

**AN AUDIENCE DIVERSIFICATION MODEL FOR  
PUBLIC GARDENS AND MUSEUMS**

by

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## ABSTRACT

It is not unusual when visiting public gardens and museums to discover their audiences are primarily Caucasian, female, upper-to-middle class, well-educated, and middle-aged to elderly. This homogeneity among audiences is a problem many organizations are trying to rectify. In order to help manage audience diversification strategies, an audience diversification process model—with a focus on educational programming—was created. This model is based on current literature and practice. The audience diversification model consists of efforts within five Actions. The Actions are: Action 1: Assess audiences and programs for diversity; Action 2: Establish an organizational commitment to diversity; Action 3: Build mutually beneficial relationships between the public garden/museum and community groups of under-represented audiences; Action 4: Design, develop, and implement education programs with community involvement; Action 5: Integrate regular evaluation into the programming process. This model was used to assess the audience diversification efforts at three case study sites: Fairchild Tropical Garden, Please Touch Museum, and Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens. Educators and directors were interviewed regarding the management of their audience diversification efforts. While the selected institutions are currently implementing some of the efforts in the audience diversification model, the research shows that none of the organizations followed the model completely. In addition to these results, critical issues surrounding the Actions and efforts within the audience diversification process are discussed. This research will provide educators,

directors, and other administrators with the information necessary to better understand and implement audience diversification efforts through educational programming.

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

It is not unusual when visiting a public garden or museum to discover the audience is primarily Caucasian, female, upper-to-middle class, well-educated and middle-aged to elderly (Hooper-Greenhill 1997, 2). This homogeneity among audiences within public gardens and museums is a problem many organizations are trying to rectify. Despite efforts towards diversification of staff, boards, audiences, and volunteers, little progress has been made. A commonly asked question is why do public gardens and museums have such difficulty in attracting more diverse audiences? Marilyn Hood, in her article “Staying Away: Why People Choose Not to Visit Museums” discussed a revolutionary idea: public gardens and museums should investigate why people do *not* come to their institutions, rather than spending valuable funds surveying people who are already visitors. Her premise is that people choose leisure time activities based on six major attributes: being with people or social interaction, doing something worthwhile, feeling comfortable and at ease in one’s surroundings, having a challenge of new experiences, having an opportunity to learn, and participating actively (Hood 1983, 51). Hood suggests that public gardens and museums have trouble attracting more diverse audiences because these attributes may be available at these organizations, but “not in sufficient quantity to warrant regular visits” (1983, 55). In addition to Hood’s conclusions about leisure time choices, it is also important to note that there may be additional reasons for non-attendance at

museums and public gardens, such as transportation difficulties and the expense of admission.

In order to improve the regular attendance of new groups of people, some public gardens and museums have adopted various diversification strategies. These usually take the form of bilingual materials, festivals, special events, exhibitions aimed at particular populations, and focused marketing. Most organizations have found, however, that “In the long run these strategies enjoy only limited success” (Karp and Lavine 1993, 45). The key elements lacking in these efforts are the basic understanding and deep-seated commitment necessary to diversify an organization (such as staff, board, volunteers, programs, mission, etc.) and its audience. When the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI)—an organization dedicated to creating more inclusive environments—studied institutional attempts towards diversification, founder Cherie Brown noted that “...most individuals could not sustain the commitment to take on institutional change. They experienced the work as too hard and they became discouraged” (Brown and Mazza 1997, 17). When the necessary commitment of time and resources becomes apparent to administrators, it is easy to justify ignoring the issue and to put institutional time and money into other programs (Hooper-Greenhill 1997, 2). Yet audience diversification is not an issue that will be solved by relegating it to the back burner. This research is an attempt to support the audience diversification process by providing a useful guide for organizations wishing to diversify their audience and programs.

For the purpose of this research, public gardens refer to botanical gardens, arboreta, display gardens, parks, and conservatories. In addition, museums are discussed because of their similarity to public gardens in that both fit into the category

of leisure time activity, and both provide collection-based experiences for visitors. The results of this research should be useful to administrators, educators, curators, marketing personnel, and other individuals involved with audiences in the public garden and museum fields. The remainder of this chapter characterizes the rationale and purpose of the research, explains the importance of audience diversification, and provides an outline for the remainder of the thesis.

### **Rationale and Purpose**

While much is available in public garden and museum literature about individual issues such as diversifying staff and audiences, evaluation of programs, community building, and the importance of initial audience assessment, nothing was discovered that discusses the idea that these separate elements need integration to ensure a successful audience diversification program. Some articles refer to the necessity of evaluation to determine what the public liked or did not like about a program or exhibit (Korn 1994, 23). Other professionals claim that acquiring demographic and psychographic information is the best way to begin developing new audiences (Hood 1983, 51). Recent journal articles discuss the need for institutions to become part of their community through educational and outreach opportunities (Karp and Lavine 1993, 84). This research can be viewed as an extension of the existing body of knowledge concerning public garden and museum audience diversification, with a focus on educational programming.

The primary purpose of this study is to provide public garden and museum professionals with a model that can be used as a practical tool and guide toward diversifying audiences through educational programming. This research study, based on interviews conducted at three case study institutions, will also provide insight into

critical challenges staff are likely to face as they commit to the process of audience diversification. The three case study institutions are: Fairchild Tropical Garden in Miami, Florida; Please Touch Museum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens in Akron, Ohio.

### **Importance of Audience Diversification**

Before embarking on a discussion of the importance of audience diversification, it is necessary to define two terms that are used frequently in the proposed model and throughout the research. For the purpose of this study, “diversity” and “under-represented audience/group” are defined in the following ways:

*Diversity:* A group or audience having multiformity, including—but not limited to—race, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, income, religion, sexual orientation, and physical ability

*Under-represented audience/group:* Any audience segment using the public garden/museum whose representation is less than its percentage within the local community based on census data

Through audience assessment and observation, public garden and museum professionals are aware that their audiences are not diverse (racially, socio-economically, etc.), and they wish to change. However, having the desire to diversify audiences does not necessarily translate into an action plan for how best to serve diverse audiences. It takes planning, time, and resources. Because of this, many organizations waver in their desire and/or ability to diversify, questioning whether time and resources could be better spent in other strategic pursuits. The key question must then be asked: why does audience diversification warrant a sustained and informed effort?

Striving to attract and serve more diverse audiences can benefit an organization in many ways. One way, common to most non-profits, is based in the difficulty of funding. Most public gardens and museums rely on financial support from private foundations, corporations or government—whether it be for collections, programming, or other organizational needs. Increasingly, funders look to see whether or not non-profit organizations serve their diverse communities. Demonstrating themselves to be necessary resources within diverse communities is an important criteria for receiving the funding they need.

Working toward diversity can also lead institutions to initiate positive strategic and philosophical change within an organization, thus keeping businesses moving forward with fresh ideas and ideals. The article “Why Diversity Matters” explains that “Responding to varied perspectives and preferences...keeps an organization’s flexibility muscle exercised and well-developed” (Gardenswartz and Rowe 1998, 2).

In addition to funding needs and organizational change, public gardens and museums must be aware of changing demographics within their communities in order to plan for future audiences. Minda Borun, as quoted in the article “The Museum is Open,” says, “Demographics are changing, and museums have to serve a broader audience...It’s partly a sense of mission and altruism and partly enlightened self-interest” (Larson 1994, 32-38). Keeping in touch with changing demographics and working to serve broader audiences enables public gardens and museums to plan for their future and to create a relevant place for themselves in their communities.

These examples—funding, positive organizational change, and gathering information for future planning—are only three of the possible short and long-term

benefits for an organization with diversity as its goal. Yet as we move into the twenty-first century, it is not enough for non-profits to consider solely the impacts on their institutions when addressing diversity. They must also be concerned with where they stand as leaders in their communities. The 1992 report developed for the American Association of Museums (AAM) entitled “Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums” claims that “...every area of museum activity contributes to museums’ public dimension and to the important public service museums provide” (AAM 1992, 9). Because of this role, public gardens and museums are challenged to insure they do what they can to promote diversity in all aspects of their organizations and to establish themselves as organizations that serve all audiences within their communities—not just a select few.

### **Outline of Thesis**

Following this introductory chapter, the audience diversification process model is discussed in-depth in Chapter 2. The research design used for this thesis, including the procedures and case study institution selection, is covered in Chapter 3. The purpose of Chapter 4 is to describe and discuss the case study institutions, examining organizational factors such as audience demographics, size of institutions, mission statements, and the impetus for audience diversification efforts. In Chapter 5, the audience diversification efforts at each institution will be analyzed according to the audience diversification model which was developed for this research. Critical issues involved in the audience diversification process will be discussed in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 includes a summary of the research and provides conclusions from the analysis of data presented in previous chapters. It also will illustrate recommendations for future research on this topic. The appendices provide supplementary materials,

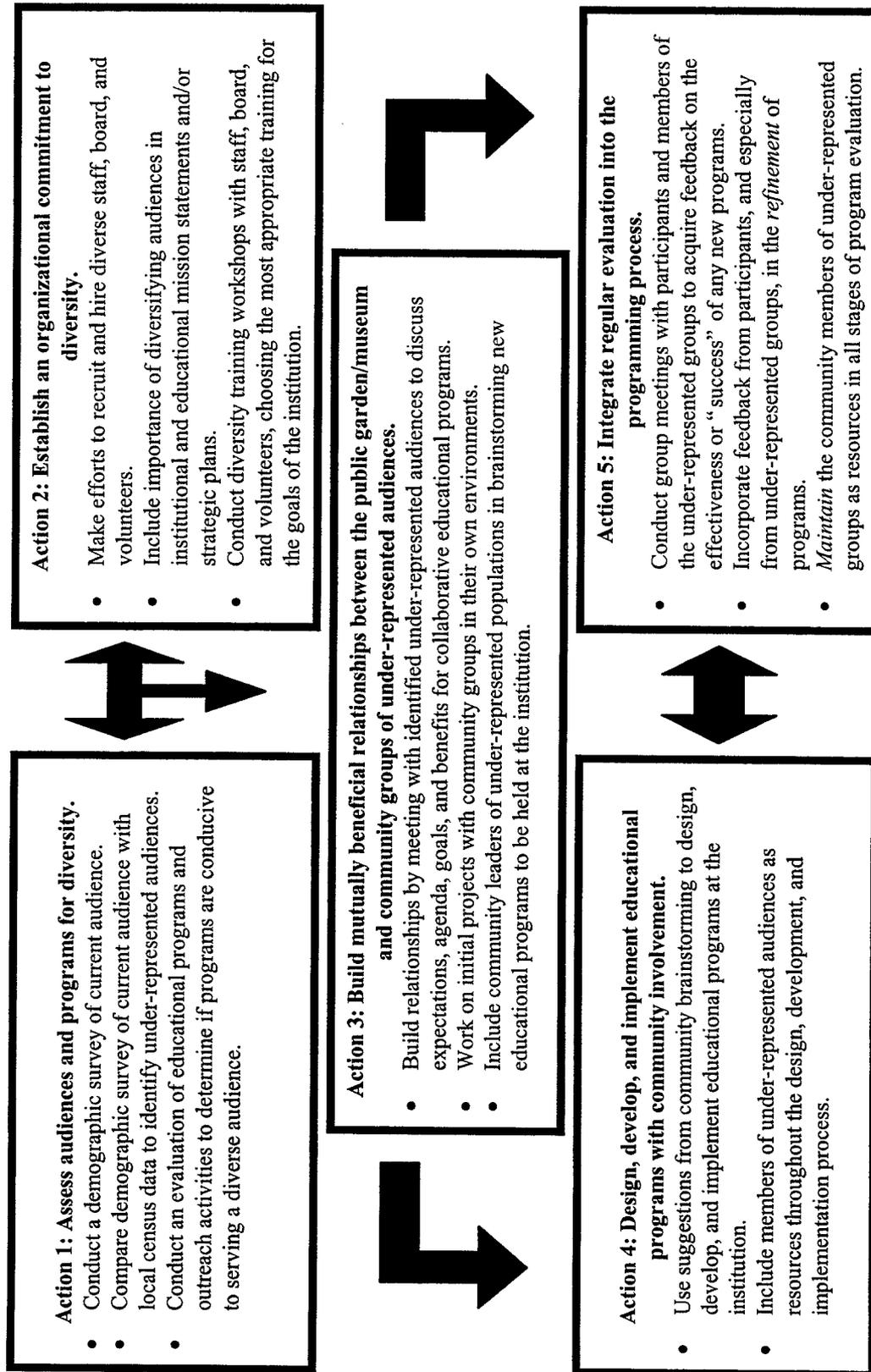
such as the surveys used in initial research, the set of interview questions, and an approval form from the Human Subjects Review Committee.

## Chapter 2

### MODEL FOR AUDIENCE DIVERSIFICATION PROCESS

A successful audience diversification process begins with commitment on the part of the public garden or museum. Developing a more diverse audience is not something that can happen overnight—in fact, it may take years. Yet committing to the process and adapting it will help ground the garden or museum, keeping it stable throughout the more challenging phases of audience diversification efforts.

The model described in this chapter is based on research dealing with audience development and attracting more diverse audiences. This researcher combined a variety of audience development techniques and theories into a model describing a comprehensive audience diversification process. The model is organized into five stages or “Actions”, with each having its own purpose and/or plan of action. When reviewing the model, it becomes apparent that none of these actions is separate from the others—they are all connected and may be implemented simultaneously. However, Actions 1 and 2 should be well under way before beginning the final three Actions. It is also important to note that Actions 3, 4, and 5 are efforts that should be integrated into on-going organizational planning and thus are never truly completed. For ease of understanding, the model is provided in both graphical (see page 9) and textual representation. The components of the audience diversification model are:



**Figure 2.1 Audience Diversification Model**

**Action 1: Assess audiences and programs for diversity.**

- Conduct a demographic survey of current audience (updated at least every 5 years).
- Compare demographic survey of current audience with local census data to identify under-represented audiences for the public garden/museum (meaning any audience segment whose percentage is less than its representation in local census).
- Conduct an evaluation of educational programs and outreach activities to determine if programs are conducive to serving a diverse audience.

**Action 2: Establish an organizational commitment to diversity.**

- Make efforts to recruit and hire a diverse staff, board, and volunteers.
- Include the importance of diversifying audiences in institutional and educational mission statements and/or strategic plans.
- Conduct diversity training workshops with staff, board, and volunteers, choosing the most appropriate training for the goals of the institution.

**Action 3: Build mutually beneficial relationships between the public garden/museum and community groups of under-represented audiences.**

- Build relationships by meeting with identified under-represented audiences to discuss expectations, agenda, goals, and benefits for any collaborative educational programs and projects.
- Work on initial projects with community groups in their own environments (projects that are advantageous for both the community groups and the public garden/museum).
- Include community leaders of under-represented populations in brainstorming new educational programs to be held at the institution.

**Action 4: Design, develop, and implement educational programs with community involvement.**

- Use suggestions from community brainstorming to design, develop, and implement educational programs at the institution (such as lectures, classes, workshops, special events, etc.).
- Include members of under-represented audiences as resources throughout the design, development, and implementation process.

**Action 5: Integrate regular evaluation into the programming process.**

- Conduct group meetings with participants and members of the under-represented groups to acquire feedback on the effectiveness or “success” of any new programs.
- Incorporate feedback from participants, and especially from under-represented groups, in the *refinement* of programs.
- *Maintain* the community members of under-represented groups as resources in all stages of program evaluation.

**Discussion of Audience Diversification Process Model**

The following sections explain the reasons for choosing these five Actions and why the components within the Actions are integral to the comprehensive audience diversification process.

**Action 1: Assess audiences and programs for diversity.**

*Conduct a demographic survey of current audience.* This effort is critically important in the beginning stages of the audience diversification process. If an organization does not know its current audience, it cannot accurately assess who in the community is *not* part of its audience. Although this component of the process is necessary for even the most basic planning for diversification, the data also have the potential to help the organization in other ways. Hood explains other benefits in collecting such data, writing, “These data can be critical in convincing civic leaders, media, and potential members and supporters of the importance of...[the institutions’] contributions to the community and of the need for increased support for educational programming” (1986, 28). The statistics from a demographic survey of the current audience will form the basis for all future audience diversification planning.

*Compare demographic survey of current audience with local census data to identify under-represented audiences for the public garden/museum.* Once the

demographic survey is completed and compared to the local census data, the garden/museum will be able to “identify specific segments of the community that the museum would like to serve more fully...” (AAM 1992, 16). The comparison of the two sets of statistics enables an institution to identify under-represented groups, and to make informed decisions about which audiences to target in future planning.

*Conduct an evaluation of education programs and outreach activities to determine if programs are conducive to developing a diverse audience.* While gathering data on current and potential audiences is a vital effort in Action 1, evaluating the existing educational programs cannot be ignored. For many public gardens and museums, it may be intuitively obvious that educational programs are not conducive to attracting diverse audiences, especially if diversity is not currently part of the organizational mission and goals. However, as with the above two efforts, having the statistics to determine “the overall effectiveness...as well as the effectiveness of individual components”—will help support future decisions and serve as a basis for comparison when analyzing the success of any newly developed programs (Korn 1994, 25).

**Action 2: Establish an organizational commitment to diversity.**

*Make efforts to recruit and hire a diverse staff, board, and volunteers.* Action 2 represents another early stage of the audience diversification process. This particular effort within Action 2 is not an easy one, but essential to the success of audience diversification. The basis for including it in the process is simple—people feel more comfortable around people who are similar to themselves. Unfortunately, as Donald Garfield writes, “when so-called ‘new’ audiences enter the doors of the museum, they rarely see members of their own group working as curators,

conservators, educators, and administrators” (Garfield 1989, 48). Therefore, when an organization gets to the point in the audience diversification process when it can bring in new groups, having staff, board, and volunteer representation from under-represented populations will help make the audience more comfortable and the transition smoother for the organization.

*Include the importance of diversifying audiences in institutional and educational mission statements and/or strategic plans.* The article “Creating a Culture of Diversity Management: Moving from Awareness to Action” claims that “the conviction to diversify must be translated into direct and visible support” (Stoner, Russell-Chapin 1997, 7). Including the importance of diversity in mission statements and/or strategic plans is perhaps the most “direct” and “visible” way of expressing the organization’s commitment to diversity. Having diversity as a goal, written down in the mission statement and/or strategic plan, makes the organization accountable for following through with that goal. When in doubt about certain decisions or strategies, a public garden or museum can look at its mission statement and/or strategic plans and remind itself of its true vision and goals.

*Conduct diversity training workshops with staff, board, and volunteers, choosing the most appropriate training for the goals of the institution.* In recent years, diversity training has become common in non-profit arenas. Conducting these workshops is important to any organization wishing to diversify its audience. It can stimulate and challenge traditional thinking about behaviors and attitudes in the workplace. However, while diversity training can be inspiring to an organization, there are pitfalls that can occur when the training is not done well (Overmyer Day 1995, 24-30). To avoid these problems, Day advises that the key to beneficial

diversity training lies in showing “the links between diversity and business goals. This provides a context for diversity initiatives. It helps everyone understand why diversity is important and how valuing differences relates to the overall business” (Overmyer Day 1995, 26). If successful diversity training is accomplished, along with the other two efforts within Action 2, a public garden/museum will have built a solid foundation in establishing an organizational commitment to diversity.

**Action 3: Build mutually beneficial relationships between the public garden/museum and community groups of under-represented audiences.**

*Build relationships by meeting with identified under-represented audiences to discuss expectations, agenda, goals, and benefits for any collaborative educational programs and projects.* Action 3 revolves around the idea that audience diversification cannot occur without community involvement. This first effort within Action 3 is key to making any kind of institution-community relationship work. Many organizations do not spend enough time in this relationship-building stage, but rather move too quickly into projects with under-represented audiences. To make the relationship beneficial, both partners (the organization and the community members) must “share ownership” by meeting and communicating personal goals, agenda, vision, and expectations (Root 1997, 18). Once these issues are openly discussed and accepted and shared goals have been created, both partners can move forward together with plans for collaboration.

*Work on initial projects with community groups in their own environments.* Brown and Mazza, of NCBI, write that “we don’t build a relationship with a program or an idea. We build a relationship with a person who is committed to a particular program or idea” (Brown and Mazza 1997, 51). In building a relationship

with community members through projects, no matter how committed both partners might be to the program or idea, the initial project work should be done in the community members' own environment. By working on a project with the community in their own environment, the community members become more comfortable with the relationship, and the organization proves its good faith and commitment to the partnership itself.

*Include community leaders of under-represented populations in brainstorming new education programs to be held at the institution.* Once confidence has grown in both partners as a result of previous efforts in Action 3, members of the collaboration can begin brainstorming project ideas for programs at the institution. Again, it is necessary to involve community members from under-represented groups when working towards a more diverse audience—while they may not be horticulturists or know which objects to exhibit where, they certainly can offer fresh perspectives on what programs their communities need, want, or like. AAM agrees, encouraging museums to “involve representatives of various communities and diverse cultural groups in the research and documentation process...in order to broaden the range of perspectives and deepen the understanding of museums' holdings” (AAM 1992, 19). If under-represented groups are included in the planning process, they will be much more likely to attend any newly implemented programs.

**Action 4: Design, develop, and implement education programs with community involvement.**

*Use suggestions from community brainstorming to design, develop, and implement programs at the institution.* Once the brainstorming stage is completed, the next stage is to use ideas from the community and design, develop, and implement

programs that will help attract under-represented audiences. Incorporating suggestions from the community will help to ensure the representation from those community groups at the programs. However, the goal of Action 4 is not only to begin new programs at the institution, but to do so with continued community involvement, carrying on the relationship established in Action 3.

*Include members of under-represented audiences as resources throughout the design, development, and implementation process.* Some organizations may believe community involvement in the developmental stages will inhibit progress or diminish the quality of the project, as a result of input from “unqualified” advisory groups. Amina Dickerson, author of “Redressing the Balance” disagrees. She claims, “Certainly the community must be involved in the process of programme development. Communities need continuous interaction with your institution...train and hire representatives to assure the perspectives of others” (Dickerson 1991, 23). While including members of under-represented audiences in program design and development may seem at first like cumbersome work, the fresh perspectives will reap positive rewards for both the education programs and the institution itself.

**Action 5: Integrate regular evaluation into the programming process.**

*Conduct group meetings with participants and members of the under-represented groups to acquire feedback on the effectiveness or “success” of any new programs.* Constant evaluation automatically increases an institution’s chance of developing effective programs. Randi Korn writes, “Evaluation, if it is slowly integrated into the operations of a department, or even the museum, will serve the staff members well” (Korn 1994, 26). And again, this evaluation cannot be made by staff alone. In her article, Dickerson reminds readers that “the dialogue [between the

institution and community] does not end once the exhibition has opened and the programmes begin. To the contrary, the work has then only just begun” (Dickerson 1991, 23). Participants and community members of under-represented audiences may have the most valid perspectives and useful suggestions for improving programs. After all, they probably know better than the garden/museum what will prove most beneficial for their communities. Therefore it is vital to include them in the evaluation process.

*Incorporate feedback from participants, and especially from under-represented groups, in the refinement of programs.* Once evaluations have been conducted/collected, it may seem obvious to use feedback to refine the programs—but this does not always happen. In many cases, goals for the feedback are never clearly defined, and the evaluations are never used. Recently, public gardens and museums have become more comfortable with the idea of changing and refining programs by using information gathered in evaluations (Korn 1994, 23). The bottom line becomes: conduct evaluations only if the valuable feedback will be used to refine programs.

*Maintain the community members of under-represented groups as resources in all stages of program evaluation.* The key word in this particular effort is “maintain”. If all aspects of the programs are going smoothly, it is easy to become complacent and not foster critical evaluation of the projects. Yet continuing to include the community members as resources in regular evaluation will ensure their interest in the public garden/museum. Their interest is then passed on to the audiences they represent, encouraging continued participation in educational programs. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the efforts made in Actions 3, 4, and 5 are continual, and meant to be incorporated into the daily routines of education departments and organizations.

If a constant, steady cycle of integration can be made by involving the community and giving it a sense of shared ownership, then the diversification of an audience will happen with a little extra flexibility, patience, and time.

## Chapter 3

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### Procedures and Case Study Site Selection

A literature review was completed in the early stages of this research to establish an understanding of current audience diversification theories. The literature review revealed there has been little research conducted on audience diversification as a process, although articles can be found on audience assessment, diversity of staff, board and volunteers, and other components such as community involvement and evaluation. As a result of these findings, an audience diversification process model was created; this model was outlined in Chapter 2.

Once the model was developed, case studies were chosen as the most appropriate way to collect data about an audience diversification process. This decision was based, in part, on the small number of organizations involved in audience diversification efforts, rendering quantitative analysis insignificant due to insufficient sample size. With a limited number of institutions available, pursuing case study research and in-depth interviews at those institutions was the most efficient way of collecting pertinent information regarding audience diversification processes.

Criteria were established to identify which public gardens and museums would qualify as case study sites. A garden/museum was selected as a *potential* site if it met the following criteria:

- is willing to participate in the study; and
- has completed and/or initiated at least one audience diversification effort for each of the five Actions discussed in the audience diversification model.

Before beginning survey or interview questions, a letter was sent to the Associate Provost for Research at the University of Delaware, outlining the research and proposed procedures. The Human Subjects Review Committee approved the thesis research without any changes (see Appendix C). With this approval, a written survey—based on the audience diversification model—was created and mailed to 425 institutional members of the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta (AABGA) (see Appendix A for survey). A list of ten museums was also compiled after contacting experienced museum professionals for suggestions. These institutions also received surveys and were analyzed according to the initial criteria.

Of the 138 institutions that responded to the survey, ten public gardens and museums met the initial criteria. In order to identify a representative sample of institutions, a secondary set of criteria was developed based on desirable characteristics of the organizations. Institutions were chosen as case studies if there was diversity among the sample with respect to:

- organizational size;
- region of the country;
- proximity to a large city;
- target audience(s); and
- length of time audience diversification efforts had been in place.

Once the secondary criteria were established, a set of brief interview questions was developed and the ten possible case study institutions were further examined through telephone interviews with education department heads or directors (see Appendix A for telephone interview questions). Data collected from interviews allowed identification of institutions that best met the secondary set of criteria for in-depth case study: Fairchild Tropical Garden in Miami, Florida; Please Touch Museum in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens, in Akron, Ohio.

An interview guide was developed for in-person interviews to be conducted at each selected institution (see Appendix B for interview questions). Data collected from the three site visits were compiled and analyzed according to the audience diversification model. The results, illustrating current efforts being made towards audience diversification at each case study institution, are outlined and discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. Analysis of these results was used to form conclusions about the audience diversification model created for this study. Critical challenges and conclusions surrounding the process of audience diversification were brought to the forefront and are discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

## Chapter 4

### DESCRIPTIONS AND DISCUSSION OF CASE STUDY INSTITUTIONS

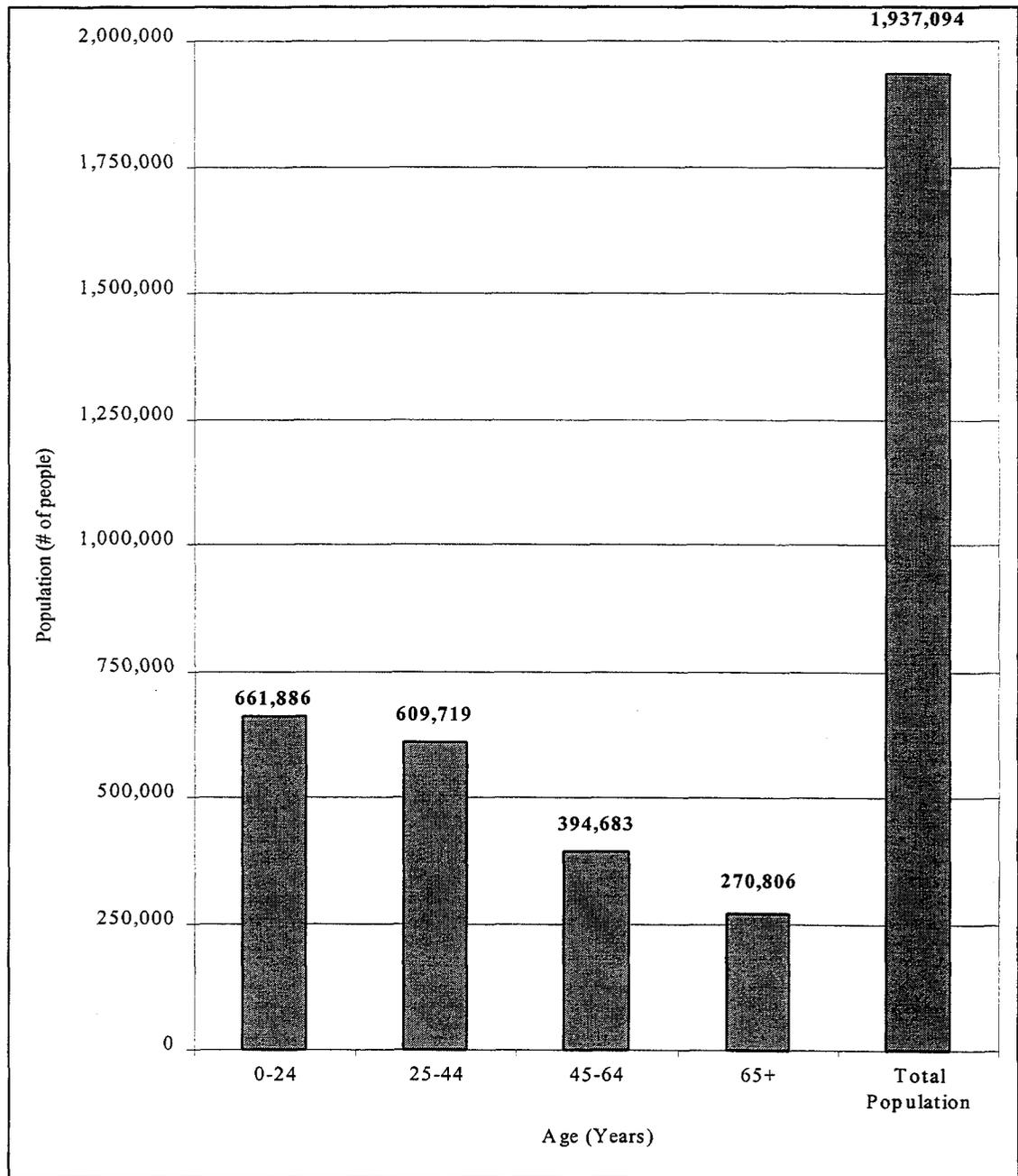
#### Local and Regional Demographics

In order to better understand the organizations' decisions about which audiences to target, it is first necessary to investigate all potential audiences for each institution. For this reason, the following section provides demographic information from the cities and counties in which the organizations are located. Age and race demographics are from county data; educational attainment demographics are from city data, due to lack of availability of county statistics. For consistency, the terms and categories in the figures are worded according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, although this researcher recognizes the inaccuracy of including "Hispanic" as a race, and the political incorrectness of using terms such as "White" rather than Caucasian, or "Black" rather than African American.

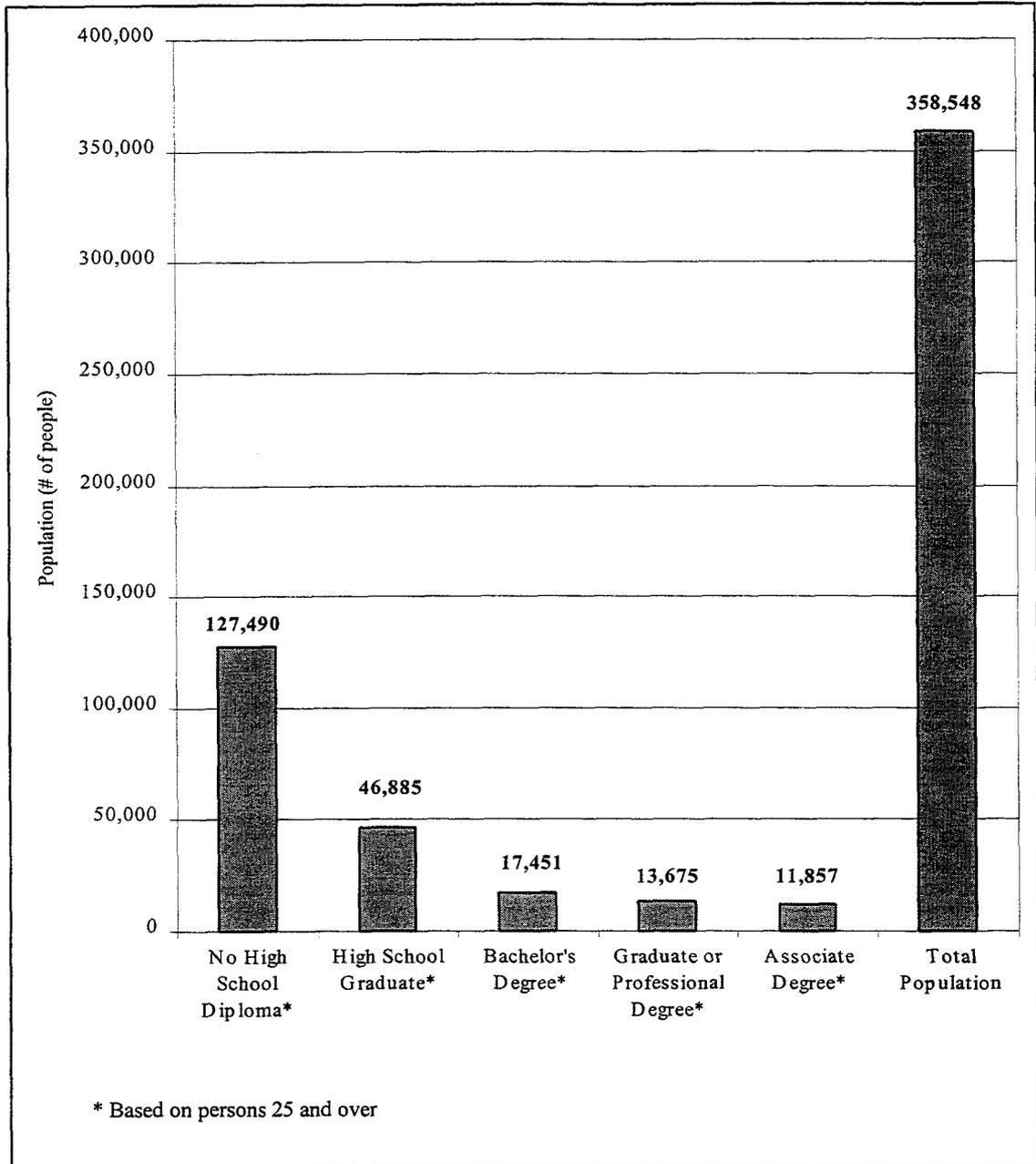
#### *Fairchild Tropical Garden*

Fairchild Tropical Garden (FTG) is a tropical botanical garden in the continental United States. Founded in 1938, FTG is located in Miami, of Dade County, Florida. According to the 1990 United States Census, Dade County has a total population of 1,937,094 citizens; 928,411 are male and 1,008,683 female. The median household income in the city of Miami is \$16,925. Because this research discusses local demographics and potential audiences, age, educational attainment, and

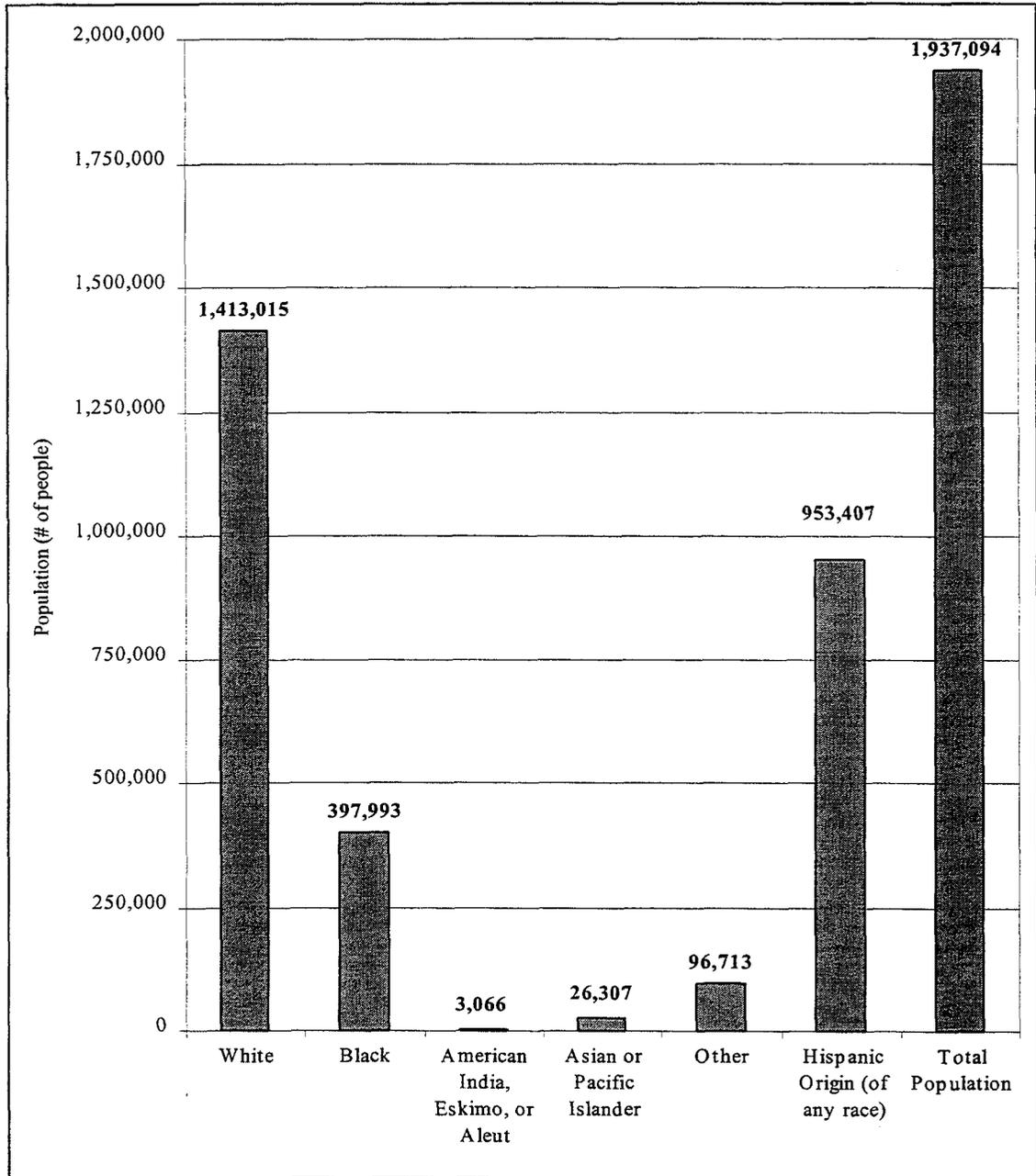
race of Dade County's and Miami's citizens are recorded in Figure 4.1, Figure 4.2, Figure 4.3, respectively.



**Figure 4.1** Population, by Age, of Dade County, Florida, from the U.S. Bureau of the Census



**Figure 4.2 Educational Attainment for the Population of Miami, Florida, from the U.S. Bureau of the Census**

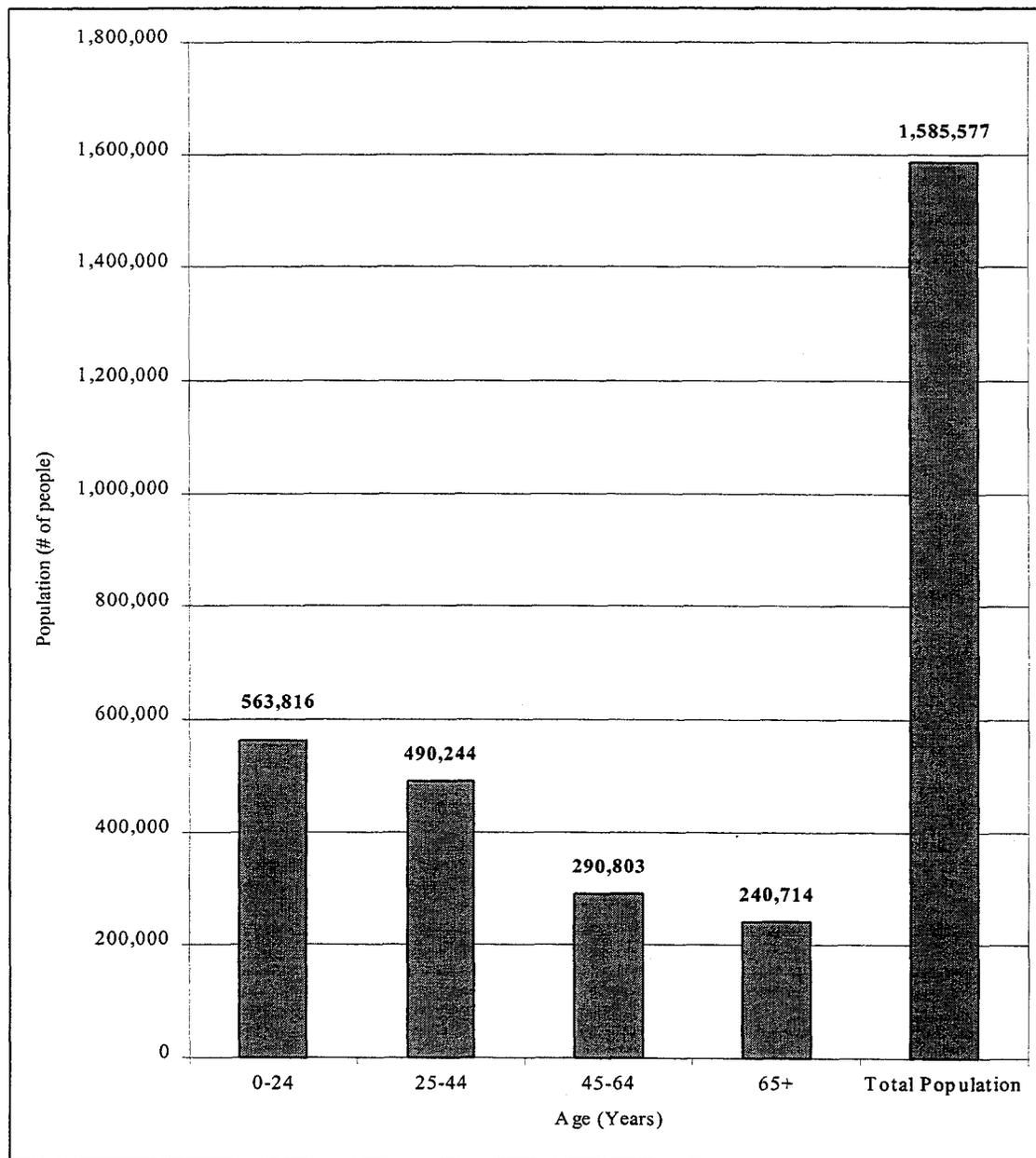


**Figure 4.3** Population, by Race, of Dade County, Florida, from the U.S. Bureau of the Census

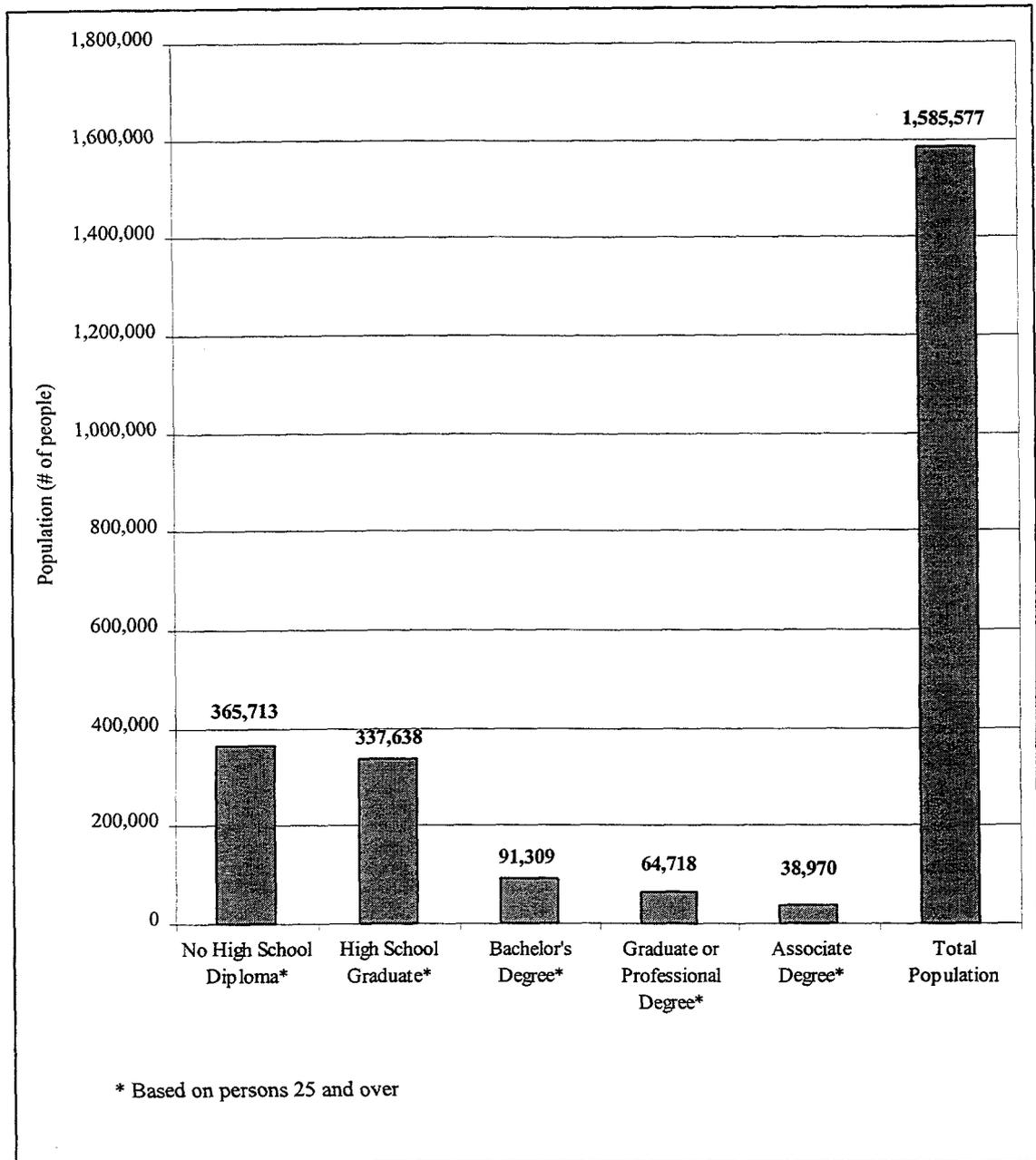
As can be seen from Figure 4.1., over 65% of Dade County's population is 0-44 years old. Figure 4.2 illustrates that over a third of Miami's population lack a high school degree, thus the educational attainment level of the citizens is relatively low. Figure 4.3 shows that Dade County provides FTG with racially diverse populations, with 49.2% of the total population being people of Hispanic origin.

#### *Please Touch Museum*

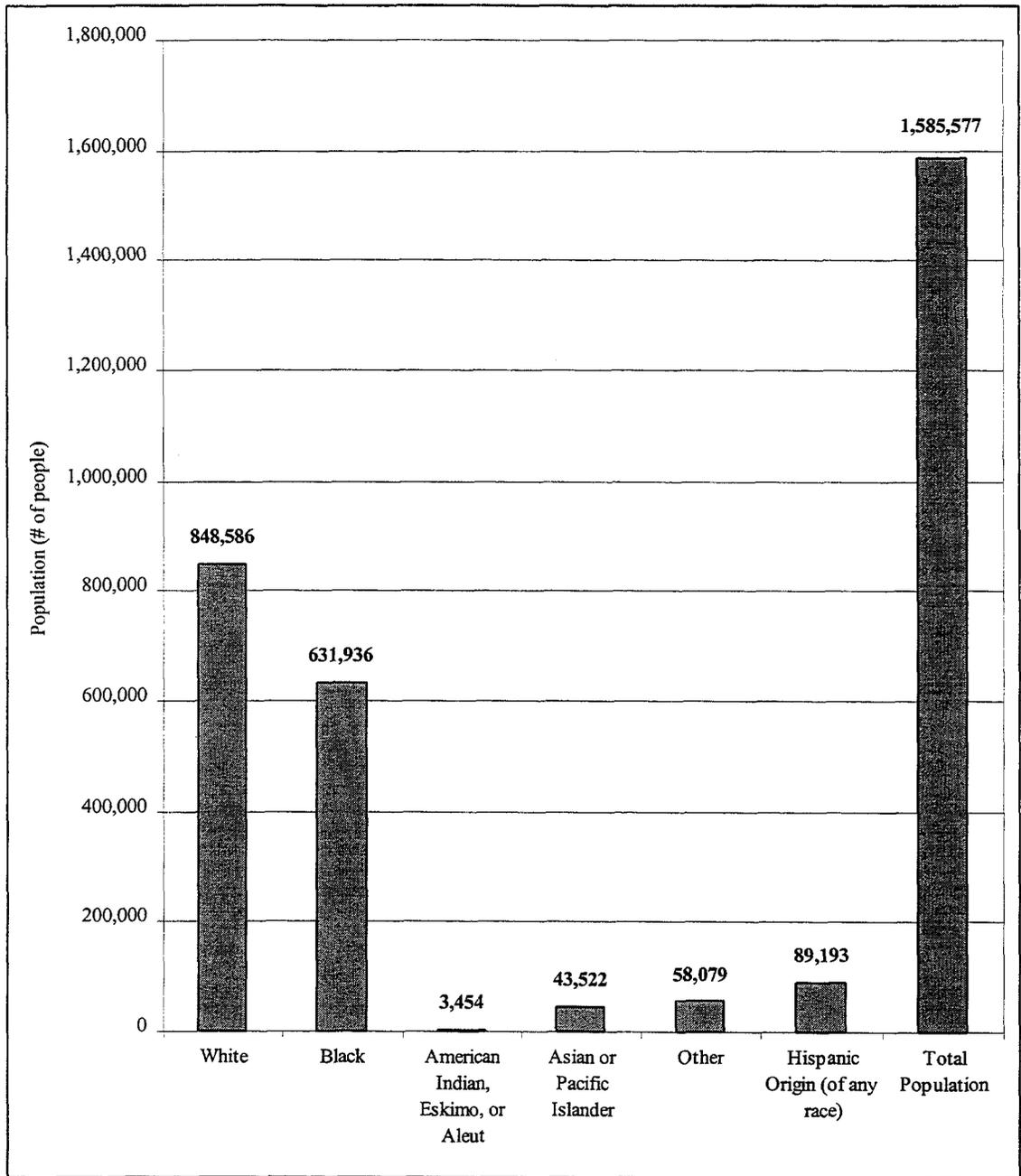
Please Touch Museum (PTM), founded in 1976, is a hands-on museum for young children, designed for adults and children to learn together. Located in Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, PTM is in the heart of Philadelphia's Parkway museum district. PTM's most obvious difference from the other two institutions is its role as a children's museum. Its similarity to FTG is its urban location. According to the 1990 United States Census, Philadelphia county's total population is 1,585,577, of which 737,763 are male and 847,814 are female. The median household income for the city of Philadelphia is \$24,603. Demographic statistics on age, educational attainment, and race of Philadelphia County's and Philadelphia's population are given in Figure 4.4, Figure 4.5, and Figure 4.6, respectively. It should be noted that the total population statistics are the same for Philadelphia County and the city of Philadelphia, as Philadelphia makes up that particular county.



**Figure 4.4** Population, by Age, of Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, from the U.S. Bureau of the Census



**Figure 4.5 Educational Attainment for the Population of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from the U.S. Bureau of the Census**

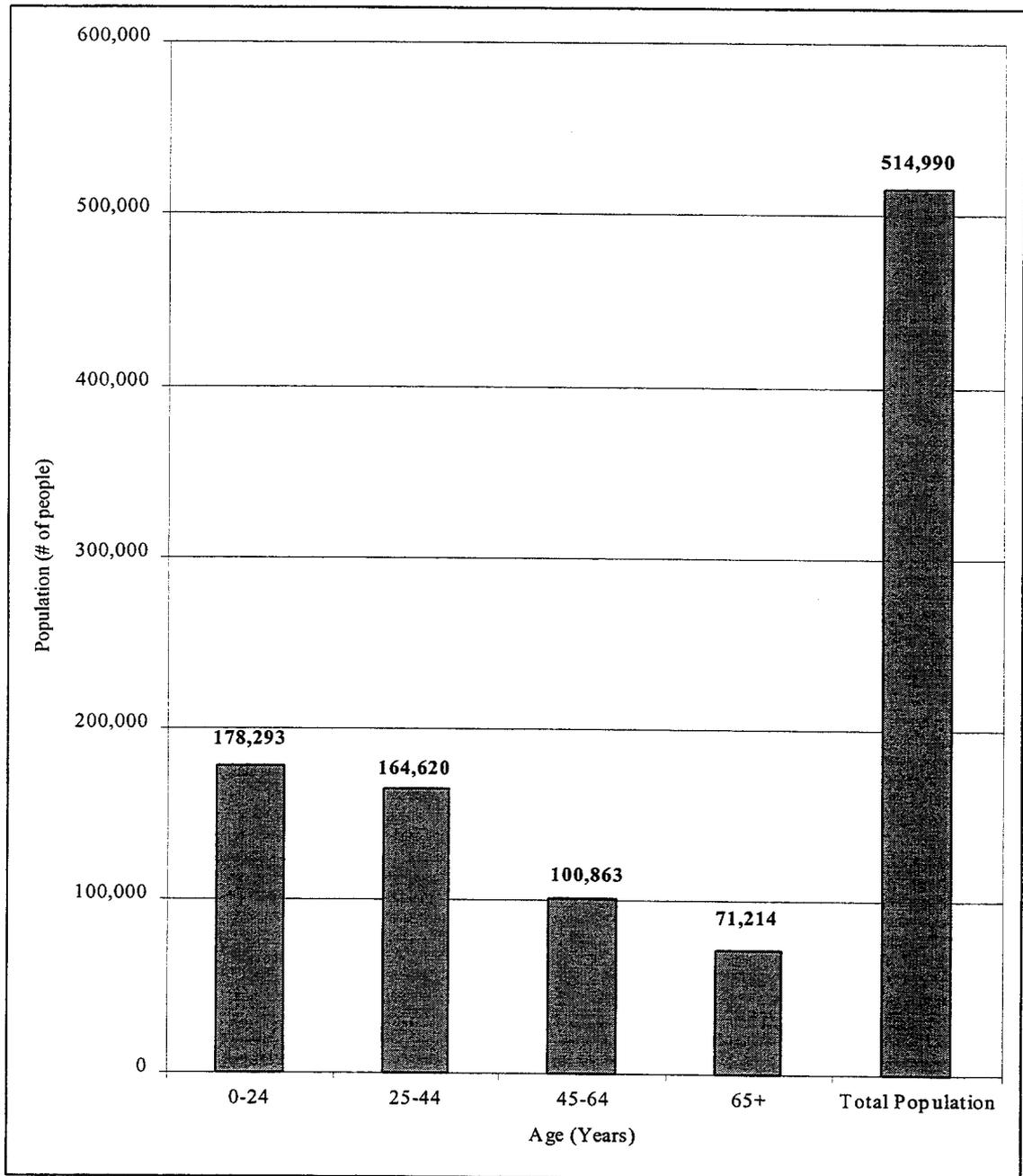


**Figure 4.6 Population, by Race, of Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania, from the U.S. Bureau of the Census**

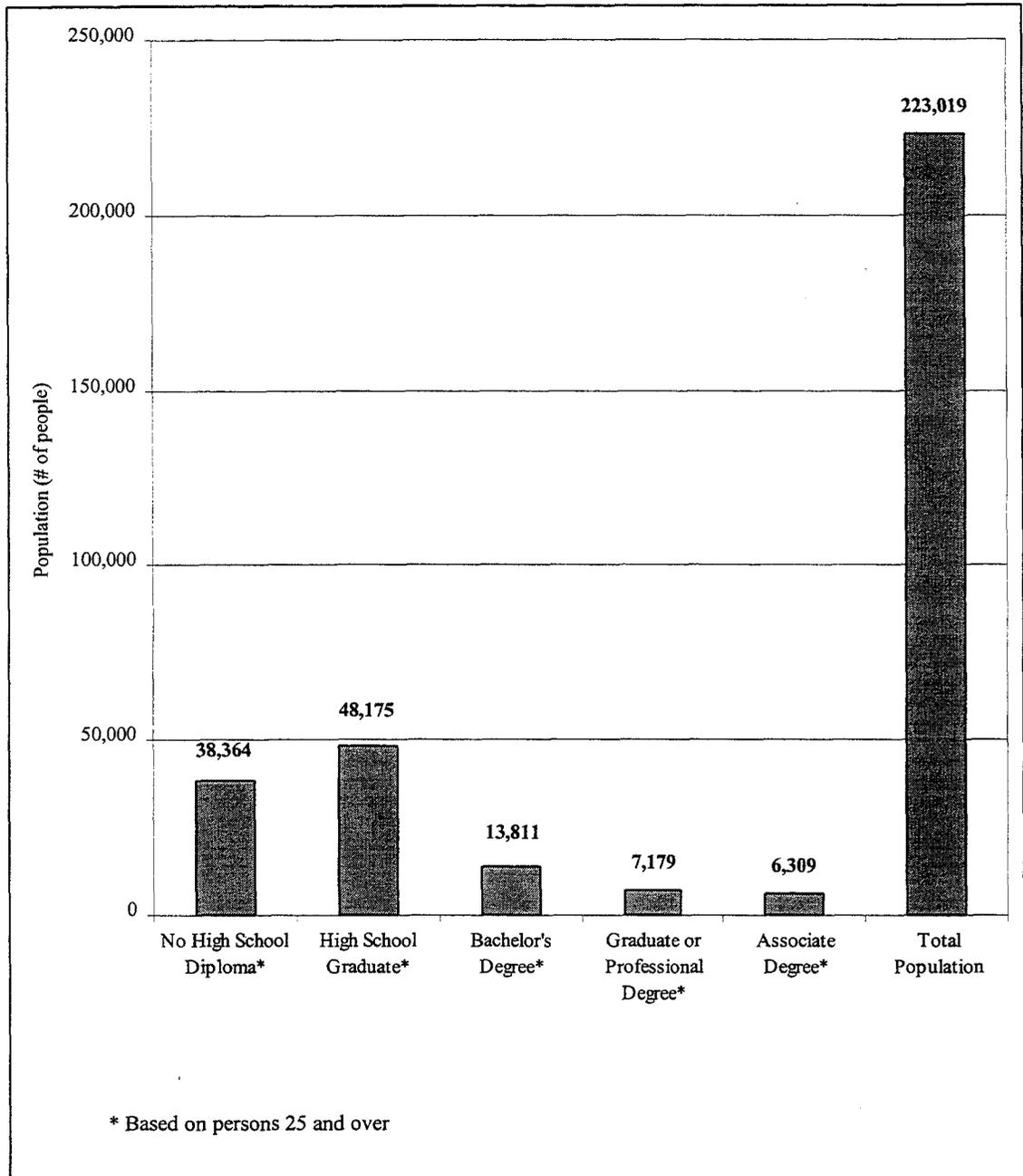
The age demographics for Philadelphia County's citizens, illustrated in Figure 4.4, are similar to the numbers for FTG, with 67% of the population being in the 0-44 year range. Figure 4.5 shows that the number of people without high school degrees is the greatest, as it was with the population of Miami. And like FTG, PTM is located in a racially diverse area, with Blacks making up 39.9% of the total population—this is illustrated in Figure 4.6.

#### *Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens*

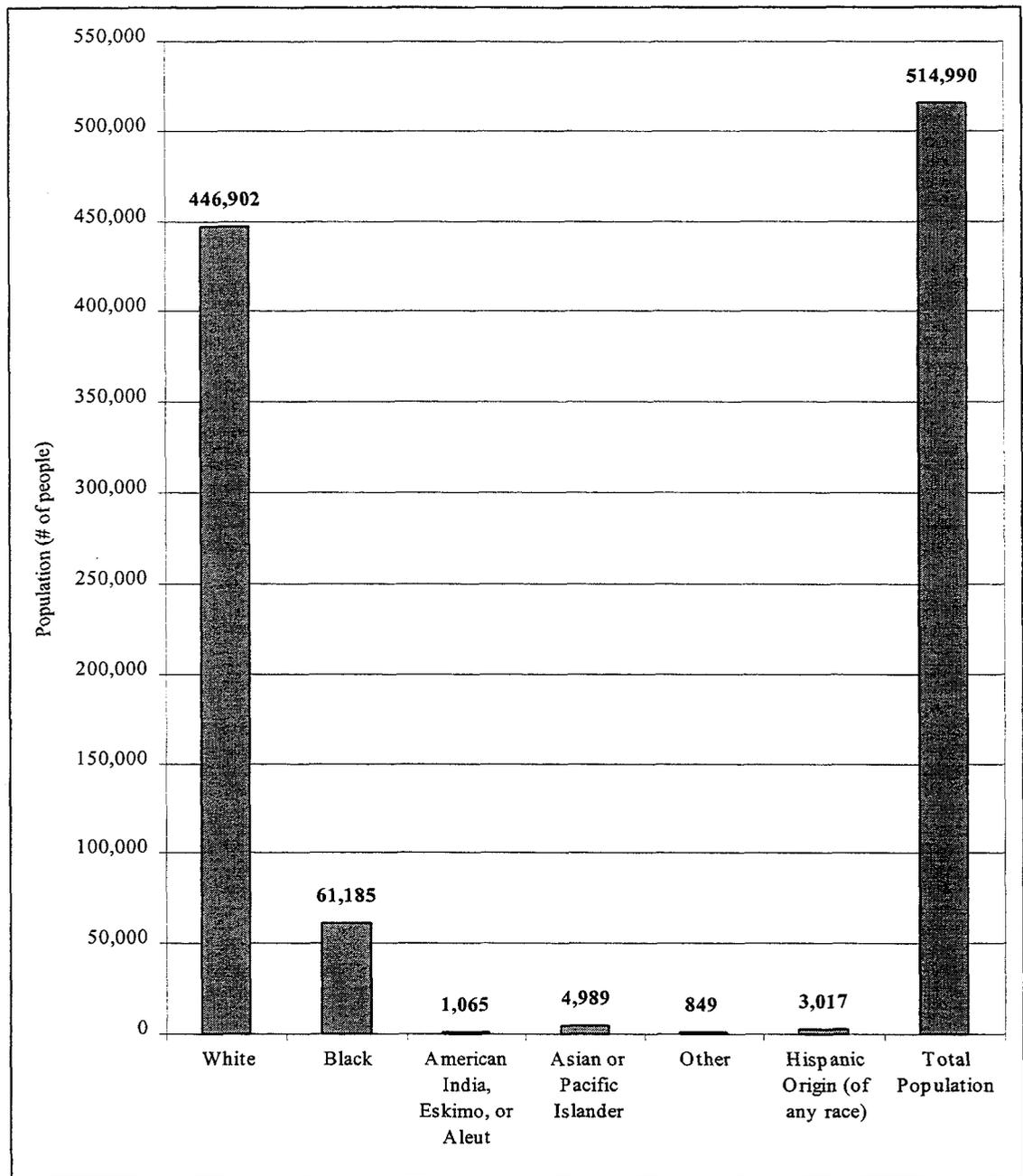
Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens (SHHG), organized as a museum and gardens in 1957, is located in a suburban section of Akron, in Summit County, Ohio. SHHG is unique from the other sites as it is a historic house with both a museum and public garden. The total population in Summit County, at 514,990 citizens, is less than half of the total population for each of the other two counties. The ratio of men to women is similar to the other case studies' counties, being 246,590 men to 268,400 women. The median household income in Akron is \$22,279. Demographics on age, educational attainment, and race of citizens in Summit County and Akron are found in Figure 4.7, Figure 4.8, and Figure 4.9, respectively.



**Figure 4.7** Population, by Age, of Summit County, Ohio, from the U.S. Bureau of the Census



**Figure 4.8 Educational Attainment for the Population of Akron, Ohio, from the U.S. Bureau of the Census**



**Figure 4.9 Population, by Race, of Summit County, Ohio, from the U.S. Bureau of the Census**

Figure 4.7 illustrates that the 0-44 year age group—the source of future visitors, volunteers, and program participants—is the largest at 67% of the population, similar to the FTG and PTM communities. As shown in Figure 4.8, the number of high school graduates in Akron exceeds that of citizens not having high school diplomas—this differs from both Miami and Philadelphia. Perhaps most significantly for SHHG, Summit County does not reflect the racially diverse populations of the other two case study communities. Figure 4.9 illustrates that Blacks make up the second largest race, but only represent 11.9% of the total county population.

### Organizational Size

The organizational size can play a significant role in audience diversification efforts. It can affect not only the programming, but how quickly the process can occur. Table 4.1 illustrates factors involved in the size of an organization—total staff, size of physical site, annual visitation, educational program participants—and compares the data among the three case study institutions. The data were collected from institutional brochures, reports, interviews with staff, and are based on statistics for 1997-1998.

**Table 4.1 Organizational Size Data for Case Study Institutions for FY 1997-1998**

	Total Staff (full time and part time)	Size of Physical Site	Annual Visitation	Educational Program Participants
FTG	60	83 acres	112,000	11,764
PTM	45	0.87acres	180,000	70,000
SHHG	85	70 acres	100,000	65,000

The total number of staff illustrates that SHHG has the largest staff, although all three could be considered medium-range in staffing capabilities for public gardens or museums. FTG has the most acreage of all three, while PTM has the least (being located indoors). However, PTM's limited site space has not inhibited the number of visitors, because it brings in the highest number of visitors per year. PTM also has the greatest number of educational program participants.

In reviewing the data on factors influencing organizational size, no institution can be seen as having a greater advantage over, or be considered larger than, the others. As the data illustrates, each organization benefits from one factor even if it is lacking in another. The diversity within these statistics relates to the secondary criteria for choosing these institutions, and the desire to have case study sites with varied backgrounds and organizational statistics.

### **Organizational Mission Statements**

Each case study institution has an organizational mission statement guiding the development and implementation of planning, programs, and displays. In reviewing the mission statements for each site, the goals and priorities of the three institutions are very different—despite the common commitment to audience diversification. Each mission reflects the character of its organization, along with the unique attitude with which each site approaches the process of audience diversification. Listed below are the mission statements for FTG, PTM, and SHHG, along with a brief explanation of each.

### *Fairchild Tropical Garden*

Fairchild Tropical Garden aspires to become the premier tropical botanical garden in the world, setting the highest possible standards in landscape design, exhibitions, living collections and horticultural practices; serving as a primary source of information on tropical plants through research and education programs; and inspiring positive attitudes and behavior towards the urban and natural environment. Essentially, the Garden exists to promote the conservation, use, study, understanding and enjoyment of tropical plants.

Diversification of audiences is not mentioned specifically as a goal. Indeed, audiences or visitors are not mentioned at all—they are only implied. This is deliberate on the part of FTG, whose staff believes its usefulness to visitors is its concentration on conservation and the ability to teach people about their environment, both of which are mentioned in the mission. FTG staff believe that conservation and concern for the environment are such universal issues that its programs serve an inclusive rather than exclusive purpose. In this way, the Garden is able to focus on content and learning, rather than becoming bogged down in demographics. Instead, it does have an active plan of work which states:

The mission of Fairchild Tropical Garden is to promote the conservation, use, study, understanding and enjoyment of tropical plants. Fairchild programs make the collections meaningful to all audiences. An objective of Fairchild volunteer programs is to improve the diversity of the volunteer corps to better represent all segments of the community.

### *Please Touch Museum*

As a first museum experience, we will provide engaging and enriching programs for young children by:

- Making play the basis of learning in the arts, sciences and humanities for children ages one to seven, their families, caregivers and teachers;
- Providing programs both inside and outside of the museum that serve children and families from a diverse cultural and socio-economic spectrum;
- Collaborating with other organizations on the design and delivery of services, programs, exhibits and products oriented to young children;
- Attracting, developing and motivating diverse staff and board of exceptional commitment, experience and expertise;
- Conducting our planning and operation so as to achieve a balance between innovation and stability;
- Collecting, cataloging and exhibiting appropriate artifacts primarily from the post-1945 period.

The mission documents that PTM has invested much time in considering its priorities and usefulness to the community. In contrast to FTG's content-driven mission, PTM's is audience-oriented, with four of the six statements discussing visitors as a priority. Diversity of audience and diversity of staff are mentioned specifically, while the focus on all children indicates an inclusiveness towards audience. Because of its specificity, PTM's mission best reflects the type of mission statement necessary in accomplishing Action 2 of the audience diversification model.

### *Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens*

Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens is a private not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the unique artistic and historic character of the former estate of the Frank A. Seiberling family through quality management and fiscal responsibility, in order to provide appropriate learning opportunities and esthetic enjoyment for diverse audiences.

This mission statement differs from the others in its focus on the broadest goals of the institution. Including “diverse audiences” does mandate that audience diversification is a priority with SHHG, without delving too deeply into specific goals of the programs, collections, or exhibits. It should be noted that SHHG has immediate plans to rewrite its mission, but that “diverse audiences” will continue to be present as a primary goal of the institution.

### **Organizational Impetus for Initiating Audience Diversification Efforts**

The impetus for initiating audience diversification efforts is critical to understanding the organizations themselves. It helps to explain why they chose to diversify audiences, and how they view and manage their own audience diversification processes. Therefore, the institutions’ reasons for beginning audience diversification efforts are discussed in the following sections.

#### *Fairchild Tropical Garden*

Within the past five years, FTG has acquired a new director and education director. These changes sparked the initiative for diversifying its audience. Initially, with the presence of a new director, FTG began taking a good look at the diverse population in the surrounding community, hiring a new education director to help diversify the audience and members. FTG decided that the best way to connect the diverse community to plants was through conservation—this being an issue universal to all people. A 1995 evaluation went one step further, recommending a focus on the Caribbean because, demographically, Miami has much more in common with the cultural areas of the Caribbean than with the rest of Florida. With the commitment for initiating audience diversification efforts in place, FTG was fortunate to receive public

funds for community outreach and development, and this helped to produce a faster initiation of the process than there might have been otherwise.

### *Please Touch Museum*

The impetus for beginning audience diversification at PTM began in 1991 with the advent of a new director, and the realization that its audience was primarily Caucasian and middle-class, despite being located in the diversely populated city of Philadelphia. Almost immediately, PTM began its first outreach program, called Community Partners, which traveled to low income areas, setting up play groups for people in the community. With the success of this project, and the initiative to bring in more diverse staff, board, and volunteers, the audience diversification process at PTM was well underway.

### *Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens*

In 1995, the new director at SHHG did an across-the-board needs assessment and discovered it would need a large amount of financial support for improvements to the entire facility. Because these projects are less glamorous than constructing new buildings or gardens, the best chance for receiving support came from AAM accreditation. In order to become accredited, SHHG began the Museum Accreditation Process (MAP I, MAP II, and MAP III). Because diversification is a priority with AAM, it became a priority of SHHG. In addition to the desire for accreditation, the needs assessment revealed the audience, members, and volunteers at SHHG were made up mostly of retirees, and that SHHG needed to consider developing a younger audience to maintain operations in the future.

The location, size, mission, and impetus for diversification can greatly affect how audience diversification efforts are initiated and managed. Each organization's efforts and audience diversification process is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 5

### ANALYSIS OF AUDIENCE DIVERSIFICATION PROCESSES AT THE CASE STUDY INSTITUTIONS

The audience diversification process model and the efforts which make it effective were discussed in Chapter 2. The details of each process, however, are unique to an individual institution and operate according to its goals and needs. This chapter outlines what the case study institutions have included in their processes, and analyzes these processes according to the model for audience diversification. Critical challenges and issues, related to audience diversification efforts, will be discussed in Chapter 6.

#### **Action 1: Assess audiences and programs for diversity.**

**Table 5.1 Comparison of Case Study Institutions' Efforts within Action 1 of the Model**

	Demographic survey of current audience	Compare survey to local census	Evaluation of education programs
FTG	yes	yes	no
PTM	yes	yes	no
SHHG	yes	yes	yes

*Fairchild Tropical Garden*

Conduct a demographic survey of current audience. In 1995, FTG initiated a demographic assessment of its audience, and the results showed FTG's audience was not diverse—the majority of visitors were female, Caucasian, between the ages of 35-54 years old, with English as first language, a household income range of \$55,000-\$75,000, and a college-level degree.

Compare demographic survey of current audience with local census data to identify under-represented audiences. When these demographics were compared to local census data, it was apparent FTG was not serving all members of its community, with the primary under-represented audiences being African American, Hispanic, and Haitian. FTG decided to target all three of these communities.

Conduct an evaluation of educational programs and outreach activities to determine if programs are conducive to serving a diverse audience. FTG did not complete any evaluation of educational programs. When asked why it had not done so, the education director responded that their funding was limited, and that FTG could tell through observation it was not putting together programs conducive to attracting diverse audiences.

In completing two of the three efforts within Action 1, FTG is mostly representative of the model. Its failure to conduct an evaluation of programs because of insufficient funds is a common and understandable problem. However, having data to support informal observations is beneficial under any circumstances. In public gardens and museums especially, data from an original program evaluation will be valuable with strategic planning and in future requests for funding (Hood 1986, 28). If funds for an evaluation are not available, it is worthwhile investigating whether college students or interns could do an assessment for credit or for career experience.

*Please Touch Museum*

Conduct a demographic survey of current audience. PTM organized a demographic assessment of its audience with the arrival of the new director in 1991. While no records were available on the statistics of this survey, the staff members interviewed observed that the audience was generally Caucasian and middle-class.

Compare demographic survey of current audience with local census data to identify under-represented audiences. In looking at the local census information, PTM could see it was not serving a variety of potential audiences within the Philadelphia population, among them African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, teen parents, possible welfare-recipients living in the Philadelphia Housing Authority, and at-risk youth. PTM decided to target all these groups.

Conduct an evaluation of educational programs and outreach activities to determine if programs are conducive to serving a diverse audience. At the time the audience was assessed, PTM did not have educational programs, so it could not complete any kind of program evaluation.

PTM also completed two of the three efforts within Action 1. Its inability to conduct an evaluation of educational programs due to lack of programming is understandable. In addition, notice should be taken of PTM's broad spectrum of target audiences. Rather than simply looking to see what audiences it could bring to the Museum, PTM went one step further in attempting to target groups it could serve by fulfilling a need within the community.

*Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens*

Conduct a demographic survey of current audience. SHHG began doing regular demographic surveys of its audience in September 1995, and has continued them on a quarterly basis. The results of the surveys confirmed the observations of staff: SHHG's primary audience was female, Caucasian, between the ages of 45-65 years old, with a household income range of \$50,000-\$60,000, and with 51% having college degrees.

Compare demographic survey of current audience with local census data to identify under-represented audiences. When these statistics were compared to the local census, SHHG discovered it was not serving a substantial component of its community—primarily people between the ages of 25-45 years old and families with young children.

Conduct an evaluation of educational programs and outreach activities to determine if programs are conducive to serving a diverse audience. Although audience diversification efforts were initiated in 1995, an evaluation of educational programs was not conducted until 1997, with MAP III. The results of this evaluation indicated SHHG could be doing more children's programs in order to develop its young adult and family audience.

SHHG was representative of the model for Action 1 in completing all three efforts. However, in an ideal process, SHHG would have completed the evaluation of programs at the same time it assessed its audience. By completing all three within the same time frame, an institution will have laid a more solid foundation on which to build future audience diversification efforts.

**Action 2: Establish an organizational commitment to diversity.**

**Table 5.2 Comparison of Case Study Institutions' Efforts within Action 2 of the Model**

	Recruit and hire diverse staff, board, and volunteers	Include diversifying audiences in mission and/or strategic plans	Conduct diversity training workshops
FTG	yes	yes	yes
PTM	yes	yes	yes
SHHG	yes	yes	no

*Fairchild Tropical Garden*

Make efforts to recruit and hire diverse staff, board, and volunteers. FTG began various strategies in order to diversify members of its staff, board, and volunteers, such as having positions advertised in different language newspapers, testing all applicants/recruits in bilingual skills, and requiring new staff to speak both English and Spanish.

Include importance of diversifying audiences in institutional and educational mission statements and/or strategic plans. While FTG does not include anything about diversifying audiences in its mission statement, it does promote audience diversification as a goal in its active plan of work for the education department and institution (see page 37).

Conduct diversity training workshops with staff, board, and volunteers, choosing the most appropriate training for the goals of the institution. Diversity training workshops helped contribute to FTG's changing organizational philosophy.

The most recent session was held in 1998, and it is now a training requirement for new staff.

FTG completed all three efforts within Action 2, making it representative of the model. Because of these efforts, the number of Spanish-speaking members on the board and staff increased, and the education director noted an increased awareness, sensitivity, and positive attitude on the part of staff after diversity training. The successful completion of this Action made it much easier for FTG to begin building relationships within the community.

### *Please Touch Museum*

Make efforts to recruit and hire diverse staff, board, and volunteers. When new positions are available—in staff, board, or volunteers—PTM looks for an individual having the best skills for the opening, or for the program being developed. Because most of the projects work with diverse groups in the community, recruits usually are bilingual and have experience working with diverse groups of people.

Include importance of diversifying audiences in institutional and educational mission statements and/or strategic plans. PTM's mission was discussed on page 38 as being an excellent indicator of its organizational goals for working with diverse audiences. Staff claimed their core ideology is to enrich the lives of children, meaning *all* children, with equal access and opportunities for everyone.

Conduct diversity training workshops with staff, board, and volunteers, choosing the most appropriate training for the goals of the institution. PTM conducted diversity training workshops for staff in 1995, but staff indicated the session's content was more informational than empowering.

PTM also completed all three efforts within Action 2. However, while the diversity among staff and volunteers has increased, staff noted a difficulty in maintaining a diverse board, primarily due to the rotation and rigorous meeting schedule. PTM also mentioned the need for clearly stated goals before initiating diversity training—it recognized that its training would have been more valuable if goals had been discussed beforehand with the coordinator of the session. These observations, and the fact that it learned from these observations, illustrates PTM's understanding of what it takes to establish an organizational commitment to diversity.

*Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens*

Make efforts to recruit and hire diverse staff, board, and volunteers.

Having a diverse board is the main priority at SHHG, based on the understanding that the entire community should be well-represented there. When losing board members, SHHG campaigns for individuals who could fill any gaps in the community representation, whether that gap characterizes a certain age group, profession, race, or other qualities.

Include importance of diversifying audiences in institutional and educational mission statements and/or strategic plans. Because attracting diverse audiences is a priority with SHHG, it was included as a goal in the mission statement (see page 38).

Conduct diversity training workshops with staff, board, and volunteers, choosing the most appropriate training for the goals of the institution. Diversity training is not something SHHG plans to do with staff, board, or volunteers. Instead, the possibility of conducting customer service workshops was discussed, based on the

idea that visitors are customers, and customers are people, regardless of race, age, ethnicity, or other factors.

Although SHHG has implemented two of the three efforts within Action 2, it does not yet reflect the full organizational commitment necessary to successfully continue further audience diversification efforts. While it campaigns for board diversity, not much is done in the way of recruiting more diverse staff and volunteers. In addition, the director explained the lack of conducting diversity training in the following way: the volunteers, who comprise a large portion of SHHG’s work force, have been extremely resistant to change and would not be receptive to any training with diversity in its title. This issue is one many institutions are likely to face, and perhaps the best way to overcome volunteer resistance is to move slowly, and communicate openly with all groups involved.

**Action 3: Build mutually beneficial relationships between the public garden/museum and community groups of under-represented audiences.**

**Table 5.3 Comparison of Case Study Institutions’ Efforts within Action 3 of the Model**

	Meet and discuss goals with under-represented audiences	Work on initial projects with groups in their own environments	Include community leaders in brainstorming programs
FTG	yes	yes	yes
PTM	yes	yes	yes
SHHG	no	yes	yes

*Fairchild Tropical Garden*

Build relationships by meeting with identified under-represented audiences to discuss expectations, agenda, goals, and benefits for collaborative educational programs. In 1997, FTG assembled a community-based advisory committee. In general, the community members reported that if FTG wished to diversify its audience, it would have to begin initiating projects within the community, and make itself more known to the under-represented audiences.

Work on initial projects with community groups in their own environments. Because many of the community advisory members had connections with specific community groups or neighborhoods, project ideas within the community environment were discussed, and plans were formulated for initial contact.

Include community leaders of under-represented populations in brainstorming new educational programs to be held at the institution. The majority of the meeting was spent brainstorming projects that could be developed both on *and* off-site, all with the intent of forming relationships with the under-represented communities.

FTG initiated all three efforts within Action 3, making it representative of the model. It should be noted that the formal advisory committee agreed to meet for the second time after eighteen months, in order to give FTG time to work on new projects within the community. Because of this long stretch of time between meetings, FTG relied upon the community groups with which they worked as their primary resources. In an ideal model, however, it might be best to have the advisory committee participate in new programs in some manner, however slight, just so they can be fully informed when it comes time to meet again. This shift of community

resources may or may not prove to be problematic in the future—fortunately, FTG has incorporated a certain amount of flexibility into its process for any possible changes.

*Please Touch Museum*

Build relationships by meeting with identified under-represented audiences to discuss expectations, agenda, goals, and benefits for collaborative educational programs. In most cases, PTM develops relationships by working with the community on all stages of the projects—from the beginning to the end. Contact between PTM and the community is made and a collaboration is formed if the goals, agenda, and expectations are well-suited to one another.

Work on initial projects with community groups in their own environments. Most of PTM's projects operate within the community environment.

Include community leaders of under-represented populations in brainstorming new educational programs to be held at the institution. While most of PTM's projects are located off-site, PTM makes sure every program has some element which encourages the community participants to attend PTM, whether through free memberships or an activity built into the program itself.

PTM has completed and continued all three efforts within Action 3. Because it has been working on audience diversification for almost ten years, PTM has the advantage over the other two case study institutions of having had the time to fully develop community relationships. The efforts within Action 3 have become cyclical, with new relationships and programs being formed on a regular basis. In addition, the fact that all of PTM's outreach programs incorporate visits to the Museum as part of the program helps under-represented audiences to become more familiar with and comfortable at the Museum, encouraging a sense of ownership and empowerment.

*Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens*

Build relationships by meeting with identified under-represented audiences to discuss expectations, agenda, goals, and benefits for collaborative educational programs. SHHG differs from the other two institutions in that the community relations formed at SHHG occurred secondarily in 1997, as a result of MAP III. Building relationships through meetings and collaborative educational programs is not a priority.

Work on initial projects with community groups in their own environments. Technically, SHHG has worked on projects with potentially under-represented community members, through staff lectures at schools and community group meetings, such as Rotary, Jaycees, Kiwanis, and other service-type groups. However, forming collaborative relationships with young adults and/or their families is not the objective of these experiences.

Include community leaders of under-represented populations in brainstorming new educational programs to be held at the institution. As part of the MAP III in 1997-98, SHHG conducted a series of focus groups with community members to discuss SHHG's role in the community, and to brainstorm educational program ideas.

SHHG has initiated two of the three efforts within Action 3, but it is not as representative as it could be. This can be explained, in part, by SHHG's goal of becoming accredited by the AAM. Over the past three years, it has used MAP I, II, and III as its guide, and is following audience diversification efforts based on MAP evaluations and recommendations. Because SHHG's main priority at this time is to become accredited—with diversifying its audience as only part of this—it believes

forming relationships with the community is not essential unless recommended by MAP. While this point of view is understandable, it should be noted that any institution could benefit from exploring collaborative relationships with under-represented groups, enabling the public garden/museum to become a more useful and integral component within its community.

**Action 4: Design, develop, and implement educational programs with community involvement.**

**Table 5.4 Comparison of Case Study Institutions' Efforts within Action 4 of the Model**

	Use suggestions from brainstorming to design, develop, and implement programs at the institution	Include under-represented audiences as resources in all programming stages
FTG	yes	yes
PTM	yes	yes
SHHG	in progress	no

*Fairchild Tropical Garden*

Use suggestions from community brainstorming to design, develop, and implement educational programs at the institution. The educational programs brainstormed at FTC's first advisory meeting (programs both inside and outside the Garden) were all implemented within a year and a half of that meeting. Community-based project ideas include tree-planting/gardens at schools representing low income populations, a horticultural therapy program at senior community centers, and a greening project in the common areas of a low income African American community.

Project ideas for programs to be held at FTG included having after-school group visits to FTG free of charge, job shadowing for students, and the expansion of FTG's big annual event—the Mango Festival.

Include members of under-represented audiences as resources throughout the design, development, and implementation process. Individuals from the communities with which FTG worked played active roles in the design and implementation stages.

FTG completed both of the efforts within Action 4. It was successful in implementing programs which had been brainstormed earlier with the community advisory team. The fact that both FTG and the team had come up with a realistic number of new programs helped in implementing those projects and enabling FTG to attain their goals. As mentioned earlier, it might benefit FTG to have members from the advisory team regularly participate/observe any new programs in addition to using the under-represented participants as resources.

#### *Please Touch Museum*

Use suggestions from community brainstorming to design, develop, and implement educational programs at the institution. PTM's community generated programs designed, developed, and implemented with help from under-represented community groups are: Teen Parenting Program, Homeless Families Intake Office/Resource Room, Child Care and Early Childhood Development Training System, Head Start Program, PTM Special Needs Program, Women Against Abuse Project, and Traveling Trunks. These programs service a number of under-represented populations, such as African Americans, Hispanics, Asians, teen parents, possible welfare-recipients living in the Philadelphia Housing Authority, and at-risk youth.

Include members of under-represented audiences as resources throughout the design, development, and implementation process. At PTM, each community-driven program always has its own advisory team.

PTM has completed and continued the two efforts within Action 4. Using community members as resources throughout the design, development, and implementation of programs is a concept that is integrated into the educational programming process at PTM. PTM feels so strongly about this that the staff noted there would not be PTM projects without suggestions from under-represented audiences. Although PTM has effectively maintained relationships with new groups of people, staff mentioned that community representatives can change frequently, making consistency within the projects a challenge. These types of problems illustrate why it is necessary to establish a commitment to the process of diversification—if there is no commitment, it may be tempting to just give up efforts whenever a stumbling block appears.

*Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens*

Use suggestions from community brainstorming to design, develop, and implement educational programs at the institution. SHHG has not had time to do more than work on the design of brainstormed project ideas because the focus groups were held only recently. Project ideas included a “nooks and crannies” tour of the house, rotating exhibits focusing more on Seiberling family history, and possible first-person interpretation of SHHG.

Include members of under-represented audiences as resources throughout the design, development, and implementation process. SHHG does not plan to use members of under-represented audiences as resources in the design, development, and

implementation of these projects. When asked why not, the director explained he believed it might cause friction if SHHG did not take the advice of under-represented groups when making important exhibit/interpretive decisions. The Superintendent of Akron schools is on its board, and SHHG believes this to be a less controversial way of becoming informed about what kinds of programs families want.

SHHG is in the process of initiating the first effort within Action 4. It should be noted that, prior to conducting the series of focus groups in 1997-98, SHHG designed and implemented programs and special events geared towards bringing in young adults and families (its target audiences). While these programs—Holiday Lights, Trick or Treat Trail, and others—were visibly successful in bringing in SHHG’s target audiences, they were not community-inspired ideas, and therefore cannot be considered part of Action 4.

In addition, SHHG’s belief that members of under-represented audiences should not participate in the design, development, and implementation of programs is a common misconception. In some cases, public gardens/museums believe these audiences are not qualified to make appropriate decisions regarding programming. However, if communication is open, and a solid relationship has already been formed through efforts discussed in Action 3, then public gardens/museums should not fear continuing the use of under-represented audiences as resources. Continuing the relationship will only strengthen it and make it more viable.

**Action 5: Integrate regular evaluation into the programming process.**

**Table 5.5 Comparison of Case Study Institutions' Efforts within Action 5 of the Model**

	Conduct meetings with participants and under-represented groups to analyze effectiveness of new programs	Use feedback from meetings to refine programs	Maintain the use of under-represented group members as resources in all programming
FTG	yes	yes	in progress
PTM	yes	yes	yes
SHHG	no	no	no

*Fairchild Tropical Garden*

Conduct group meeting with participants and members of the under-represented groups to acquire feedback on the effectiveness or “success” of any new programs. Many of FTG’s programs are custom-designed with specific audiences in mind, such as the African American community greening program, or the senior citizens horticultural therapy project. In these cases, there is constant communication between the community participants and FTG staff, making evaluation of the programs a continual process.

Incorporate feedback from participants, and especially from under-represented groups, in the refinement of programs. The constant communication and evaluation mentioned above is also used in the refinement of programs.

Maintain the community members of under-represented groups as resources in all stages of program evaluation. FTG plans on maintaining open

communication with the community members with which it works, thus encouraging constant evaluation throughout the duration of any programs. It also plans on maintaining the use of the formal community advisory committee as long as it continues to be useful and beneficial for FTG and its surrounding community groups.

FTG has completed two of the three efforts within Action 5, and is in the process of completing the final effort. Performing on-going evaluation and refinement with under-represented audiences as resources has worked well so far for FTG. They now need to wait for the advisory team's assessment of the new changes. It is again the recommendation of this researcher that FTG have less time between advisory team meetings and to have the team become more involved as resources in the programming itself. This would help eliminate any lag time or "waiting" on the part of FTG, which hinders its ability to progress with further audience diversification efforts.

*Please Touch Museum*

Conduct group meeting with participants and members of the under-represented groups to acquire feedback on the effectiveness or "success" of any new programs. The evaluation process at PTM has been regularly integrated into its everyday programming. The staff meet with project participants of under-represented populations to acquire feedback when needed.

Incorporate feedback from participants, and especially from under-represented groups, in the refinement of programs. All comments and suggestions contribute to the refinement of programs, and the staff motto is to revisit any ineffective programs that have potential benefits for an under-represented audience.

Maintain the community members of under-represented groups as resources in all stages of program evaluation. Because evaluation and revisiting

problem projects are natural, cyclical occurrences at PTM, maintaining under-represented audience members as collaborators is all part of the process—it makes the programming cycle complete.

PTM has effectively implemented all three efforts within Action 5, making it representative of the model. In fully integrating members of under-represented audiences as resources in all aspects of programming, PTM encourages a sense of ownership among those audiences, and this assures PTM that diverse community members will continue to serve both as resources and audiences.

#### *Stan Hywet Hall and Gardens*

Because the case study interview occurred before SHHG had the opportunity to implement newly brainstormed programs, evaluation of any kind has not taken place. Thus, SHHG has not completed any of the efforts within Action 5.

In the future, however, SHHG does plan to distribute evaluations for any new projects, as it already does with previously established programs. It also plans to use any comments and suggestions for program refinement. However, SHHG does not plan to involve non-participant community members to analyze the success of any new programs. The director believes such involvement at this point could be counter-productive, especially if under-represented audience offered suggestions and SHHG did not implement the ideas—thus running the risk of offending powerful people in the community.

This commonly-held misconception was previously addressed in analyzing SHHG's efforts within Action 4. It is understood that SHHG is still in the early stages of its audience diversification efforts, and that its top priority at this time is to become accredited by the AAM. However, SHHG may discover the value of

collaboration with community groups in future planning. If under-represented groups are to become a regular component of an institution's audience, relationships between the institution and that audience must be developed and integrated into program planning and evaluation.

This chapter has outlined which audience diversification efforts each case study institution implemented and reasons some efforts were not initiated. This comparison illustrates which sites are representative, leaders, or behind in terms of instituting the audience diversification process. All three case study institutions reported at least some level of success in diversifying their audiences, and all have observed increased attendance of targeted audiences.

PTM is most representative of the audience diversification model because the only effort not completed was the initial evaluation of programs—this is explained by PTM not having sufficient programs to analyze at the beginning of the process. FTG is almost as representative as PTM in that it has initiated most of the efforts within the model, with the exception again being the initial evaluation of programs. Time, however, has been a factor in the implementation of FTG's evaluation process—it has not yet had the years PTM has had to work on enhancing its process. SHHG's has taken a different path from the other two organizations because of its impetus for initiating audience diversification efforts. As a result of this, the primary reason SHHG is behind in the process is that it has not yet attained the commitment to diversification called for by the model.

In interviewing the case study institutions, this researcher uncovered valuable information in the form of critical challenges or issues that occurred at the case study sites during the implementation of audience diversification efforts.

Because the purpose of this research is to provide a practical guide for organizations wishing to diversify audiences, it is important to discuss the possible challenges and problems that may occur when implementing the audience diversification process. Chapter 6 will provide insight into these critical issues.

## **Chapter 6**

### **CRITICAL ISSUES WITHIN THE AUDIENCE DIVERSIFICATION PROCESS**

The audience diversification model discussed in this research is meant to be used as a practical guide for any organization wishing to diversify its audience. While the model is a guide, the efforts making up the Actions may not occur exactly as they are intended. Critical issues and challenges surrounding each Action and the process as a whole were brought forth for discussion during interviews with the case study institutions. Critical challenges are discussed below according to each Action, and then with the process as a whole.

#### **Critical Issues within Action 1**

The case study interviews revealed Action 1 has the potential to be most neglected of all the Actions. Formal assessment of audiences and programs seems intimidating to organizations, especially if little funding is available. A common informal evaluation often includes staff observation of changes that need to be made. In the long run, however, an institution may regret not having the statistics on audiences and programs. Once the audience diversification process has begun, it is beneficial for an organization to go back to its original statistics to determine whether progress has been made. If there was no assessment of audiences or programs, this comparison cannot be done. The director at SHHG—the only case study site to complete all efforts in Action 1—expressed his appreciation for systematic evaluation,

believing it has helped keep the organization on track. The assessment statistics may also prove useful in the future with funding opportunities, marketing projects, and the evaluation of new programs. These benefits must be recognized to ensure organizations do not pass over this important stage in the audience diversification process.

### **Critical Issues within Action 2**

Each case study institution commented on the necessity for its director to be committed to the efforts for audience diversification. In this research, all three sites had new directors who initiated the diversification efforts and it was essential they buy into the process and be key initiators, facilitating organizational change. A common challenge for the directors at the case study organizations was working towards staff or volunteers' acceptance of the organization's commitment to diversity. While leadership may desire to change attitudes and behaviors quickly, it takes time. Both FTG and SHHG commented their staff felt they were moving too fast. This needs to be considered—changing an organization's philosophy takes time if the transition is to be a permanent one. Holding diversity training workshops provides an excellent opportunity for facilitating changes in attitudes and behaviors, but it is not without its challenges. As PTM found, diversity training models should be investigated to ensure they will offer what is needed for the institution. Goals and expectations should be discussed up-front, and then carefully considered. If done right, diversity training can do wonders for stimulating organizational change.

### **Critical Issues within Action 3**

A common discussion point with Action 3 was the importance of remaining flexible when building relationships with under-represented audiences. According to FTG and PTM, there are many obstacles to forming viable relationships, from community members dropping out, to staff and community apathy, to too many personal agenda. Yet if the flexibility is there, along with commitment, then the programs and both parties will be better off from having the involvement of under-represented populations. PTM advises that working hard on the “buy-in” stage helps alleviate inconsistencies with the communities in future efforts. Mike Powers, in his article “The Hidden Strengths of Communities” agrees: “I like to think of community involvement as sort of dull and sort of hard. You have to talk people into it. But there are enormous rewards, most of which are psychological and social” (Powers 1995, 14). This is why discussing agenda and goals is so important in the beginning stages of relationship-building with under-represented audiences.

### **Critical Issues within Action 4**

A common misconception discussed in the interviews is the idea that community members cannot know as well as the institution how to develop new programs. However, in order to move successfully towards diversification, this belief must be changed. If an organization begins involving members of under-represented audiences in brainstorming ideas for new educational programs, it should be standard to continue their participation as resources in the development and implementation efforts. This trust and involvement shows members of under-represented groups they are needed and valued. In turn, the sense of ownership they gain from those feelings

makes them, and the diverse audiences they represent, want to continue to participate in programs—and the relationship comes full circle.

### **Critical Issues within Action 5**

While most public gardens and museums know evaluation should be an integral part of programming, many continue to disregard its value. It became apparent, through case study interviews, that evaluation can be incorporated into the programming process without too much extra effort or resources. All three sites indicated that getting participants to evaluate programs was never a problem, as people are eager to discuss their opinions when given the opportunity. FTG and PTM both found that meeting briefly with participants and community members gave them plenty of valuable suggestions for refining programs, and that this type of regular contact made it easy to maintain an evaluation process during all stages of programming. Again, ensuring that under-represented audiences feel appreciated validates their commitment to participate in programs, while also benefiting the organization by enhancing the diversity of its audience.

### **Critical Issues within the Audience Diversification Process as a Whole**

While, in this research, audience diversification is discussed solely from the perspective of educational programming, it should be noted that all three case study institutions claimed the education departments' work can be enhanced with the active involvement of human resource teams, marketing, and membership departments—to name just a few. With all departments working together towards a common goal, it would be difficult not to succeed. For instance, FTG remarked on the benefits of marketing more broadly, making sure specific under-represented groups

have transportation, and finding out if the program is open when a target audience could attend.

Having the entire organization actively participate in the audience diversification process also benefits the organization as a whole. Any time positive institutional changes are made it affects all aspects of the organization—for instance, if a new initiative occurs in collections, it can affect programming, which can affect staffing, which can affect how volunteers are used, and so on. The transitions and movement forward with audience diversification keeps ideas and attitudes within the organization fresh. PTM claims this is what it likes most about the process—that most new programs grow out of other programs and initiatives and that it never knows what will come out of a new idea in the future.

## **Chapter 7**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Summary**

In reviewing the audience diversification model presented in this thesis, along with data collected at the three case study institutions, this research study shows that none of the organizations followed the model completely. PTM was most representative of the model—the only effort not completed was the initial evaluation of programs. FTG was also representative, but to a lesser extent. This was due to the fact that efforts within Action 5 were still in progress. SHHG's impetus for initiating audience diversification efforts influenced how it managed its process and, as a result, SHHG has not attained the commitment called for by the model. Overall, Action 1—the initial assessment stage—was most lacking among the three institutions. Action 5—the regular evaluation of programming—also seems lacking at first glance, but this was explained by the fact that SHHG had not developed new programs to evaluate (and thus could not complete this Action). Along with these results, critical issues surrounding the Actions and efforts within the audience diversification process were discussed as an important component in the research.

#### **Conclusions**

While the audience diversification process model is a guide towards which to strive, it became apparent through the interviews that the model must be adapted to

each individual institution's goals, needs, and capabilities. Although the model was written in general terms to make adaptation easier, too many variables within an organization may eliminate the guarantee that the exact model will work for everyone.

Modifying the efforts within the model to suit an organization's needs may be necessary, but all efforts within the Actions are integral parts of the comprehensive audience diversification process. Each effort is in the model for a reason, and each one that is ignored or neglected runs the risk of limiting the full success of the process. For example, FTG and PTM did not evaluate their educational programs to see if the programs were conducive to serving diverse audiences—thus FTG and PTM did not complete all efforts within Action 1—and they now wish they had. Both felt having those statistics would have aided in measuring the success of their new programs and the process itself. The director of SHHG (the only institution to complete all efforts within Action 1) stressed the importance of this initial stage, stating “We are constantly analyzing and evaluating everything that we do. This enables us to make decisions. If we do end up being successful, it's because of this; if we're not successful, it's because we didn't do it enough.”

The final, unexpected conclusion of this research is that the benefits of this process are not limited to bringing in a more diverse audience. The case study institutions discovered that, in pursuing Actions within the process, positive changes were initiated throughout the organizations. Attitudes became more positive, meaningful programs were established regularly, membership increased, and new staff positions were created. Overall, the audience diversification efforts inspire fresh ideas and changes which help keep organizations vital in their own right, and vital to their communities, ensuring a stability and sense of purpose for the future.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study was limited to the discussion of ways in which audiences can be diversified through educational programming. In addition, because of time and financial constraints, only three case study institutions were selected and none of them were completely representative of the model. There is a need for other scholars to continue research on audience diversification efforts at public gardens and museums. Possible areas of further study are listed below.

- Compare the audience diversification model to an organization that has completed all Actions and efforts, and has initial and summative demographic information from the beginning and ending of the process; and
- Study financing necessary to implement all efforts within the audience diversification process, and assess available funding opportunities.

**Appendix A**

**INITIAL SURVEY FOR CASE STUDY SITE SELECTION**

## Audience Diversification at Public Gardens and Arboreta

**\*\*Return by April 6, 1998\*\***

*For the purposes of this study, "diversity" may be defined to include race, ethnicity, culture, sex, age, religion, sexual orientation and physical ability.*

Instructions: Please check any of the following activities your institution has engaged in within the past five years. If your answer is no, or not applicable, do not check anything.

My institution has:

- conducted a demographic survey of our current audience.
- compared our demographic survey with local census data to identify under-represented audiences (meaning any audience segment whose percentage is less than the percentage of this group in the local census).
- completed an evaluation of our education programs and outreach activities to determine the quality of programs as they relate to developing a diverse audience.
- included audience diversification as a goal in strategic plans and institutional and educational mission statements.
- made efforts to have our staff, board, and/or volunteers reflect the populations in the community.
- held diversity training workshops with staff, board, and/or volunteers to create an understanding among them that educational programs must reach all segments of the community.
- worked on projects with community groups in their own environments  
(beneficial projects for both community groups and your institution).
- held focus groups, involving community leaders, to brainstorm new education programs and to encourage the participation of under-represented groups.

- implemented suggestions from focus groups to develop new education programs.
- held follow-up focus groups with members of under-represented community groups to analyze the “success” of new education programs.
- conducted evaluation of participants’ reactions to each new program they attended.
- used suggestions from focus groups and evaluations to refine the programs.
- maintained* the use of focus groups and evaluation activities for each new set of education programs, and in all stages of program development.
- made efforts not covered in the above statements. Please explain briefly.

Please complete the following:

Name:
Institution:
Address:
Phone number and best time to reach you by phone:
Fax number:
E-mail:
<input type="checkbox"/> My institution is willing to participate in your research as a case study site.

*Thank you again for replying to this survey. Participants may obtain the results of my research upon request. I will look forward to hearing from you.*

## PHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CASE STUDY SITE SELECTION

The focus of my research is audience diversification through education programs and relationship building between your institution and

- **under-represented groups within your institution's audience, or**
  - **groups not represented at all within your institution's audience.**
1. Just to verify your responses from my original survey, audience diversification efforts at your institution are being made through education programs—yes or no?
  2. What type of institution is your institution? (examples: museum, botanic garden, arboretum, zoo, etc.)
  3. A). How many full-time staff, part-time staff, and volunteers work at your institution?  
B). What is the size of your membership base?
  4. Who, or what department, initiated the efforts for audience diversification?
  5. Is there one staff person spear-heading the efforts? If so, who?
  6. Have the majority of these efforts been made in the past 1-2 years, 2-5 years, 5-10 years, or 10-20 years?
  7. What group(s) make up your current audience? **NOTE:** This answer can be based on gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, culture, physical ability, etc.
  8. Based on the above answer, you probably have under-represented groups within your audience, or groups that are not represented at all. Which of these under-represented groups are you targeting through your **education** programs?
  9. Has your institution kept documentation on audience diversification efforts/progress for at least the past five years? (examples: audience surveys, education brochures, minutes from focus groups/brainstorming/discussion sessions, evaluations, other, etc.)
  10. If documentation has been kept, would it be available for me to use in my research if I would need to?

## Appendix B

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR CASE STUDY INSTITUTIONS

#### **Institutional Background**

What is the age of your organization?

What is the total number of staff working at your organization (full-time and part-time)?

How many people, per year, participate in your education programs?

What is your annual visitation?

What is your organization's mission?

What year did your organization begin audience diversification efforts?

What was the impetus for initiating audience diversification efforts?

Is there a staff person who takes the lead in audience diversification through education programming?

If yes, who?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Audience Diversification Efforts**

##### *Step 1: Assessment of Audience and Programs*

Did you complete a demographic survey of your audience within the last five years?

If yes, when?

What were the results of this survey, looking at the following factors (percentages):

- Gender (male, female)
- Age
- Income
- Race
- Education level achieved
- Other

Did you compare these figures to local census data?

Based on the comparison, were you able to identify under-represented groups (meaning any audience segment whose percentage is less than the percentages in the local census)?

If yes, what were they?

If no, why not?

Based on the under-represented groups listed above, did you decide to target any specific under-represented group(s)?

If yes, what group(s) did you decide to target?

If no, why not?

Did you complete an evaluation of education programs and outreach activities to determine if they were conducive to attracting a diverse audience?

If yes, when?

If no, why not?

What were the results of the evaluation of your educational programs?

*Step 2: Establish an organizational philosophy which values diversity*

What efforts have you made to diversify staff, board, and volunteers?

Do you have demographic information (percentages) on the above groups?

If yes, please fill out the following chart.

	Staff	Board	Volunteers
Gender			
Age			
Income			
Race			
Education			
Other			

Have you held diversity training workshops with your staff, board, and volunteers?

If yes, when?

If no, why not?

If you held diversity training workshops, did you measure the effect or impact on the staff, board, and volunteers?

If yes, how was it measured and what were the results?

Do your institutional and educational mission statements and strategic plans include diversifying audiences as a priority?

If yes, in what ways (please provide me with a copy of your mission statement and strategic plans).

If no, why not?

*Step 3: Build mutually beneficial relationships between the organization and the community groups within under-represented audiences*

Have you worked on projects/programs with under-represented groups in their own environments?

If yes, please describe the programs.

If no, why not?

Problems/challenges

How did your organization perceive these programs to be beneficial for the under-represented groups?

How were these programs beneficial for your organization?

Have you worked on projects/programs with under-represented groups at your institution?

If yes, please describe the programs.

If no, why not?

Problems/challenges

Have you involved community leaders of under-represented populations in focus groups (formal or informal) to brainstorm new education programs for your organization?

If yes, what were the results of these focus groups?

If no, why not?

Problems/challenges

*Step 4: Develop and implement education programs*

Has your organization used suggestions from the above-mentioned focus groups to develop and implement new education programs (such as lectures, classes, workshops, special events, etc.)?

If yes, what types of programs did you develop and implement (please describe them)?

If no, why not?

Problems/challenges

Did you involve members from the under-represented groups in the development and implementation of these programs?

If yes, in what ways?

If no, why not?

Problems/challenges

*Step 5: Commit to the development of a systematic evaluation process*

Did you conduct evaluations of participants' reactions to each newly implemented program?

If yes, how did the evaluations reflect input from the above-mentioned focus groups/under-represented groups' involvement (please provide me with a copy of the evaluation(s))?

If no, why not?

Problems/challenges

Have you held focus groups, again involving community members of under-represented groups, to analyze the "success" of the new education programs?

If yes, what were the results?

If no, why not?

Problems/challenges

Have you used evaluations and suggestions from focus groups to refine the education programs?

If yes, what measured improvement has there been in the programs since their refinement?

If no, why not?

Problems/challenges

Have you maintained the use of focus groups and evaluation activities for each new set of education programs, and in all stages of program development?

If yes, in what ways has this systematic process helped to ensure the enhancement of your organization's audience diversification efforts through educational programming?

If no, why not?

Problems/challenges

### **Impacts/Effects of Audience Diversification Efforts**

Have you evaluated your audience diversification process with staff, under-represented groups, or both?

If yes, how, and what were the results?

Have you conducted a demographic survey of your audience since you began diversification efforts?

If yes, how have the current percentages changed in comparison to the previous survey?

What works best with the audience diversification process you have used?

Are there any other efforts you have made, other than those captured here, that have enhanced your audience diversification process?

What other approaches might you explore in further audience diversification efforts?

In light of what we already discussed, what other problems did you encounter in any of the steps we talked about?

What is/was the most difficult step(s) in your diversification efforts?

Are there certain facets of this process you feel should not be repeated, or are not necessary?

If yes, what are they and why?

**Appendix C**

**HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW COMMITTEE APPROVAL**



OFFICE OF THE VICE PROVOST  
FOR RESEARCH

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6 August 1998

Ms. Claire Andorka  
Longwood Graduate Program  
153 Townsend Hall  
University of Delaware  
Newark, DE 19711

Dear Ms. Andorka:

Subject: Audience diversification in public gardens: a five-step process

We have reviewed the interview guide you submitted for the above-referenced project and find the questions acceptable. The study therefore continues as exempt, as approved on 3 March 1998, under the following category:

Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless (1) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and (2) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please notify the Human Subjects Review Board if you make any changes in this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Costel Denson".

Costel D. Denson  
Vice Provost for Research  
Chair, Human Subjects Review Board

cc: James E. Swasey

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY UNIVERSITY

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