

**EVALUATION OF  
THE ALLIANCE FOR CALIFORNIA TRADITIONAL ARTS (ACTA)  
APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM**

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# EVALUATION OF THE ALLIANCE FOR CALIFORNIA TRADITIONAL ARTS (ACTA) APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

## Overview of the Evaluation

The Alliance for California Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program's evaluation assessed the effectiveness and impact of a traditional arts apprentice program on the program's participants using qualitative methods consisting of in-depth face-to-face interviews. The current project focused on 22 males and females between the ages of 10 and 71 participating in a traditional arts apprentice program involving individual master/apprentice skill training. This project involved collaboration between the Center for Reducing Health Disparities (CRHD) at the University of California, Davis Health System, the Asian American Center on Disparities Research (AACDR) at the University of California, Davis, and the Alliance for California Traditional Arts (ACTA).

It is expected that participation in the Apprenticeship Program will lead to a number of outcomes, of which many will be related to the enhancement of health and psychological well-being.

## Description of the Program

The *Alliance for California Traditional Arts* (ACTA) was founded in 1997 by cultural workers, arts administrators and traditional artists to address a void in statewide support of folk and traditional artists. Folk and traditional artists are tradition bearers: people who transmit what they believe, know, do and create with others who share a common heritage. From Ohlone basketry and African-American quilt-making to cowboy poetry and Vietnamese opera, California is home to hundreds of diverse traditions. ACTA promotes and supports ways for these cultural traditions to thrive now and into the future by providing advocacy, resources, and connections. ACTA connects artists, communities, and funders to each other, information, and resources through convenings, research, and technical assistance. Recognized for its leadership, intellectual capital, and excellence in program administration, ACTA is the state-designated entity for *all* folk and traditional arts. Through programs and services, such as the Apprenticeship Program, ACTA works to cultivate the growth of traditional arts and culture through nurturing California's unique cultural landscape, services to artists, and connecting people, resources, and information.

ACTA's annually funded Apprenticeship Program encourages the continuation of California's traditional arts and cultures by contracting master artists to offer intensive, one-on-one training to qualified apprentices. Each contract supports a period of concentrated learning for individuals who have shown a commitment to and a talent for a specific artistic tradition. A ***master artist*** is someone who is recognized as an exemplary practitioner of a traditional art form by his or her community and peers. An ***apprentice*** is someone who learns from a master artist. To be considered for the program, a master artist and apprentice must jointly apply to the program.

A panel of California's folk and traditional arts experts and practitioners review the applications according to the following criteria: (1) traditionality of the art form.; (2) artistic quality of the

master artist's work; (3) demonstrated commitment and skill of the apprentice; (4) shared membership of the master artist and apprentice in a cultural community (family, ethnicity, occupation, tribe, religion, etc.); (5) feasibility of the proposed work plan and timetable; and (6) urgency (for endangered art forms).

Ineligible apprenticeships include: (1) contemporary studio crafts or the reproduction of antiques; (2) re-creations of historic or village folk traditions that attempt to reenact lifestyles from the distant past; and (3) apprenticeship Program participants from the previous year.

Once participants are selected, ACTA makes a contract with master artists and their apprentices to implement the work plans submitted in their applications. Six-month to one-year contracts of \$3,000 are made with California-based master artists to cover master artist's fees, supplies and travel. The apprenticeships begin on or after January 1 and are completed by December 31 of the same calendar year. The apprenticeship lasts at least six months, but may continue for up to one year, depending on the needs of the particular project. ACTA staff works closely with the apprenticeship team to articulate work plans, gauge progress, and offer assistance and support. Near the half-way point of the project, ACTA staff documents the apprenticeship through recording and photography. The resulting archival materials become part of ACTA's permanent archival collections, which may be used publicly for educational purposes. Each apprenticeship team organizes some type of public offering (performance, exhibit, etc.), in consultation with ACTA staff, in order to share the results of their intensive apprenticeship experience.

### **Description of the Sample**

The total sample consisted of 22 participants (10 masters (45.5%) and 12 apprentices (54.5%)) who had been selected for the program. Attempts were made to hold interviews with all master/apprentice pairs that participated in the past two funding cycles of the program. Interviews were obtained from 10 complete master/apprentice pairings. An additional two interviews were collected from apprentices, however their masters could not be interviewed – one declined the interview, and the other had scheduling conflicts. Four (18.2%) of the master/apprentice pairs had familial relationships (e.g., step-father/step-daughter, grandfather/grandson, etc.). Masters consisted of six males and four females ranging in age from 32 to 71 years ( $M=54.3$ ,  $SD=13.5$ ), while the apprentices consisted of two males and 10 females ranging in age from 10 to 49 years ( $M=26.1$ ,  $SD=11.8$ ). All participants resided in California, with the majority of the participants from the Bay Area (63.6%) and a few from Central Valley (18.2%) and northern California Native American communities and reservations (18.2%). Due to budgetary considerations, the evaluation could not sample any of the Southern California apprenticeships. The sample included individuals of Native American, Armenian, Brazilian, Chinese, Filipino, Laotian, Mexican, and South Asian descent. The total sample was comprised of 12 (54.5%) individuals from Asian/Pacific Islander (API) communities, four (18.2%) from Native Californian (NC) communities, two (9.1%) from African Diaspora (AD) communities, two (9.1%) from Middle Eastern (ME) communities, and two (9.1%) from Latino (L) communities. Nine of the participants were born in the United States (40.9%), nine (40.9%) were born in Asia (China, India, Laos, and the Philippines), and four (18.2%) were born in Latin America (Brazil and Mexico).

The program funded various art forms involving dance (40.9%), music (31.8%), and material arts (27.3%) originating from places including Native California , India, Brazil, China, rural Mexico, the Philippines, and Laos.

The following section provides a description of each of the artists in the current sample. Not all master/apprentice pairs were included in the qualitative sample because some participants declined the interview request or were unable to schedule an interview.

**Master A** is a male of South Asian ancestry in his sixties, born and raised in India. He has been involved in traditional Indian dance for over 50 years and has been guru to Apprentice A for 11 years. One-on-one lessons were held 2-3 times per week for two hours either at Master A's or Apprentice A's home.

**Apprentice A** is a 30-year-old female of South Asian ancestry, born and raised in California. She has been involved in traditional Indian dance as a student of Master A since 1996 – approximately 11 years. Apprentice A hopes to share this traditional dance form with others through performances and teaching.

**Master B** is a 60-year-old male of Filipino ancestry, born in the Philippines. He has been involved in traditional Filipino music since he was a young child. He has practiced for over 50 years, first performing around the towns and villages of his home region. Master B has been teaching music for 30 years, and has taught Apprentice B for 10 years. Weekly 1½ to 2-hour lessons were given at Master's B residence or at his ensemble's practice room at a local university.

**Apprentice B** is a 36-year-old male of Filipino ancestry, born in Manila, Philippines. He has been involved in traditional Filipino music as a student of Master B since 1997 – approximately 10 years. Apprentice B has been teaching this musical form to students at a high school for several years and hopes to improve his teaching through this apprenticeship opportunity. Apprentice B was a member of Master B's ensemble and showcased performances locally and nationally.

**Master C** is a 43-year-old female of South Asian ancestry, born and raised in India. She has been involved in traditional Indian music since the age of five and has taught Apprentice C for six years. Weekly 2-hour long lessons were conducted in the music room of Master C's residence.

**Apprentice C** is a 13-year-old female of South Asian ancestry, born in California. She has been involved in traditional Indian music as a student of Master C since August 2001 – approximately six years. From this apprenticeship, Apprentice C hopes to advance her skills and knowledge of the music tradition to “keep alive the rich traditions of Indian Classical music.”

**Master D** is a 59-year-old female of Laotian ancestry, born in Laos. Master D has been involved in a traditional material art form from Northern Laos since the age of 10 – approximately 48 years – and learned the art form from her aunt and grandmother while growing up in Laos. Master D is the mother of Apprentice D.

**Apprentice D** is a 29-year-old female of Laotian ancestry, born in Vientiane. Between the ages of nine and 14, Apprentice D learned traditional Laotian material art from her mother, Master D. She plans to use the knowledge and skills obtained through the apprenticeship to teach this traditional Laotian material art form to Laotian youths.

**Master E** is a 46-year-old male of Brazilian ancestry, born in Sao Paulo, Brazil. He has been involved in a traditional Brazilian martial art form since his childhood– and is stepfather of Apprentice E. He started his own school in Brazil in 1979, and came to the United States to perform and teach in 1984.

**Apprentice E** is a 10-year-old female of Brazilian ancestry, born in Sao Paulo, Brazil. She has been involved in a traditional Brazilian martial art form during the last few years and is the stepdaughter of Master E. She has been in the U.S. for one year and says that the traditional art form she studies reminds her of her old home. She intends to use the skills obtained through the apprenticeship training to teach others and eventually become a master.

**Master F** is a 69-year-old male of Armenian ancestry, born in Fowler, California. He has been involved in playing traditional music since the age of seven and is the grandfather of Apprentice F. Lessons took place at Master F’s house weekly and lasted for one year.

**Apprentice F** is a 10-year-old male of Armenian ancestry, born in Fresno, California. He began to play traditional music by ear at the age of 4 from watching tapes and listening to recordings, but had no formal training prior to his apprenticeship with his grandfather, Master F. He intends to use the knowledge and skills obtained from the apprenticeship in performance.

**Master G** is a female of Native Californian ancestry in her thirties, born in Oregon and raised in California. She has been practicing basket weaving, a traditional Native Californian material art form, since 1997 – approximately 14 years – and shares tribal heritage with Apprentice G.

**Apprentice G** is a female of Native Californian ancestry in her thirties, born and raised in California. She was raised in a traditional family and has been exposed to basket weavers and regalia makers her entire life. Apprentice G has been involved in traditional Native Californian material art forms for a few years and shares tribal heritage with Master G. She plans to share the knowledge and skills obtained through the program with young people from her community.

**Master H** is a 63-year-old female of Native Californian ancestry, born and raised in California. She has been involved in traditional Native Californian material arts since 1975 – approximately 31 years – and is the aunt of Apprentice H. Locations of the Apprenticeship Program lessons were contingent on the weather and availability of gathering areas.

**Apprentice H** is a 35-year-old female of Native Californian ancestry, born in California. She has been involved in Native Californian traditional material arts since 2001 – approximately five years – and is the niece of Master H. Through the Apprenticeship Program, Apprentice H

intended to finish an item for her own family, to further the weaving tradition, and to teach her own children the art of basket weaving.

**Apprentice I** is a 23-year-old female of South Asian ancestry, born and raised in Colorado. She has been involved in playing traditional Indian music since the age of 12 and has been a student of her master for four years. Lessons took place at her master's house. At the end of the program, Apprentice I and her master planned on having a community recital.

**Master J** is a 68-year-old male of Chinese ancestry, born and raised in China. He has been involved in traditional Chinese performing arts since 1956 and has taught Apprentice J for seven years. Apprenticeship lessons took place in a local Chinese performing arts academy every Sunday for 1½ hours.

**Apprentice J** is a 19-year-old female of Chinese ancestry, born in Hong Kong and raised in California. She has been involved in traditional Chinese performing arts and has been a student of Master J since she was 13 years old – approximately seven years. Apprentice J would like to raise awareness in her community for the traditional art form by sharing her skills and training obtained through the program.

**Master K** is a 74-year-old male of Mexican ancestry, born and raised in Mexico. He has been involved in traditional Mexican dance since childhood and initially learned from his father and uncle. He has worked with Apprentice K for six years. Both Master K and Apprentice K are valuable members of a local Mexican performing arts group, contributing to the group with music and dance.

**Apprentice K** is a 26-year-old female of Mexican ancestry, born in Mexico. She has been involved with traditional Mexican dance and has been a student of Master K since 2000 – approximately six years. Both Apprentice K and her master are valuable members of a local Mexican performing group. Weekly 1½-hour lessons took place at a local Mexican arts center.

**Apprentice L** is a 49-year-old female of Chinese ancestry, born in Hong Kong. She has been involved in traditional Chinese performing arts for over 13 years and has been a student of her master for three years.

### **Sampling Procedures**

The evaluation sampled from a total of 35 master-apprentice pairs from ACTA's 2006 (16) and 2007 (19) Apprenticeship Program cohorts. Both cohorts were combined and then the pairs were classified according to their geographical location: Bay Area (the San Jose, San Francisco, Oakland metropolitan area) – 15 pairs (42.8% of the sample), Central Valley (the Sacramento, Stockton, Modesto area) – five pairs (14.3%), Southern California (Los Angeles, Long Beach, San Diego areas) – 10 pairs (28.6%), and Northern California (Butte, Redding area) – five pairs (14.3%). Due to budgetary considerations, the evaluation could not sample any of the Southern California apprenticeships. The remaining pairs were stratified according to geographical region, and pairs were randomly selected from each region according to the following

proportions: Bay Area – 53.3% sampled, Central Valley -- 40% sampled, and Northern California – 40% sampled. The participants who were originally sampled but either declined or

did not respond included two in the Bay Area region, two in the Central Valley region, and two in the Northern California region.

### **Interview Procedures and Protocol**

Separate semi-structured interviews were completed for each master and apprentice. 2006 and 2007 ACTA participants were contacted approximately six months to two years after the completion of the apprenticeship period. Following the random assignment of the master/apprentice pairs to one of two interviewers, each interviewer contacted their participants via phone call or email, inviting them to setup a face-to-face interview date, time, and location. When interviewers experienced difficulty contacting a participant, the ACTA Apprenticeship Program Associate Director personally emailed and called the participant.

The interviewers traveled to the interview location specified by the participant. In many cases, the interview was held at the participant's home, however interviews were also held at dance studios, clinics, coffee shops, and the ACTA San Francisco regional office in the Presidio in San Francisco. In some cases, the interviewer and participant spoke briefly before beginning the interview. The actual interview began shortly after the participant filled out a Participant Bill of Rights and a Consent Form. Minors (participants under the age of 18) filled out an Assent Form and the interviewer obtained consent from their parent. Participants who were minors at the time of the interview often did not want to be interviewed alone. In these instances, a spouse or another relative was present during the interview and occasionally responded on behalf of the minor.

The primary purpose of the participant interviews was to document participant perceptions about how the ACTA-supported program had been implemented. Participants were interviewed to document their ability to retain and internalize the objectives of the program. Topics addressed with the participants included: (1) skill development, (2) critical life experiences, (3) enhancement of community resources, (4) increasing community awareness, (5) strengthening community relations, (6) increasing community belongingness, and (7) cultural pride. Interviews were conducted individually by one of two trained interviewers.

The final semi-structured interview protocol, developed by an evaluation team, consisted of a series of questions concerning participant demographics, as well as the effects of the artist's work and productions on the consumer's sense of community, well-being, cultural attitudes, and related experiences. The interviewer asked most or all of the following questions:

1. What got you interested in ACTA's Apprenticeship Program?
2. When did you start learning your traditional art form? Where did you learn it? From whom did you learn this art form?
3. What role does this traditional art form play in your life?
4. What skills are you focusing on right now?
5. Are there particular challenges to practicing this art form?
6. How would you describe your relationship with your (master or apprentice)?

7. How has working with your (master/apprentice) affected the development of your art form?
8. How has working with your (master/apprentice) affected you personally?
9. What changes have you seen in yourself as a result of your participation in the master-apprenticeship program?
10. What impacts, or results, would you like to see come out of your participation in this program?
11. How has your participation in this artistic tradition impacted or affected your community? (please give examples)
12. How have you become involved with your community?
13. How have you affected others in your community?
14. Have people in your community noticed changes in your art during this apprenticeship?
15. Have people in your community noticed changes in you personally as a result of participating in this apprenticeship?
16. Do you have any plans to further develop your skills in this art form?
17. Do you have any plans to perform or hold more exhibits or projects in your community?
18. Do you have any plans for other activities in your community?
19. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about how the Apprenticeship Program has affected your development as an artist?
20. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about how the Apprenticeship Program has affected you personally?
21. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about how the Apprenticeship Program has affected your involvement in your community?

The interviews varied greatly in length from 30 minutes to 3 hours. On average, the interviews lasted 90 minutes to 2 hours. Following the interview, many of the participants mentioned upcoming performances, provided the interviewers with videos of their work, or discussed the art form at greater length. Some participants requested additional information about grants for local artists.

### **Data Coding and Analysis**

The final interviews were transcribed and analyzed at the Asian American Center on Disparities Research (AACDR) at the University of California, Davis. To organize and segment the results of the completed interviews ( $n=22$ ), a code template based on the interview protocol was first applied to the data (Crabtree & Miller, 1999) before proceeding to a line-by-line thematic analysis that was informed by grounded theory procedures (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The codes for the data were generated through two iterations of coding between the principal investigator and two research assistants. First, research assistants read each of the transcribed interviews independently. A content analysis of each sentence of the transcripts was conducted whereby the research assistants came up with general, overarching themes associated with the objectives of the program. Themes were then compared between the research assistants and



discussed with the principal investigator. A total of six main themes were agreed upon and subsequently applied to the transcribed interviews: (1) Enhancement of Community Resources, (2) Increasing Community Awareness, (3) Strengthening Community Relations, (4) Increasing Community Belongingness, (5) Cultural Pride, and (6) Personal Health and Well-Being. Each research assistant went through transcripts line-by-line a second time coding sentences that reflected the key themes. Following independent coding, research assistants met to compare their coded transcripts. The two research assistants agreed on the codes approximately 90% of the time. In the remaining 10% of cases where the two research assistants did not agree, they discussed the coded transcript before coming to a consensus on the major code.

Once the major themes were identified and finalized in the transcripts, each research assistant independently re-read all of the coded interviews and developed a list of sub-codes under each of the six key themes. Sub-codes were then compared between the research assistants and discussed with the principal investigator. The process resulted in the identification of a number of sub-themes (number is dependent on the major theme). Each research assistant read through the transcripts a third time sub-coding sentences that reflected the specific sub-themes. Following independent sub-coding, research assistants met to compare their sub-coded transcripts. The two research assistants agreed on the sub-codes approximately 95% of the time. In the remaining 5% of cases where the two research assistants did not agree, they discussed the sub-coded transcript before coming to a consensus on the sub-code.

All transcripts were recoded and entered into an Atlas.ti computer program. Atlas.ti software was utilized to support the analysis given that it provided tools to manage data in a way that supports the use of grounded theory procedures (Muhr, 1998). First, a content analysis was conducted, whereby the data was systematically analyzed to identify emergent concepts and themes, which were used to generate description and to build theory. A frequency and categorical analysis was performed in which additional coding schemes were generated to reflect emerging concepts and themes among different groups and to integrate categories.

## **Results**

Participants were asked to describe the ways in which they or their community had been affected by their participation in the art form. Qualitative analyses of the interviews identified six major effects that the program had on participants: (1) Enhancement of Community Resources, (2) Increasing Community Awareness, (3) Strengthening Community Relations, (4) Increasing Community Belongingness, (5) Cultural Pride, and (6) Personal Health and Well-Being. Many of the six major effects could be further classified into a number of specific effects or sub-themes. Both the major effects and the sub-themes that represent and define these effects are explained below.

### **Enhancement of Community Resources**

The first major theme that emerged from the interviews was the augmentation of community resources. Through involvement in the art form, participants came to perceive their role in the

community as a viable community resource. As participants developed and rehearsed skills of their art form, they became community resources via four types of mechanisms: (1) Maintaining the art form, (2) preserving broader cultural traditions, (3) giving back to the community, and (4) training future instructors.

***Maintaining the Art Form.*** Many of the participants reported that their dedication to an art form provided themselves and other community members with the means to preserve cultural traditions. Most of the master artists and two-thirds of the apprentices felt they were personally responsible for preserving and passing on the art form to future generations. Over half of the individuals in both the dance and music categories, as well as all six participants in the material category reported an intention to perpetuate the art form. In total, approximately three-fourths of the sample endorsed this sub-theme. The majority of the masters expressed a desire for the art form to endure for years to come.

The good thing is, number one, [I am] still receiving the funds from different agencies and number two is continuing the art form to stay alive and prolong in the future.  
(*Master Artist D*)

Apprentices viewed themselves as the vehicle by which they could maintain the art form and share it with family members and their own children.

My oldest sister was also a part of the program, probably like five-six-seven years ago, it's been a while. Now she has kids and so she hasn't practiced as often; but myself, I don't have any children yet and I really want to learn from my mom at this age. Because sadly, once they leave, if we don't take over this art I feel that it's going to be lost. That is why I was really interested and wanted to learn it and to practice it. I want to have a loom of my own here at this new home and I want to have it as a part-time leisure where I could practice it and hopefully pass it on to my children. (*Apprentice D*)

Other apprentices not only took it upon themselves to maintain the art form within their families, but also expressed the desire to educate future generations of youth.

We really believe it's about the education, the promotion and therefore the preservation of this art form and so those components said education means you have to go so deep in...studying the text that sort of support the history, the reason and the evolution of the art. (*Apprentice A*)

***Preserving Broader Cultural Traditions.*** Beyond the scope of the art form, many of the participants reported that their involvement in the arts simultaneously granted them the means to preserve cultural traditions. A number of the master artists and apprentices felt they were motivated to showcase, preserve, and pass on cultural practices to future generations. Participants across the dance, music, and material categories reported an intention to perpetuate and enhance cultural traditions. In total, almost half of the sample endorsed this sub-theme.

People are happy that their children are pursuing something Indian and they are able to keep their culture. They are happy somebody is there to teach them something the

authentic way; there are many teachers but you have to keep it authentically too. (*Master C*)

For many of the masters, exposing younger generations to their cultural traditions was of upmost importance and their primary goal.

I wanted to pass our heritage to someone in our family and [Apprentice F] had natural talent and had already started on his own to play the instrument. So I felt that he needed more study, more polish, so that was the primary purpose. (*Master F*)

The same master voiced his appreciation for the Apprenticeship Program, indicating that ACTA provided him with the opportunity to share cultural traditions with those younger than him.

[ACTA] gives support and gives the master artist an opportunity to enhance his tradition with younger people and to have them learn so that the tradition doesn't die. (*Master F*)

***Giving Back to the Community.*** Half of the master artists and one-fourth of the apprentices mentioned that through participation in the art form, they were able to have a sense of giving back to the community. Individuals from the dance, music, and material category reported personally giving back to the community. In all, just over one-third of the sample mentioned this sub-theme. For many of the masters, the art form was seen as a tangible commodity and they were able to use their skills and knowledge to “give back.”

At the beginning [I] had overcome a lot of difficulties, in particular, kids did not have money to come here to learn, so [I] actually [had] a lot of scholarship programs, so they came here to learn martial art form without paying anything. (*Master J*)

[I] also contribute[d] to some of the drama club or opera club department including one of student club Taiwan, National Taiwan University, and some...drama clubs in Bay Area such as those club including National Taiwan University. These organizations...get involved in the facilitating of development of drama or opera organization. (*Master J*)

I don't know if it is possible or not to have some sort of a group, some nonprofit group to have a contact point in the Chinese community. If they combine the best of this area and put on a whole concert for them. You don't need a big one, just...a small concert, a small performance with others so they can bring the culture in and whoever, I am not looking for thousands of audience, I am just looking for something [where]... you always have visitors and visit us and come by and have concerts. (*Apprentice L*)

***Training Future Instructors.*** Training a new generation of art instructors as community resources also emerged as a recurring theme. A number of the master artists and apprentices mentioned that their involvement resulted in the teaching of skills and knowledge of the art form to individuals who could teach future generations of students. Participants across all three categories (dance, music, and material) reported that future instructors were being taught the art form. In total, slightly over one-third of all participants mentioned this sub-theme.

There are a few people here in Oakland, they have a few people in Berkeley and then we have a group in Santa Rosa and we have another group in Fairfax, but it's all part of the same school but they have their own teachers. There are students of mine that have been doing it for 20-something years and are now teaching in different places. (*Master E*)

I will work with anyone. I can detect in my group whether there is someone who is struggling with something and so I will pay more attention to them more than I will but overall my teachings are to teach other people to become teachers. So they will go back to their own community and then they teach. (*Master H*)

If I did not train him, I don't think he would be comfortable...he's confident and he's definitely qualified to teach...the music because of his training with me...I gave him the opportunity to be able to share to others what he learned from me. (*Master B*)

### **Increasing Community Awareness**

A second major theme that emerged from the interviews involved an increase in community awareness. Participants acted as catalysts through which other local community members became more aware of (1) the art form and (2) a particular cultural heritage. Public performances and exhibitions provided community members with experiences with culture-specific art forms and traditions.

***Awareness of the Art Form.*** Participation in the ACTA Apprenticeship Program required a public performance or public display of the art at the completion of the apprentice period, and close to half of the master artists and apprentices mentioned that community awareness of the art form had been increased. Individuals in both the dance and music categories reported an increase in awareness of the art form among local community members, but none of the participants in the material category mentioned this theme in their interviews. In sum, a little over one-third of the sample reported this sub-theme. Participants expressed how performances and public displays of their art form helped promote awareness of the art form.

The community is very interested. They've been excited and every time that we've been invited to play at different occasion or venues the community has turned out very, very well to see how the master and the apprentice can play together and it has been very positive. (*Master F*)

In terms of everything that I've learned we've already had...many, many performances since the apprenticeship has ended in which I have shared or showcased the things that I have learned and so that was really gratifying. (*Apprentice B*)

I think that it is good if the program has a positive impact not just on the master and the student, but also on people that...would go to see the art form and then it gets kind of shared with the community and with the next generation. (*Apprentice I*)

***Awareness of Cultural Heritage.*** Half of the sample reported that community awareness of various cultural traditions was increased. Both master artists and apprentices mentioned that

through performances and public presentations, awareness of the cultural, religious, and traditional practices of the community were emphasized. Individuals in the dance, music, and material categories reported an increase in awareness of a particular cultural heritage among local community members. Apprentices tended to mention their involvement in exposing local community members to a unique part of their cultural background.

Now we present the music more to the community and they learn more about the music of our heritage. (*Apprentice F*)

Apprentices tended to explain how they shared knowledge of their cultural heritage with local community members, while master artists highlighted the cultural exchange between the United States and their homeland. For example, some master artists indicated that by increasing individual involvement in the art form, apprentices and other members of the community traveled abroad more frequently for in-depth exposure to the culture.

Once people get involved with [the art form], a lot of people start [to] travel, going to Brazil. They start going trips and stay in Brazil for three or six months and then they want to know more about the art and...they want to go to events that they know that are happening other places in the world or in the country. And so it becomes this lifestyle thing. (*Master E*)

### **Strengthening Community Relations**

The interviews indicated that involvement in the art form improved interpersonal relationships among community members across generations and continents. Thus, the third major theme that emerged from the interviews centered on building and strengthening relationships within and between communities. Participants reflected on the various ways the art form facilitated the improvement of relationships from the immediate dyad of master and apprentice to widespread relations between members of different countries. Interviewees described growth in four types of community relationships: (1) The master-apprentice dyad, (2) within artistic communities, (3) between local community members and (4) across countries.

***The Master-Apprentice Dyad.*** The ACTA Apprenticeship Program focused on the one-on-one relationship between a master artist and his/her apprentice, and a substantial number of the master artists and apprentices mentioned that their involvement in the art form brought them closer to another individual passionate about their culture. The majority of individuals in the dance and material categories, as well as all of the participants in the music category, reported the strengthening of the relationship between master and apprentice. In fact, most of the sample (90.9%) endorsed this sub-code.

I have been telling her that I want her to take more of my classes and I want to teach her more because...I feel that I can help her in her development in the other classes she is taking, I mean the teachers are great and everything, but I don't feel that they push her as much as I do. She has this incredible potential and the other teachers and they are doing good jobs, they are teaching a good class, but when I am teaching, if I see a student with an extra potential, I kind of channel my inner energy into that potential as well and challenge them a little bit more so they can do the best of their...they can use the best of

their potential and I don't feel that is really happening with her in the other classes she is taking. (*Master E*)

After years of working together, many of the apprentices indicated that they considered their master a part of their family.

After a couple of years or so after starting with him after I would go for a lesson, he would invite me to have lunch and cook lunch with me and show me how to make something and how to prepare some salad or something. And we would sit together and talk. Sometimes I would help him with things like his computer or with his emails or something like that. Something technical that he was having trouble with and he would ask me if I would help him...and I would do that. I feel...like he is very grandfatherly and very caring and so I feel like, in a sense, he is kind of like a grandfather figure for me, also a teacher though. I feel close to him even though we're not in such close physical contact anymore. (*Apprentice I*)

The time commitment involved in dedicating oneself to the art form was apparent in that a sense of kinship and responsibility developed between the master-apprentice pairs.

I don't become a guru to anybody until 10 years, at least, minimum. Minimum ten years if not more. More than 10 years until they're ready. And if they are married, the husband has to be ready. If they are not married, the boyfriend has to be ready, they have to be ready, then I have to be ready because once you become the guru, they become my responsibility. That means they, she and her husband, she and her boyfriend, she and her family, everybody becomes my responsibility and I become their responsibility. It's a big bonding thing. (*Master A*)

***Relations Within Artistic Communities.*** Half of the master artists and half of the apprentices indicated that their involvement in the art form initiated them into a larger artistic community. Participants endorsing this sub-theme felt they became part of an exclusive community with other artists. This theme was more prevalent in interviews of individuals in the dance and music art forms, however one participant in the material category also reported a shared bond with other individuals involved in the arts and feelings of attachment to a larger artistic "family." In total, exactly half of the sample mentioned that they felt a part of an artistic community through involvement with their art form.

Beginning it was my mother and then I went to other musicians like relatives and aunts people who are also musicians because when this music gets performed, everybody will be available. So learning this traditional music is not only learned from your own parents or relatives, but other musicians because there is always gatherings of musicians, whenever there's a festival or especially a wedding, where all the musicians be present to perform and there is always, kind of friendly contest involving the performance. (*Master B*)

A sense of shared experience and camaraderie emerged among individuals with a common artistic interest.

It's real exciting to be able to be around other weavers that know all this because they all think the same way. They want to learn your technique too. (*Master H*)

Even among the youngest participants of the ACTA apprenticeship program, a sense of inclusion in an artistic community was felt. This was particularly pronounced in participants who performed in a traveling group or troupe.

For me it's like a family, because my blood family is in Brazil so maybe my mom goes traveling, so I stay with basically some people who are like my aunts and they do [traditional art form], this group. So for me it's a family. (*Apprentice E*)

Older apprentices also expressed their allegiance to artistic communities.

My community now is a community of musicians and artists not just at Cal Arts, but also in LA, the whole kind of area and in the Bay Area as well, which are the two places I have lived. And I am involved in and I work with different musicians, artists and dancers and I perform and collaborate with people and perform in the community as well so I would say for now. (*Apprentice I*)

***Relations Between Local Community Members.*** Relationships between participants and individuals outside close-knit artistic communities were also improved. Most of the master artists and a quarter of the apprentices indicated that relations between local community members outside of the immediate artistic community were strengthened. Participants from all three categories (dance, music, and material) reported enhanced relations among local community members, including immediate families. Almost half of the participants endorsed this sub-code. Such relations included those between the participant and longtime friends and family members.

I felt that I brought some joy and happiness to many people because I've played for over 60 years now. I've performed for weddings of people long time ago and maybe even their kids now maybe even getting close to their grandkids. (*Master F*)

More often however, participants reported making connections with local community members they previously did not know through community events, celebrations, and discussions.

I'm sure a lot of the older women that are my mom's age have used [a Laotian weaving loom]...it's something that a lot of the Lao women do back home. So it was interesting, we had a lot of people come up and they were so ecstatic to see it; some even sat down to try it, you know do the weaving. Because it's brought back so many memories and it brings the community together...I just wish we had a little bit more of that, because it was just a one-day thing, because it was the New Year. But it'd be nice to have something that's more permanent, something that women can come and get together and do. (*Apprentice D*)

***Relations Across Countries.*** The most long-distance relationship to be strengthened by involvement in an art form was between countries. Despite the enormous amount of effort involved in bringing members of two countries together, a small proportion of the master artists and apprentices reported that their participation allowed them to cultivate and maintain bonds with individuals from different countries. Every report of strengthened relations between countries came from participants in the dance category. In all, approximately one-fifth of the sample endorsed this sub-theme.

Every other year we put together an event and travel there and we do a camp where I bring masters from different places of the country of Brazil and they go there and teach the students and it's in a beautiful place...in the middle of the jungle, by the beach, with water falls and rivers right across the street. (*Master E*)

### **Increasing Community Belongingness**

The fourth major theme that emerged from the interviews was the development of stronger ties and feelings of belongingness to an ethnic or cultural community.

***Reclaiming and Connecting to Cultural Heritage.*** Involvement in the ACTA Apprenticeship Program offered many participants the opportunity to reclaim and connect to their cultural heritage. A large number of the master artists and apprentices expressed that they felt connected to their cultural background by taking part in the traditional art form. Reports indicating personal ownership and a sense of belonging to one's cultural heritage were found uniformly across individuals in the dance, music, and material category. Within the entire sample, the majority of participants (86.4%) endorsed this sub-code. Many apprentices expressed that through their interest in the art form, they were able to identify with their roots and heritage.

Preparing for the performances means keeping up your culture, understanding your tradition, your religion, the epics, the stories. (*Apprentice C*)

Master artists tended to indicate that they felt an obligation to maintain and instill a set of traditions and values in their students and others.

Well, there's not a whole lot of people clamoring to learn because they don't see the significance of how it holds the culture, it holds the inheritance, that is your right. And I tell my students this when I teach them. It is their right to know, it is their heritage, so they have a right to know if they want to know. (*Master H*)

### **Cultural Pride**

A fifth major theme from the interviews was a sense of cultural pride. Many of the ACTA Apprenticeship Program participants, both master artists and apprentices, reported positive feelings of belonging to a particular culture and/or ethnic group through participation in their art form. Individuals in the dance, music, and material categories reported positive emotions and thoughts about their culture due to their involvement in an art form. Many participants developed positive feelings towards their culture and/or ethnic group when their art form was



acknowledged and appreciated by others. Participants reporting this effect also expressed cultural pride by dedicating themselves to the preservation of the art form.

I usually do fall back on [traditional] dancing and techniques. And usually like before that I know wouldn't 'cause I just like to move the way I move but like [traditional dance form] really right now really holds close to my heart because I just feel like, at the moment, there is a special, really different from anything else I have ever seen before, and so that has real emphasis like (goes with) my art form. (*Apprentice J*)

Some apprentice artists demonstrated their cultural pride through positive feelings of connectedness to their culture through the art form.

I've always felt privileged to be part of my community, my culture. There's a time when I think that we get mainstream so much and we forget about things like that. So personally, it kind of shined a light on me, like "Hey, I need to refocus again." Like I said, I'm really into the culture; I don't want to lose it, so personally it has affected me to be more in tuned of my roots. What's important in life too, instead of just about career and day-to-day type of life, it's more than that. It helps me refocus on what's important. (*Apprentice D*)

### **Personal Health and Well-Being**

The sixth and final major theme that emerged in the analyses was the promotion of personal health and well-being. Participants reported enhancements in physical and mental health in five spheres: (1) self-improvement, (2) spiritual and moral growth, (3) skill-learning, (4) feeling “whole,” and (5) physical health.

***Self-Improvement.*** The most frequently quoted theme (mentioned by 90.9% of the sample) emphasized how involvement in the art form gave the participant a sense of self-improvement, often unrelated to the art itself. Most of the master artists and all of the apprentices endorsed this sub-code. The majority of individuals in the dance category, as well as all participants in both the music and material categories reported some sense of self-improvement achieved through involvement in the art form. Many participants reflected on improvements made to their own personalities.

I learned that we have to be hard-working and dedicated to everything and persevere, so I see myself grow like that. (*Apprentice C*)

Other participants revealed how their participation improved their personal outlook on life.

Taking your family with you and getting them up there and bothering to pay attention to what is going on with the environment and you have to have a spiritual commitment to be in the right frame of mind to do these things. So I think...traditional art forms are really important to help people understand, to help people prioritize those things that give their life meaning. (*Apprentice G*)

***Spiritual and Moral Growth.*** A number of the master artists and apprentices expressed a feeling of spiritual and moral growth as a result of their involvement with an art form. Individuals across the dance, music, and material categories reported a personal sense of spiritual or religious growth. Within the entire sample, slightly over one-third spoke specifically about the art form as a spiritual experience and related the art form to their non-physical self (i.e. their soul).

I feel like it plays many different roles right now in music and in what I am learning and studying and also my career, and not just in Indian music but in other types of music as well, and it's definitely a spiritual art form. So I feel like it plays a role, and kind of connected me to a new art form, classical art form from India. I was born and raised here, but that kind of music keeps me connected in a way that's different from...visiting. Through the music, I feel like it is nourishing spiritually and culturally. (*Apprentice I*)

My husband has said that...he notices that my actual demeanor when I'm weaving it's changed. I'm not so stressed it's almost like relaxing. It's kind of nice because you know you're doing something that's cultural and...that's...one of those things that affects your soul and it's a positive thing. (*Apprentice H*)

***Skill Learning.*** ACTA contracted the master artists to make a concentrated teaching effort with the apprentice, and while many of the master artists and apprentices did not explicitly mention learning a new skill related to their art form during the apprenticeship period, some did. Participants who reported skill learning during the apprenticeship period came from all three categories (dance, music, and material). Approximately one-third of the sample endorsed this sub-theme. For the most part, apprentices were the beneficiaries of skill-teaching efforts provided by a master.

You learn almost everyday a little bit more. I've learned most of the main things. But you learn just a little bit more about the background, or rhythm or some little thing about performing in the public more. (*Apprentice F*)

The master artists also mentioned specific skills their apprentices were learning as part of the ACTA Apprenticeship Program.

Because of the funding, [I] was able to teach [Apprentice J] and this gentleman...about vocal performance so they can improve their performance and because of this improvement, they get another chance to...present themselves on the stage. (*Master J*)

***Feeling "Whole."*** Another theme that emerged in about one-fifth of the interviews was feeling a sense of "wholeness" upon becoming involved in the art form. One of the master artists and a few of the apprentices reported this sub-theme. Individuals in the dance and music categories reported the sense of feeling complete and whole, but none of the participants in the material category mentioned this effect. More than just nourishment for the soul, involvement in the art form allowed the participant to feel complete and fill a void in their lives.

Any art form is challenging, it requires a lot of dedication, time and effort. Support of the family members. Your absences from the family scene when you're out. So it's pretty

much the same; it does not have anything very particularly challenging...in fact it's very pleasing and fulfilling for the soul. It's more divine music that we are expressing in this art form; it's all religious, it's all spiritual. So it gives you a completeness or wholeness pursuing it. (*Master C*)

In the same respect, participation in the art form appeared to play a critical role in some of the participants' lives.

It means a lot. It makes my life more solid. Like something you enjoy doing and...it adds color to your life. (*Apprentice L*)

**Physical Health.** Some of the participants mentioned physical health benefits in their interviews. Reports of improved physical health came from master artists in the dance category. In one case, the art form itself was the mechanism by which the individual grew physically stronger.

It looks like a dance so they are interested because women...are very involved in dance movements, but it also has an element of self-defense, so they like it because...it gives them this feeling [that] they are learning something that will make them stronger, they will have to defend themselves. (*Master E*)

One other reference to physical health improvement emphasized the healing aspect of participation in art. In this instance, the art form was viewed as having a cleansing effect.

I will be teaching 15 [locally-based] Native Americans...and it is paid for through the Indian health clinic. They see art as a healing. This last class I just did, which has been a month ago it ended, and that one was specifically geared for diabetics, for people who were bad diabetics. (*Master H*)

## Discussion

For the master artist and apprentice participants in the ACTA Apprenticeship Program, the program was most effective in strengthening cultural belongingness and fostering personal empowerment. Findings from the qualitative analyses indicate the program had an effect at both the community and personal level. Interview narratives suggest signs of strengthened

connections between the participant and his or her community in addition to individual growth through mastery experiences.

Close examination of the qualitative interviews revealed that a number of the participants mentioned the strengthening of community and cultural connectedness. Previous literature suggests that community belongingness, social integration, and cultural identity may serve as major protective factors against mental health problems. Social relationships define individuals' role identities, which impart meaning and purpose in life. These relationships also provide individuals with a sense of belonging, and thus contribute positively to well-being (Durkheim, 1865/1966; Thoits, 1983, 1985). Participation in the ACTA Apprenticeship Program may

augment the individual's perception that they are a part of, contribute to, and are a valued member of their community. Many of the ACTA Apprenticeship Program participants felt they were giving back to their communities and reported enhanced interpersonal relationships within their communities, accordingly. Involvement in the community is a form of social integration that represents potential protective factors to reinforce resilience in the presence of other risk factors (Nettles & Pleck, 1996). Social integration appears to have a direct, positive association with mental health (Lin, Ye, & Ensel, 1999; Thoits, 1995). Ethnic and cultural identification have also previously emerged as protective factors against mental health disorders. Ethnic or cultural identity involves the idea of psychological stake, the investment of time and effort, development of competence, and participation within an ethnic or cultural group (Oetting & Beauvais, 1991). Through commitment to and involvement in the group, ethnic and cultural identities serve as protective sources of strength, both personally and socially, against mental health problems. Many of the ACTA Apprenticeship Program participants reported positive feelings of dedication and belonging to a particular cultural or ethnic group through learning and sharing their art form. The ACTA Apprenticeship Program could be a mechanism by which individuals enhance their cultural identity and promote a healthy lifestyle.

The program may also provide the participant with a sense of personal empowerment. Past research suggests that empowerment is a process through which individuals and communities gain mastery over their affairs (Rappaport, 1987). Empowerment has been found to operate through self-efficacy, which has implications on psychosocial functioning (Bandura, 1986, 1989). Individual self-efficacy can be enhanced in four fundamental ways, and the most effective approach to developing a resilient sense of efficacy is through mastery experiences (Bandura, 1986). The ACTA Apprenticeship Program may construct and reinforce a unique mastery experience for all participants. The program offers participants a special opportunity to develop their skills and acquire a sense of self-improvement – two elements critical to adaptive functioning. Each master artist and apprentice spends a concentrated amount of time cultivating and refining skills specific to a traditional art form. Participants reported a sense of personal empowerment and viewed their skills and competencies as resources to the community. The development of competencies and assets often render people more resilient to stress and adversity. Therefore, the apprenticeship program may potentially correlate with improved psychosocial and mental health functioning.

Overall, the qualitative analyses identified a number of compelling effects the ACTA Apprenticeship Program often can produce in its participants. The present qualitative study utilized a fairly small sample and it is unclear if the findings and effects that materialized in the current interviews would replicate in a more representative sample. Additional evaluative studies are necessary to assess and confirm the effects of the Apprenticeship Program. Nevertheless, the evaluation findings strongly suggest that the Apprenticeship Program can enhance psychosocial factors that are related to both physical and mental health of participants. Clearly, the promising potential of this program warrants further investigation in terms of demonstration projects complemented with both qualitative and quantitative evaluations to more definitively determine the Program's impact.

Table 1

Themes Cited by Participants ( $n=22$ )

Effect Mentioned	Frequency of Participants Reporting Effect	Percentage of Participants Reporting Effect
<i>Enhancement of Community Resources</i>		
Preserving and Passing on the Art Form to Future Generations	57	77.3%
Preserving and Passing on Cultural Tradition to Future Generations	21	45.5%
Giving Back to the Community	16	36.4%
Training of Trainers	12	36.4%
<i>Increasing Community Awareness</i>		
Awareness of Cultural Heritage	18	50.0%
Awareness of the Art Form	23	36.4%
<i>Strengthening Community Relations</i>		
Relations Between Master and Apprentice	55	90.9%
Relations Between Artistic Communities	18	50.0%
Relations Between Local Community Members	27	45.5%
Relations Between Countries	7	18.2%
<i>Increasing Community Belongingness</i>		
Reclaiming and Connecting to Cultural Heritage	53	86.4%
<i>Cultural Pride</i>	41	59.1%
<i>Personal Health and Well-Being</i>		
Self-Improvement	58	90.9%
Spiritual and Moral Growth	19	36.4%
Skill Learning	13	31.8%
Feeling "Whole"	8	18.2%
Physical Health	2	9.1%

Table 2

Demographic Information for ACTA Apprenticeship Program Participants (n=22)

ID	Gender	Ethnicity	Birthplace	Age	Genre	Experience (Years)
A (M)	M	South East Asian Indian	Kolkata, India	62	Dance	54
A (A)	F	South East Asian Indian	Salinas, CA (USA)	30	Dance	11
B (M)	M	Filipino	Mindanao, Philippines	60	Music	54
B (A)	M	Filipino	Manila, Philippines	36	Music	10
C (M)	F	South East Asian Indian	India	43	Music	37
C (A)	F	South East Asian Indian	Stanford, CA (USA)	13	Music	6
D (M)	F	Laotian	Laos	59	Material	48
D (A)	F	Laotian	Vientiane, Laos	29	Material	5
E (M)	M	Brazilian	Sao Paulo, Brazil	46	Dance	23
E (A)	F	Brazilian	Sao Paulo, Brazil	10	Dance	2-3
F (M)	M	Armenian	Fowler, CA (USA)	69	Music	62
F (A)	M	Armenian	Fresno, CA (USA)	10	Music	0
G (M)	F	Karuk American Indian	Medford, OR (USA)	32	Material	9
G (A)	F	Karuk American Indian	Eureka, CA (USA)	33	Material	2-3
H (M)	F	Pomo American Indian	Isleton, CA (USA)	63	Material	31
H (A)	F	Pomo American Indian	Stockton, CA (USA)	35	Material	5
I (A)	F	South East Asian Indian	Fort Collins, CO (USA)	23	Music	11
J (M)	M	Chinese	Shanghai, China	68	Dance	50
J (A)	F	Chinese	Hong Kong, China	19	Dance	7
K (M)	M	Mexican	Jalisco, Mexico	71	Dance	60+
K (A)	F	Mexican	Jalisco, Mexico	26	Dance	6
L (A)	F	Chinese	Hong Kong, China	49	Dance	13

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