movement incorporates principles of youth development: we need young people's leadership on environmental issues."

Brooklyn

Insights

seeing the same faces in our been duped into believing that safer. It undermines the fabric resources. We don't have the coming out of prison, so we have