



TOWARDS UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE AND FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE ARTS EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

Arts education has proven benefits.

The US Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that art and culture represented 4.2% of US Gross Domestic Product in 2014 – more of our economy than transportation, tourism, or construction. The National Institutes of Health and the World Health Organization confirm that art can lower anxiety. Princeton University reveals that arts education encourages cooperation, promotes understanding, fosters inclusion, and reduces delinquent behavior in high-risk youth.

Despite encouraging data, it's a struggle to provide lasting, quality programs, and those who could benefit most may be least able to pay. **So, I believe that the greatest challenge facing arts education today is maintaining financial sustainability and universal accessibility.**



Arts Education's Challenge in the Private Sector: Inaccessible

In the private sector, arts education program options include private lessons, in which a student works one-on-one with a musical instructor, and the student pays directly for his or her own costs, including the sheet music, the musical instrument, and the instructor's fee for each lesson. There are also group classes and camps. Private sector arts education solves the problem of financial sustainability at the expense of creating a new problem with inaccessibility.

Arts Education's Challenge in the Public Sector: Unsustainable

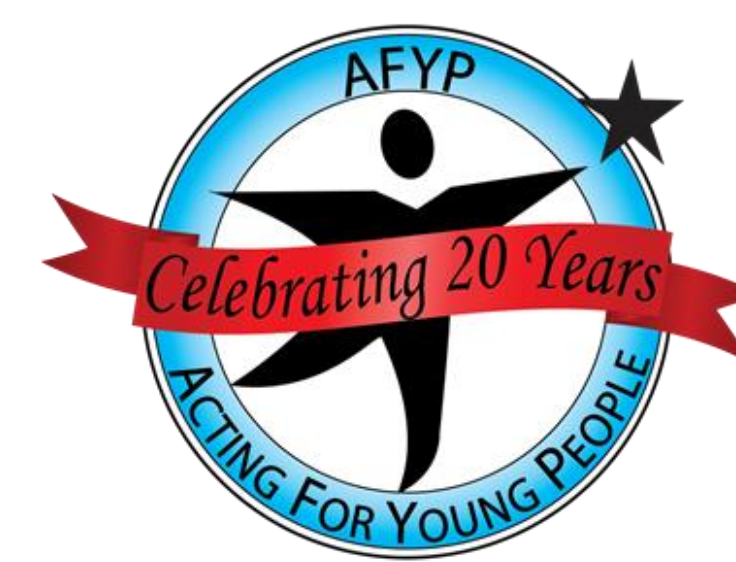
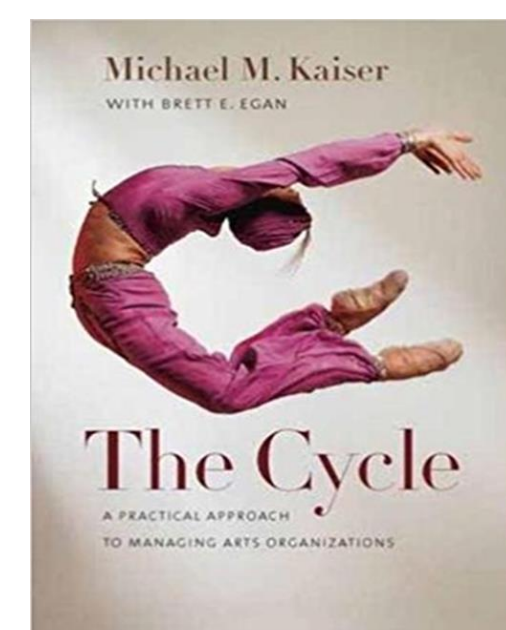
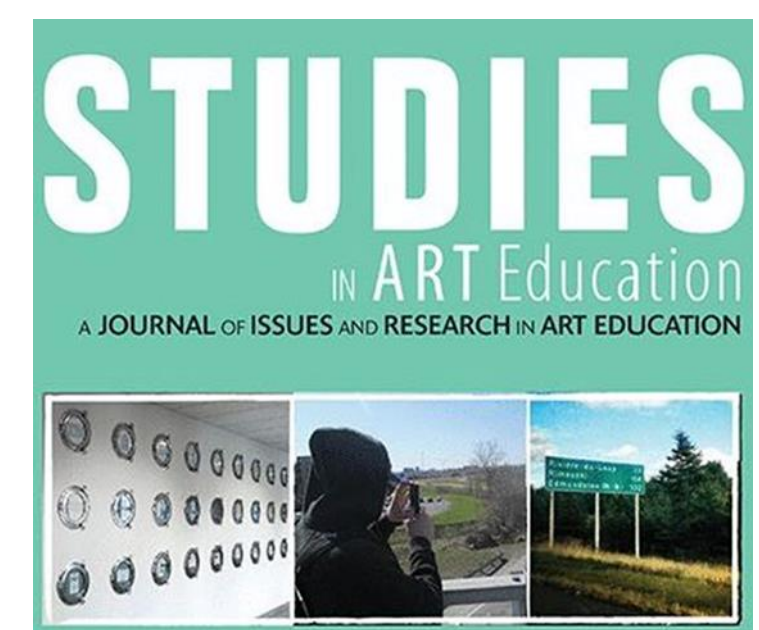
In the public sector, on the other hand, the focus is on universal accessibility. Due to taxes and other public funds, public school systems can provide arts education to their students without direct instruction fees. Students are still often required to pay for their own musical instruments and other artistic materials. Public programs can achieve results on par with private ones. However, the focus on universal accessibility raises costs, and students pay less directly, so financial sustainability becomes a major concern.

METHODS

This project engaged with literature and case studies to develop a framework for success.

The literature included:

The academic journal 'Studies in Arts Education,' 'The Cycle,' by Mr. Michael Kaiser, a global arts management expert, and work by the non-profit DeVos Institute of Arts Management.



I applied my research to three main case studies:

BRIDGES: Harmony Through Music, an after-school music education program for disadvantaged elementary school students, Acting for Young People (AFYP), an acting program for children and adolescents, and KidzNotes, an orchestra and music education program for children.



ARTS EDUCATION MATRIX

Drawing on the literature and case studies, I developed a four-box matrix to categorize arts education organizations based on a matrix used by the Boston Consulting Group.

The ideal category is the top right, 'star' programs, which maintain both financial sustainability and universal accessibility.

The 'Cult Classics' maintain financial sustainability but with lower accessibility.

The bottom right category, 'One Hit Wonders,' contains programs that are universally accessible but financially uncertain.

The bottom-left category is the 'Wannabes.' These programs have neither financial sustainability nor universal accessibility.

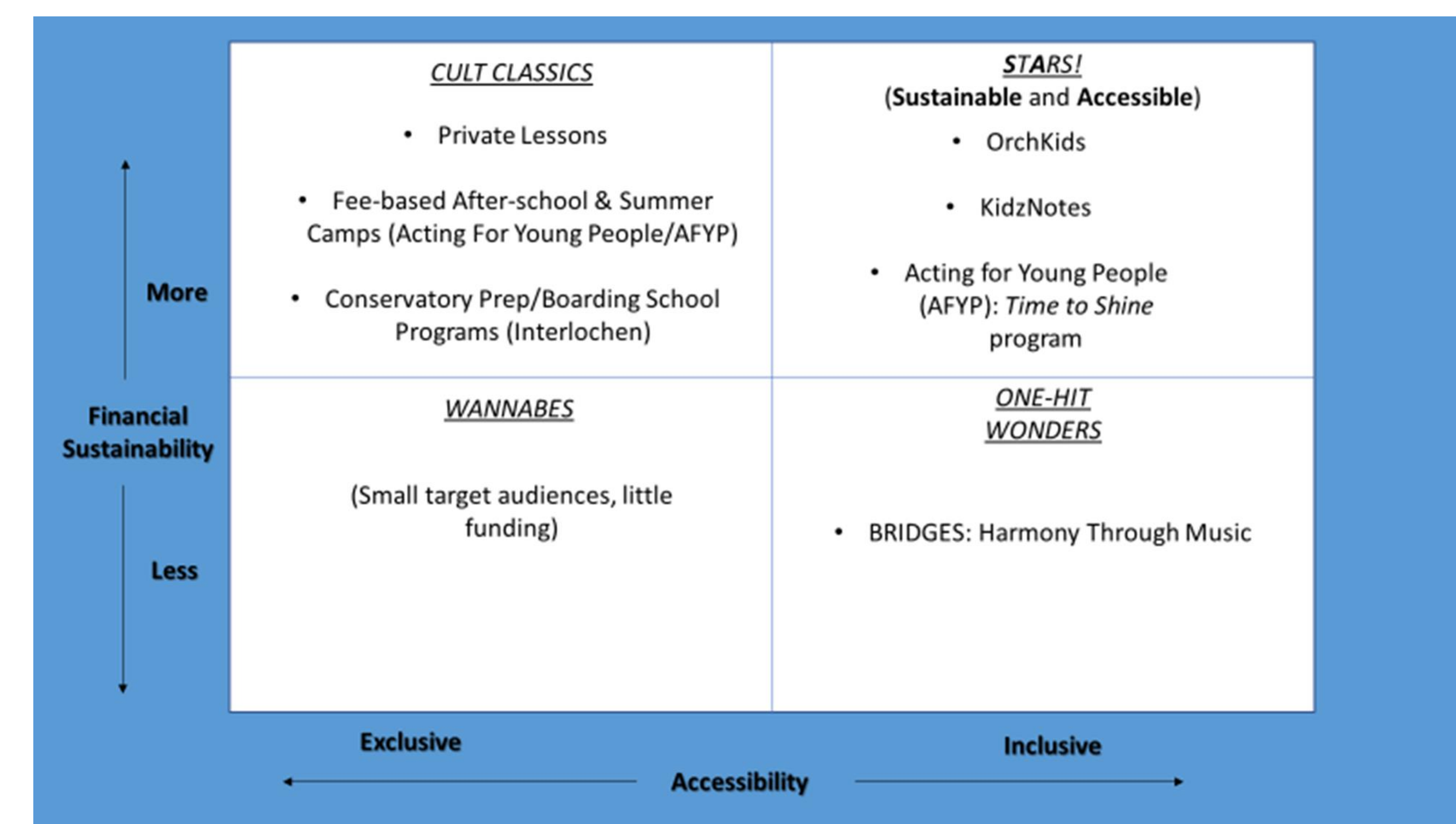


Figure 1. Arts Education Four-Box Success Matrix, based on the Boston Consulting Group business success matrix

SUCCESS FRAMEWORK

My results suggest a framework of 3 key success factors to achieve both financial sustainability and universal accessibility.

#1 is diverse funding sources, such as grants, participation fees, and donations.

#2 is shared community resources, such as performance spaces.

#3 is public-private partnerships, in which a public-sector group, such as a public-school system, collaborates with private-sector companies and individuals to maximize resources, improve instruction quality, and increase reach.



POLICY OPPORTUNITIES

- Creation of new grants and expansion of current grants for arts education programs
- Tax incentives for non-profit and public arts education programs
- Corporate tax incentives for public-private partnerships that promote arts education
- Subsidies for low-income families to pursue arts education lessons/classes, purchase instruments and sheet music
- Investments in arts education in the short and medium terms will pay dividends in the long term, creating a more prosperous future society



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