

# **BUILDING OUR CULTURE TOGETHER**

**A bold new strategy to strengthen the cultural sector in British Columbia**

***Revised draft paper (2)***

from

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## INTRODUCTION

Investment in arts and culture, by both government and the private sector, is today widely recognized as a major contributor to the overall public good, making unique and significant contributions to the prosperity, liveability and sustainability of our province. This document outlines the leading role that the Government of British Columbia will take in working with the cultural sector to help build a flourishing, innovative workforce and a healthy, harmonious society.

Investment in the cultural sector encourages economic growth, and attracts and fosters the skilled and imaginative workforce that the new technologies demand. It helps forge the vital links between creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship that are going to be the hallmarks of economic and social vitality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It helps both rural and urban economic regeneration, attracts tourists and strengthens national and international competitiveness.

At the same time, it reinforces the social scaffolding that supports vital and confident communities. The unprecedented social diversity of modern British Columbia calls for new levels and forms of inclusiveness. Arts and cultural activity deepens and reaffirms our sense of identity and belonging, and through shared experience, it eases

interaction among diverse cultures – creating better neighbours and more harmonious communities.

Recent studies show that creative activity also has a direct influence on health. It reduces depression, counteracts the effects of isolation, improves morale and helps to reduce hospital stays and professional stress. In the justice system, it encourages individuals to find new forms of self-expression and helps reduce recidivism in the prison population.

It also contributes significantly to the educational experience. Young people who are engaged with creative activity both inside and outside the educational system develop confidence, supple minds and agile imaginations – all highly desirable attributes in the emerging information economy. Creative individuals help develop new products, increase performance and productivity, and bring targeted expertise to many fields of business and industry.

Creative activity also has purely personal values. For the individual, it provides not only a source of personal pleasure and stimulation but also a means of building identity and self-esteem, and broadening personal horizons.

Taken together, the cumulative effect of cultural activity – economic, social, educational, personal – makes a vital contribution to the liveability, prosperity and sustainability of the society in which we live.

Public awareness of the importance of cultural activity is highly developed. Ninety per cent or more of the fifteen to twenty-four age group in a recent Canadian survey agreed that government has a responsibility to make artistic activities accessible to all Canadians. They felt that learning about music, drawing, acting and other art forms is

important for children; believed that promoting and supporting Canada's artistic expression is essential if we are to remain distinct as a country; felt that artists and works of art play important roles in helping maintain the country's cultural identity; and agreed that the arts teach us about different cultures and ways of living.

The significance is not lost on British Columbians. A recent report on consumer spending on culture in Canada showed that Canadian consumers spent \$25.1 billion on cultural goods and services in 2005 – five per cent higher than the combined consumer spending on household furniture, appliances and tools. Per capita spending on culture in British Columbia, at \$886, was second-highest in Canada, compared with a national per capita spending average of \$821. Twice as many Canadian households spent money on live performing arts as spent money on live sports events.

However, British Columbian engagement with creative expression is not solely about consumption. The province is a ferment of creativity, innovation and artistic expression. In a recent national survey that measured artists as a percentage of the workforce, seven out of the 10 most artistic small communities in the country, and six of the 10 most artistic large cities, were located in this province. Our largest city, Vancouver, has an artistic concentration three times the national average.

Some of the leading innovators in North America's video, media arts and digital technology industries are located here. Our writers, painters, musicians, singers, photographers, dancers, playwrights, media artists and architects are celebrated internationally. In recognition of that, the province has in recent years substantially strengthened its support for the publishing, new media and animation industries.

At the same time, British Columbia is proud of its position as one of the most culturally diverse provinces in Canada. Our streets and meeting-places are vibrant with the colours and sounds of many cultures.

For all these reasons, British Columbia holds great promise as an international centre for collaborative innovation and imagination, with cultural activity taking its place alongside economic, social and environmental considerations as an integral element of a provincial culture of prosperity, literacy, health and sustainability. Using our resource-based economy as the rock on which to grow, we are well poised to take advantage of the opportunities that will be presented in the new imagination economy of the coming decades.

Much of the groundwork for this has been laid through the sustained support provided by the British Columbia Arts Council and its associated sectoral initiatives within the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts.

Established to ensure that all British Columbians can participate in a healthy arts and cultural community recognized for its excellence, the Arts Council currently maintains a wide variety of programs designed to foster individual creativity, support arts and culture endeavours, reinforce the sector's long-term sustainability and ensure that the work of the arts and culture community is accessible to all British Columbians.

At a province-wide Cultural Summit called by the Minister in the spring of 2006, delegates from the social, economic, educational and cultural fields gave strong endorsement to the work and achievements of the Council, and reached a broad consensus that it is time to build on the Council's strengths by ensuring that it has the resources that will allow it to reach its full potential.

They also identified the challenges that must be addressed in order to take maximum advantage of the opportunities offered by the cultural sector:

- insufficient operating and capital investment in our cultural organizations;
- problems of distribution and equitable access to creative activity in non-metropolitan parts of the province;
- a largely untapped field for cultural exports;
- insufficient emphasis on cultural engagement in our education system;
- the need for a greater emphasis on culture as an aspect of the province's strategy to build the tourism industry;
- the need for more non-government investment in the cultural sector;
- and inadequate support for the individual creator on whose imagination much of this pyramid of economic and social effect is built.

To address these challenges, they called for the development of actionable strategies, including new investment, that will bring about a greater integration of culture within governmental policy discussions and decision-making. (*A full report on the Summit proceedings is attached as Appendix A.*)

The strategic directions in the following pages are built around core principles that emerged from the Cultural Summit, as well as the overall priorities of the provincial government. Capitalizing on the unique attributes of British Columbia's cultural and social diversity, as well as its natural setting and its unique and important connections with the Pacific Rim, they are designed to foster excellence in all forms of creative activity for the lasting benefit of all British Columbians.

Central is the notion of partnerships, sharing, diversity and inclusion. Cultural activity reaches into every crevice of British Columbian life and society, across all social, racial and income groups, and a broad public and political recognition of that seminal importance is essential to the success of any sustained supporting initiative. As was repeatedly stressed at the Summit, it is vital to build bridges that connect government, business, the private sector, educators, cultural workers and the diverse groups that make up the complex fabric of our cultural life.

Summit participants also recognized that it is impossible, and inadvisable, for government to attempt to be all things to all people. Traditional approaches to the sector-based development of government policy and strategy are being supplanted by recognition of the value and importance of cross-sectoral thinking and mutually supportive investment. Businesses that operate outside the cultural sphere, educators, unions, foundations, regional development agencies, community groups, special-interest organizations and the print and broadcast media all have a common interest and a role to play in the secure positioning of the cultural sector.

The involvement of young people is essential not only at the educational level but at every stage of our cultural development, as creative individuals, as participants in the cultural activity in our communities and as contributors to decision-making. And a vital role is played by the volunteers who keep our non-profit arts groups ticking. More than one British Columbian in 30 contributes voluntary work to arts and culture organizations – one of the highest ratios in Canada.

But government has to lead the way, demonstrating that investment in cultural activity at every level pays rich dividends in economic growth and competitiveness,

catalyzing the vision of non-governmental stakeholders and challenging British Columbians to join forces to enhance the quality of life in our communities and develop a thriving future workforce.

In particular, there was a sustained call for the affirmation and expansion of the role of the B.C. Arts Council as the most effective and trusted means to support individual artists and arts organizations throughout the province. It should be provided with sufficient resources and staff to deliver these services in a timely, efficient and transparent manner. Its abilities to support cultural entrepreneurship as an engine of economic development should be reinforced. And its role in collation, analysis and dissemination of scientific research demonstrating the benefits of arts and cultural activity in relation to the economic and social goals of the province should be strengthened.

Other guiding principles from the Summit can be summarized as follows:

- Sustained core operational funding is required to ensure the long-term growth and development of the sector, delivered via a comprehensive, multi-year investment program that takes into consideration the relationship of arts and cultural activity to recreation, community development, education and the diverse cultures of the province.
- Increased support for individual creators, as the cornerstone of the creative process, is necessary to keep pace with the growth and diversity of the province's creative constituency.
- New investment in cultural facilities and professional development is required urgently. In particular, increased support is needed for the

Provincial Cultural Infrastructure program to help organizations upgrade existing facilities.

- Access to cultural expression must be available to all residents of the province. Artists and arts organizations funded from the public purse must recognize their responsibilities to rural as well as urban British Columbia, and public investment in cultural activity should be understood as a way to reduce economic barriers to public participation not only in the metropolitan areas but in the province's heartlands.
- Creativity must be encouraged in our schools, our workplaces and our communities in order to develop an entrepreneurial, imaginative and compassionate society. New commitments to the integration of arts and culture into the school system are required.
- The province's cultural sector must establish new synergies with the tourism industry.
- The wide range of cultural traditions and artistic practices of the province's aboriginal and diverse cultures must be respected, supported and celebrated.
- The heritage sector, including museums and parks, is inextricably linked with professional arts and culture and must be given its rightful role in community and cultural planning..
- More research and analysis of the tangible evidence of the economic and social benefits of investment in culture is required, linking cultural investment to the provincial government's priorities. At the same time, the

argument must be reframed so that arts and cultural activity is not seen as an either-or proposition, but rather as an integral element of a prosperous and healthy society.

- Artists and cultural workers must be invited into the broader discussion of how we define and shape all aspects of our daily life, and encouraged to become involved at the political level to advance the economic and social arguments for cultural investment.

The aim of this document is therefore to propose strategies for the cultural sector that will ensure that all British Columbians can share in the economic, social and personal benefits of investment in creative activity and our province's heritage, and to build a framework of creative activity in which ingenuity and the imagination play their true and crucial role in ensuring the prosperity and liveability of the province for generations to come.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

*The following pages comprise brief discussions of the topics addressed by the Summit delegates: **Creativity, Infrastructure, Sustainability, Communities, Education, Heritage, Public Awareness and Research.** Each discussion is followed by a series of suggested objectives and strategies that emerged from that meeting and subsequent discussions among participants and with members of the Cultural Summit Advisory Committee, as well as from research into practices in other jurisdictions.*

## CREATIVITY

The creative act is the beginning of possibility. Without the imaginative leaps of the individual creator we would have no books, no music, no theatre, no movies – none of the rich and endless panoply of entertainment and provocation that adds such resonance and colour to the lives we live.

But the significance of the creative act is not confined to the cultural sector: it is the seed from which prosperity grows, and a prime component of competitive advantage in the new national and global economy. It is an act of imagination that creates the story that becomes the play that becomes the movie that spins off into the franchise. It is a spark of intuition that gives birth to the J-chip, that transforms the way that we understand the make-up of the human genome, that redesigns the in-store display that multiplies a product's sale.

Creative individuals must be fostered. But they must also be attracted, by a milieu in which their values are shared and their contributions valued. We are already seeing the beginnings of international competition for this increasingly valuable human resource. If we wish to be successful in that competition, we have to show that we understand that our economic competitiveness depends on human creative capabilities by investing in creativity.

At present, despite the existence of a wide range of federal and provincial support programs, many artists in B.C. live a precarious existence. They are producing far below their potential, leading to a significant under-utilization of one of the province's most valuable resources.

Existing programs serving individual creators through the B.C. Arts Council will be strengthened, and new emphasis will be placed on creative activity in our schools.

We also intend to take advantage of the new developments in media and communications technologies, as well as advances in biology, physics and engineering, to enable artists and scientists to cross-fertilize their vision and ingenuity in search not only of new forms of creative expression but new solutions to some of society's most intractable challenges.

### **Diversity**

The changing demographic make-up of British Columbia also demands a re-evaluation of our support for artists from aboriginal and minority cultures. Summit delegates made it very clear that they believed the province's arts and culture programs must support, respect and celebrate the wide range of cultural traditions and artistic practices of the province's aboriginal and immigrant peoples. Since they visibly show the creative expression of different cultures, the arts also have a significant role to play in finding solutions to the challenges inherent in demographic change.

Delegates therefore called for more attention to First Nations historical and contemporary art (as an aboriginal delegate to the Summit pointed out, it is time to dismantle the notion that aboriginal art, songs and dances are only for aboriginal people).

They also felt strongly that the provincial government should take the lead in demonstrating, to British Columbians and the rest of the world, B.C.'s wide-ranging creative and ethnic diversity and the distinctiveness of the B.C. culture that is emerging, and to place a greater priority, in provincial cultural planning and programming, on the diversity of genres and cultures, without falling into the trap of "ethnic" programming.

The principle of cultural inclusiveness must permeate all arts and culture support programs, and new resources must be dedicated to ensuring access for these artists and the organizations that support them to the grant application process, and to representation in the decision-making process.

*Objectives:*

- Maximize creative activity and encourage new thinking.
- Produce an innovative workforce.
- Improve economic security and working and living conditions of professional artists.
- Improve the public perception and recognition of the artist and the creative individual.
- Improve the levels of public access to the work of the province's artists.
- Increase retention of BC-produced cultural workers.
- Strengthen arts and culture in the educational curriculum.
- Reinforce cultural activity in aboriginal and diverse cultures, and increase their inclusion in the cultural mainstream.

*Strategies:*

Commit to increased investment in the B.C. Arts Council to enable it to:

- Increase support for individual artists in research and creation.
- Ensure that access to support programs is available to all British Columbians.
- Recognize and foster excellence in all cultural traditions, and ensure their artistic practices are available to all British Columbians.
- Invite grass-roots minority groups to showcase their culture to mainstream audiences, and support festivals such as the Taiwanese cultural festival.

- Increase collaboration with and support for Canada's aboriginal peoples, recognizing that First Nations artists have a unique historical and spiritual relationship with the land and can contribute to the building of B.C.'s cultural identity in unique ways.
- Reaffirm the principle of arm's-length funding and independent decision-making by peers.
- Reaffirm the commitment to cultural equity by ensuring that peer juries and advisory committees embrace the full cultural diversity of the province's peoples.
- Expand the opportunities for artists to work with scientists within a scientific research framework.
- Encourage the continued development of province-wide networks for creative individuals, both by discipline and by region, to ensure the broadest possible awareness of opportunities and best practices.
- Develop a mentor program that matches emerging artists with established professionals.
- Promote the employment of artists by business and the private sector.
- Provide more training for artists and small cultural enterprises in the business aspect of their work, include training in the business of art in art school curricula, and explore the use of business loans to enable artists to become small business operators in rural areas.

- Ensure availability of lifelong professional training and learning opportunities for artists and cultural workers, including the use of such methods as distance education and mentoring.
- Provide marketing assistance for individual artists through collaborative ventures involving support organizations such as the B.C. Potters Guild and the B.C. Crafts Association.
- Examine improvements to the legal and tax framework under which artists operate, such as scaling repayment of student loans for artists in relation to income, and strengthen protective measures regarding compensation, intellectual property rights, pensions and benefits, collective bargaining rights and appropriation of indigenous materials.
- Establish with the Ministry of Education a policy to “buy B.C.” instead of importing textbooks, and use incentives to place more B.C. books on BC Ferries, and to encourage bookstores to stock and promote local authors.
- Reinvigorate the Knowledge Network as a distribution point for province-wide arts activity.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

As was repeatedly stressed at the Cultural Summit, the contribution of the creative and cultural industries to the economic and social health of the province is significant by any measure. However, the non-profit arts and culture sector confronts daunting infrastructure challenges that prevent it from taking full advantage of the opportunities for growth that are available. These challenges include shortfalls in the areas of:

- Affordable and flexible presentation facilities and office space – that is, the *physical plant* in which these organizations operate;
- Provincial, national and international distribution – that is *touring* support;
- Management, marketing and other forms of business and legal support and advice – that is, the ability to build *organizational and networking capacity*.

These are of course interlinked factors, but can usefully be considered as discrete elements that contribute to the larger whole.

**Physical plant**

Many of the theatres in which our organizations produce and prepare concerts, plays, dance and educational programs are outdated, run down and in some cases dilapidated. As the functions of museums and galleries expand, and new pressures are brought to bear on their ability to handle the associated demands, the museum and gallery community is also feeling a significant need to find new space. The growing problem of accommodation in B.C. is also affecting individual artists in search of affordable live-work spaces. And across the cultural sector, the need for affordable and flexible accommodation for the management services that support professional creative activity is acute.

Delegates to the summit felt strongly that significant investment in cultural facilities of all kinds is required if the sector is to continue to prosper and contribute to B.C.'s social and economic development. In particular, increased support is needed for the Provincial Cultural Infrastructure program to help organizations upgrade existing facilities.

History has repeatedly shown that new, updated, revitalized and rejuvenated venues attract the public, inspire increased attendance and revitalize artistic and managerial spirit. They create civic, provincial and national pride and play an important socio-economic role in terms of both their economic impact and their contribution to social cohesion and public health.

The immediate need identified by the community is for

- medium size performing/media arts venues that could serve both commercial and non-profit needs;
- more museum/gallery facilities to accommodate the growing need for new space for exhibitions and other gallery-based community activities;
- designated shared warehouse and production office space;
- affordable live-work studio space for individual artists.

In general throughout the province there is a lack not only of suitable presentation facilities but of public spaces for gatherings and festivals. Support was also expressed for the creation of a linked network of regional cultural centres that capitalize on the growing demand for cultural engagement by providing such services as galleries, theatres, libraries, concert halls, arts workshops, storage/preparation quarters, mentoring programs and café and retail space within a single precinct.

Additionally, to provide a more responsive and flexible approach to these dilemmas, many delegates indicated the need for the removal of various kinds of bureaucratic limitations that impede the timely and effective provision of new space and restoration of existing buildings.

*Objectives:*

- Improve and develop capital projects and performing facilities.
- Coordinate investment decisions with long-term government priorities in areas such as health, social cohesion, education and tourism.
- Increase business and private-sector investment in cultural activity through new partnership networks.
- Encourage the creation and development of new media industries.

*Strategies:*

- Commit to new investment in the B.C. Arts Council to enable it to:
- Continue to develop sector-wide plans to respond to the long-term demands for new capital infrastructure projects, including a mapping process of existing infrastructure and a survey of place-specific needs.
- Establish an ongoing fund to which organizations can apply to build, renovate and/or equip the facilities in which our artists perform, rehearse and educate and our administrators manage.
- Change zoning regulations in communities to allow for a certain percentage of renovated or newly developed space to be set aside for art practitioners, and relax building requirements for artists' studios.
- To facilitate a richer engagement between artists and the community and to allow young artists to challenge themselves and their audiences, relax regulations around municipal code requirements for performing spaces and the presentation of art in public areas.

- Investigate the creative development of affordable and flexible creative spaces in other parts of North America and Europe as a possible model for new approaches to space provision for artists and arts organizations in B.C.
- Develop partnerships between business, government, arts organizations and individuals to create and fund the places, spaces, facilities and infrastructure where art is produced and presented.
- Develop informal gathering places for exchange and experiment by artists from all disciplines, supported by funding that allows them to keep up with technological advances.
- Expand the use schools as community art centres after school hours and in vacations. Create an inventory of buildings, such as schools, that are empty at certain times in the year and program touring arts presentations to augment tourist programs around the province.
- Create financial incentives to improve collaboration between the managers and users of publicly funded facilities to improve efficiency while minimizing risk.
- Examine tax law revisions for the cultural sector, and examine the models for cinema taxation for arts funding that has been evolving in France, South Korea, Denmark and Australia.

## **Touring**

The arts and culture sector makes a substantial contribution to the Ministry's goals for tourism in the province, delivering lasting economic and social benefits. More than half of the 12 million annual visitors to British Columbia say our province's historical sites and cultural attractions play an important part in their decision to visit. One in three of them attend festivals or cultural events during their stay, and those who travel for cultural purposes spend on average about one-third more than other visitors. In line with government priorities, a new emphasis is being placed on the value of the work of the cultural sector to the province's tourism initiatives.

However, it is a different story when it comes to the question of touring the riches of the cultural sector outside the metropolitan regions. The B.C. Touring Council reports that the number of touring performances across the province is declining, particularly in smaller and more isolated communities, due to a variety of factors – the number of volunteer-based presentation organizations is shrinking, those that survive struggle in an increasingly competitive environment, funding cuts in schools have impacted arts touring.

As one Summit delegate put it, touring today is a far more complex matter than simply sending a theatre or dance company around the province on a bus. What is needed is a much greater outreach by the major cultural institutions of the province to smaller communities – in a sense, a pay-back from the metropolitan areas to what was described as the resource-generating areas.

The question is also linked to the previous issue of physical plant. A number of communities have taken bold and innovative steps in adapting existing structures, sometimes heritage buildings, for re-use as performance and gallery spaces, and these initiatives should be underlined as examples of what is possible.

At the same time, new attention should be paid to outreach by our cultural professionals beyond the province's boundaries. National and international touring helps raise the creative profile of British Columbia, plays an effective and economical role in promoting the province's interests abroad, and can reinforce regional pride and identity.

*Objectives:*

- Ensure that the benefits of cultural activity are available to smaller and/or regional communities.
- Ensure that British Columbia's professional cultural organizations can tour the province in a cost-effective manner.
- Integrate the activities of British Columbia's professional cultural organizations into the province's cultural tourism initiatives.

*Strategies:*

- Make significant new resources available to the B.C. Touring Council as the most effective way to strengthen the existing province-wide touring infrastructure and reinforce a regional cultural tourism network.
- Facilitate regional and cross-province travel for presenters.
- Ensure that regional voices are represented in cultural touring decision-making and establish a community-based decision-making procedure, representing a wide diversity of the community, to guide the choice of imported cultural presentations.
- Develop province-wide programs to encourage the open and respectful sharing of the cultural practices and expressions of aboriginal and immigrant communities, and to foster an understanding of the diversity of the province's cultural and creative activities, and provide mentoring and training for aboriginal artists and arts administrators.
- Develop regional collaborative arts festivals that rotate annually from community to community.

- Continue to explore the use of new digital technologies to serve communities and develop audiences.
- Enhance marketing assistance for individual artists through collaborative ventures designed to help locate national and world markets for their work.
- Give new emphasis to a province-wide promotion and distribution network, including cultural tourism and greater integration with the schools.
- Support national and international touring and attendance at national and international marketing events.

## **Organizational and networking capacity**

The problem of providing effective, efficient and flexible long-term professional management for the cultural sector is seen as an increasingly serious issue. Financial uncertainty, demographic shifts, heightened competition (both inside and outside the non-profit sector) and growing service demands make it vital for our arts and heritage organizations to have strong governance and management practices and the ability to adapt to ongoing change and diversity, in some cases through shared services.

The situation is complicated by the shift in government at all levels toward a new era of increased fiscal responsibility and transparency – new approaches to “measurables” (the expected results of arts investment) call for new and more stringent forms of accounting.

ArtsPOD, a program of the Centre for Sustainability, helps arts and heritage not-for-profit organizations to achieve long-term organizational sustainability by funding resources to assess their strengths and weaknesses, improve governance and management practices, increase ongoing planning capacity and develop strategies to address their specific needs. Summit delegates felt support for these initiatives should be encouraged and increased, and every opportunity used to leverage assistance for non-profit arts and heritage organizations from the business community.

In addition, Summit delegates felt that an urgent need exists for a re-evaluation of the compensation provided to professional arts managers, who in general have traditionally been paid far less than they could command in the private sector, on the

assumption that their commitment to the cause and their belief in the importance of their work will make up the monetary shortfall in personal satisfaction.

In order to establish a resource of individuals with the skills necessary to both manage and speak for the arts at a professional level, new steps should also be taken in the areas of management training, improved human resource policies and practices regarding benefits, leadership development, sabbatical-style renewal opportunities and succession planning. Targeted mentor, apprenticeship and intern programs were also felt to be an effective means of addressing the current and projected shortfall in cultural managers, and in aboriginal and minority representation on the staff of the various cultural industries.

Governance is also a significant issue in this regard, and existing ArtsPOD programs to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of non-profit board of non-profit arts organizations should be reinforced, along with the abilities cultural organizations to actively seek out and recruit individuals who can contribute skills at the board level. In the same way, active recruitment of committed volunteers should be an ongoing activity.

*Objectives:*

- Develop a new generation of properly trained and qualified managers and professional staff for all areas of the sector, including aboriginal and diverse cultures.
- Expand programs to facilitate collaboration among organizations of similar needs and interests, in order to leverage collaborative strengths.

*Strategies:*

- Increase support for the Arts Partners in Organizational Development (Arts-POD) program.
- Revitalize programs to develop management professionalism and encourage the provision of lifelong training opportunities, including scholarships, and in particular reinforce programs to train professional managers and marketers for the aboriginal arts and culture sector.
- Provide incentives for the province's leading arts institutions to share program and planning processes with colleagues from other parts of the province.
- Investigate the idea of shared services – i.e. sharing a treasurer - among non-profit groups.
- Encourage the full-time employment of young people in cultural administrations positions to ensure an even flow of replacement management.
- In small communities and regions, fund the position of cultural coordinator to assist volunteer staff at non-profit organizations in grant preparation and general administration, and to administer grant programs at the grassroots level.

## SUSTAINABILITY

A major concern of the delegates to the Summit was the long-term sustainability of the sector. It was pointed out that arts and cultural organizations in the province are often inadequately capitalized, making it difficult for them to operate in a sustainable manner and to invest in new creative activity.

Moreover, the competition for available resources intensifies as the province's creative constituency grows and diversifies. In addition, decision-makers are also often unaware of the complex cultural ecology of the sector, in which grassroots arts organizations are inseparably linked to the major producers, and different disciplines overlap in their interests and needs.

What is needed is a comprehensive, multi-year *investment* program that takes into consideration the relationship of arts and culture to recreation, community development, education and the diverse cultures of the province. Project funding can invigorate deserving institutions, but stable, predictable core funding is essential to them.

However, delegates cautioned that funding for arts and culture has not kept pace with the sector's growth, and with the growing recognition of the importance of the sector comes an expectation of significant new operating funds, and the steady growth of these funds, certainly no less than inflationary, on an annual basis.

Partnerships and collaboration remain crucial. Government should not be expected to carry the whole burden of these essential new requirements, and incentive schemes will be augmented to attract and maintain non-governmental contributions. New initiatives to harmonize tourism and support for cultural activity will be intensified.

Many delegates also noted the importance of private and corporate philanthropy in relation to cultural sustainability. In order to redirect philanthropic dollars toward the arts – traditionally on the low end of the scale of causes favoured by donors – it is important to use the language of community investment and the social returns on that investment.

*Objectives:*

- Support the development of cultural and heritage industries and organizations with long-term operational stability.
- Assist organizations with strategic planning and development.
- Continue to reinforce the publishing, film, new media and sound recording industries.

*Strategies:*

- Increase long-term commitment of operational support for non-profit arts and culture organizations and broaden access to those programs.
- Work with the Vancouver Foundation to enhance the Arts Renaissance Fund.
- Devise new programs to leverage support from the private sector and increase public/private and cross-government collaboration.
- Encourage investigation of the use of new technologies for creation and distribution, and reaffirm support for diverse art forms.
- Continue to develop programs, in collaboration with the private sector, to involve artists and arts organizations in health and education.
- Establish measurable standards and deliverables to ensure that every decision and direction that government takes is checked against the positive support and tangible benefit it provides for our creators and their audiences.

## COMMUNITIES

Community identity. Collective pride. More engaged citizens and young people. Safer neighbourhoods. Cross-cultural collaboration and new friendships. More cohesive and understanding communities. Stronger community networks.

Community-based art has been gaining increasing importance in recent decades as more and more individuals gravitate to creative expression as a way to give fresh meaning to their lives. They do it through involvement in festivals and community events like the imaginative parades staged by Vancouver's Public Dreams, productions like the Enderby community play, or through finding new ways to develop their own creative skills.

Shared creative expression allows individuals to reflect together on their experiences. It encourages disparate elements of society – old and young, sick and healthy, the members of diverse cultures – to share their perspectives with others and reach a better understanding of their neighbours. It gives voice and visibility to those who have traditionally been isolated or invisible, and encourages contact not only across social boundaries but also among generations. It increases community vitality, contributes to economic regeneration, and gives new life to neglected aspects of community heritage.

This community-building element of cultural activity becomes particularly important as the new communications technologies present citizens with new ways of “belonging” that transcend physical borders. At the same time, new forms of entertainment and creative expression place an emphasis on the solitary individual, and community demographics change under the pressure of immigration (from other provinces and other countries) and ex-migration (from small communities to larger centres).

Nowhere is this fact more evident, Summit delegates emphasized, than in the field of the amateur and community arts. Though not professional in the strict, remunerative sense of the term, the men, women and children who play, live and work together in their pursuit of and participation in art forms they love should be included, said delegates, along with the professional community in the ongoing debate.

However, the lack of suitable facilities and the significant challenges to effective touring in this vast province mean that non-metropolitan organizations sometimes find it difficult to realize their own full cultural potential. Summit participants called for the commitment of significant new resources to community creative activity, both to enable communities to place their cultural production resources on a stable footing and to allow them to have access to the cultural product of other British Columbians.

It was stressed that local governments themselves have a particularly important role to play in ensuring the vitality of their cultural community. Regeneration and revitalization schemes that incorporate arts and culture can increase community vitality, create new community character and contribute to economic growth.

## **Volunteers**

Volunteers have always been the backbone of professional and non-professional cultural activity, particularly in smaller centres. Recent statistics indicate that nearly 12 million Canadians, or 45 per cent of the population aged 15 and over, did some volunteering through a group or organization. The same report estimated that three per cent of the Canadian population (15 and over) volunteered in an arts and culture organization in 2004, providing an average of 120 hours each. Volunteers are estimated to contribute 56 per cent of total work in arts, culture, recreation and sport organizations, and the replacement cost value of that volunteer work is estimated at \$3.6 billion.

However, one of the largest impediments to increased volunteering in this area is the lack of public visibility and outreach by arts and cultural organizations. Volunteers surveyed said they were either not asked to volunteer or did not know how to get involved. Clearly, it is in the best interests of arts and culture organizations and the various bodies who provide them with support to ensure that they continue to explore new ways to attract volunteers (by offering them, for instance, interesting and challenging opportunities), train them and acknowledge and recognize their vital contributions.

*Objectives*

- Foster a sense of local identity and social cohesion.
- Build awareness of the broad social, legal, health, educational benefits and the contribution of arts and culture to liveability, quality of life.
- Revitalize communities and enhance their attractiveness by increasing the availability of cultural experience and creative engagement.
- Enable all British Columbians to share and learn about their cultural heritage, and eliminate regional disparities in terms of access.
- Support creative engagement and access for diverse and aboriginal communities across the province and across the social spectrum.
- Enable communities to compare their creative activity with that of others, in order to raise sights and broaden horizons.
- Develop the volunteer base for arts and culture throughout the province.

*Strategies:*

- Develop a regional arts centre network to encourage and support the development of community cultural planning and integration of cultural planning into the policy process, to centralize information on an accessible database, and to facilitate the development of authentic, high-quality regional activity.
- Reinforce the existing community service programs within the B.C. Arts Council to foster collaboration between artists and communities.

- Develop incentive programs to encourage communities to include a cultural component in urban developments, funded through partnerships with other areas of government, business and the private sector.
- Help individual communities to develop capacity to create, display and enjoy their own creative expression, developing both pride and a sense of ownership.
- Ensure that community cultural leaders are aware of and understand the process for accessing funding for cultural activities.
- Ensure that communities around the province, including aboriginal communities, have a representative voice in the decision-making process on arts funding and arts policy.
- Strengthen the networking and communications capacities of indigenous arts service organizations across the province.
- Encourage more communities to establish arts councils and articulate strategies to position cultural activity within the mainstream of community activity, and to encourage community leaders to define specific audience needs and desires.
- Encourage the integration of cultural planning with other government services such as health and education, and develop programs to make cultural engagement available across age-groups and to communities such as the disabled and those from linguistically diverse origins.

- Develop new programs to engage young people in extra-curricular creative activity and in the community decision-making process on cultural planning.
- Explore the use of community and civic libraries as cultural hubs, and examine other alternatives to purpose-built facilities in non-urban communities.
- Encourage revitalization of heritage buildings as affordable artists' housing and work spaces and as centres of cultural activity and coordination.
- Develop incentive programs to leverage private and business investment through matching funds, and produce a best-practices manual to help communities in this process.
- Create a recognition scheme for communities that demonstrate an extensive and integrated cultural policy and sustained cultural activity, inviting communities to compete for an annual title, based on the national Cultural Capitals model, perhaps in collaboration with the Union of B.C. Municipalities.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration between the arts and culture sector and sports and environmental groups.
- Involve citizen panels, including youth representatives, in selecting and placing art in public spaces, government buildings and corporate offices.
- Create a network of regional Cultural Calendars that bring together information about upcoming cultural activities in the region, for use both

as a public information resource and as a coordinating planning tool for performers and presenters.

- Establish a resource of facilitators and advisors available to help communities in building cultural activity and generating community engagement.
- Build a province-wide network of Arts Cafes, based on the popular Philosophers' Cafes, where artists and citizens can debate issues around creative activity.
- Disseminate art-mobiles throughout the province, providing art-making materials and assistance to all citizens.
- Develop and formalize an arts and culture volunteer initiative, ensuring that not-for-profit boards and other volunteers have access to training and mentoring.
- Develop new programs to recognize and train volunteers in the cultural sector, and to raise cultural administrators' awareness of volunteer needs.

## EDUCATION

In recent decades, as economic pressures have intensified, the teaching of arts and culture to the young has increasingly been seen as a non-essential element of the curriculum, yielding to an emphasis on the “basics” of education, literacy and numeracy.

However, Canadians today increasingly demand more attention to arts and cultural activity in the schools. The government of British Columbia has already made a significant commitment to improving arts access and arts education in the school system, and a number of individual educational institutions have taken bold steps in integrating arts and culture into the learning process. Summit participants welcomed these initiatives and felt it important that they become the base for a serious reconsideration and repositioning of creative activity in the province’s schools.

Education in arts and culture has several distinct purposes, though they tend to overlap – to nurture a professional workforce for the cultural sector, to produce workers with the critical skills and imaginative flexibility that will enable the province to benefit fully from the opportunities of the new economy, and to contribute to the development of confident and fulfilled citizens.

A steady accumulation of evidence, in Canada and abroad, makes it clear that the inclusion of arts and cultural activity in the educational curriculum – particularly in the

form of arts-infused education, where imagination-based activities such as storytelling, music, theatre, dance and visual art takes the place of rote learning - is invaluable in developing imagination, creativity and self-expression: crucial skills that will be needed to assure our competitiveness in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

Better motivation, an improved concept of the self, greater acceptance of others, a willingness to see issues from different perspectives, better notions of team spirit and an improved understanding of broad social values are all demonstrated benefits of arts education. Schoolchildren taught through drama, music, dance and the visual arts do a better job of mastering reading, writing and math than those who focus solely on academic subjects taught in the traditional manner. Students involved with the arts are four times more likely to run for class office, eight times more likely to participate in math and science fairs.

One of the stumbling-blocks in persuading educators and the academic bureaucracy that arts and cultural activity should be given more importance in the curriculum has to do with measurement. Academic success is based on marks and grades and rankings; it is often difficult to quantify the impact of arts education in that way. However, researchers and academics in several countries are working to combat that problem, and it will be important for British Columbia to stay abreast of those developments.

At the same time, it is also necessary to give fresh attention to the training and development of professionals. This applies not only in the performing, written and visual arts, but equally in the arts of the emerging technologies, particularly film, video and new media, where creative individuals are often the ones who intuit or imagine the

technological innovations and new developments that lead society to new ways of thinking and being.

We see the fostering of education on all these fronts as a means to position the province to respond effectively to the changing demands for imagination and ingenuity in the emerging information economy, empowering British Columbians to reach their full and rich creative potential and give British Columbia a leadership role in the provision of quality education for personal, social and economic empowerment and sustainability.

*Objectives:*

- Equip the emerging workforce with the skills and imagination necessary to thrive and prosper in the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Strengthen arts and culture in the educational curriculum.
- Improve teacher development in arts and culture.
- Build durable connections between the education sector and the professional arts and culture community.
- Provide access to lifelong learning in arts and culture throughout British Columbia.
- Strengthen the province's cultural industries labour force.

*Strategies:*

- In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, establish a Premier's Arts and Education Task Force to examine the arguments, gather evidence and identify needs regarding the integration of cultural activity and arts-infused learning into the full academic curriculum, with the intention of both serving the needs of the professional cultural sector and, more broadly, developing an imaginative workforce. The Task Force will be made up representatives from both the cultural and educational sectors, and will draw on advice from business, parents and other interested parties. It will be responsible for producing a report and recommendations that propose new approaches to the province's educational curriculum.

- Incorporate research into the qualitative measurement of arts education into the scanning process undertaken by the Arts and Education Task Force.
- Modify the province's educational curriculum to include arts and culture studies and creative activity from pre-school to university level.
- Ensure that every school provides adequate programming in arts, culture and heritage, and a wide range of exposure to creative activity.
- Via distance education facilities, broadcast arts programming around the province.
- Restore funding for free school field trips to theatres, arts festivals and other cultural activities.
- Integrate the use of arts and culture as an educational tool within the training programs of the province's teachers.
- Provide professional training in arts and culture for all teachers and instructors.
- Work with cultural industry associations to build programs for professional training in the cultural sector and cultural industries.
- Stimulate an on-going debate about teaching creatively and fostering creativity.
- Establish a teacher training program for artists who would like to be arts teachers.
- Involve more professional arts and culture providers as classroom resources.

- Subsidize those outside the school system with proven credibility to train gifted students.
- Create an artist-in-residence program for schools, colleges and universities.
- Reinforce awards programs, such as the ArtStarts Champion Awards, that recognize innovative and successful arts education teachers.
- Foster greater collaboration between arts presentation organizations such as ArtStarts and regional libraries to enable more authors to tour.
- Promote partnerships between business, government, arts organizations and individuals to work to support and fund the teaching of arts programs both in the schools and in the community.
- Reinforce existing programs of scholarships, bursaries, mentorships and internships for arts and cultural studies.
- Enable students to earn academic credits by working on projects in the field with cultural organizations.
- Institute a system of merit badges for student achievement in the arts.
- Involve parents in articulating and disseminating the arguments for the benefits of arts education.
- Provide ongoing access to creative activity and learning throughout life, through free public programs that complement the academic curriculum.
- Disseminate art mobiles throughout the province, providing art-making materials and assistance to all citizens.

## HERITAGE

The tangible and intangible heritage of British Columbia is a legacy of inestimable value that belongs to every British Columbian. Its most visible aspects are museums, buildings, artefacts, archives, libraries: the visible thumbprint of culture on the place where we live. They make it possible for us to perceive ourselves in the context of our past and quiz ourselves about our potential for the future.

But equally important are the intangible elements of our unfolding story: our stories, our celebrations, our rituals, our songs, our languages ... all the ways we communicate and pass on the traditions and customs that make our identity unique.

Together, these elements combine to form a living heritage – one that embraces the peoples who were here from the earliest times through to the peoples who arrived on our shores just yesterday. As Canada's diversity broadens, we gain more understanding of the importance of traditional and folk arts, and programs that protect and display this kind of cultural expression take on a fresh importance.

Delegates to the Cultural Summit saw the role of the heritage sector as inextricably linked with professional arts and culture, despite the fact that it is often an uneasy partnership. The heritage sector collects, manages, encourages preservation, research and knowledge sharing. The professional sector is concerned with original

creation, presentation and distribution. Different facilities and programming support are required, and different evaluation criteria are applied. Often in a single community the sectors compete for limited funds.

However, the opportunity exists to link the sectors by placing artistic creativity at the heart of the community. And encouragement should be given to the imaginative use not only of libraries, community centres, theatres, art galleries, museums and concert halls but of Canada's heritage buildings and monuments. Revitalizing heritage buildings as workspaces for artists, as galleries, as workshops and as tourism attractions contributes both to economic health and community identity. The careful integration of these structures into evolving cityscapes adds vitality and cultural resonance to urban planning.

However, in many places, time is of the essence. Over 20 per cent of Canada's built heritage has been lost in the past two decades alone, and the preservation and maintenance of what remains is urgent. If we wish to safeguard this cherished treasure, for ourselves and for those who come after us, it is important that heritage organizations reach out to their communities, building partnerships and audiences.

These programs should include not only the celebration of this heritage through performance, scholarships and awards, but also its documentation, its transmission and teaching, and its preservation in ways and formats that will ensure that it will be available for future generations to consult.

*Objectives:*

- Protect heritage resources in a sustained and coordinated manner.
- Broaden the base of the heritage sector to involve diverse cultures, and to include the protection and documentation of our intangible cultural heritage.
- Position heritage as a significant contributor to tourism, economic development and social cohesion.
- Deepen understanding of the values of the heritage sector through research, education and broad involvement across society.

*Strategies:*

- Articulate and distribute a clear policy regarding the value and protection of the province's heritage and cultural resources, stressing inclusion and accessibility.
- Initiate partnerships across government and with the public (including volunteers) and the private sector to build an integrated heritage investment strategy and a broad support network for heritage institutions and activities.
- Demonstrate leadership by establishing a matching grants program targeting increased support for heritage programs and institutions.
- Strengthen heritage management and inventories, build a Heritage Registry, and develop optimum usage and exposure.

- Develop programs in tourism and education that maximize the economic and social benefits of involvement with the province's rich and varied heritage.
- Affirm the importance of intangible cultural heritage, such as the languages, dance and music of our aboriginal peoples, and develop new programs to identify, protect and foster these important aspects of our heritage.

## **PUBLIC AWARENESS**

One of the most pressing needs facing the cultural sector is one of the simplest – the need to raise its profile in the broad general community. We regard the arts in general as a frill, something that can be readily cast aside when more pressing needs seem apparent. We look on our sports stars as heroes, yet the creators and performers who carry our reputation to the wider world are all too often ignored at home – or revered only when they return bearing approval from other countries.

It is important that the widespread concept of cultural activity as a frill be dismantled, and replaced by a recognition of the broad public ownership of our joint cultural birthright. However, many other interests are clamouring for the attention of decision-makers, and a heightened awareness of the importance and value of creative activity at every level of society is crucial to the long-term success of this initiative.

To achieve the sea-change in public policy that will allow cultural activity to play a more significant role in society, delegates were emphatic that the cultural sector must become integrated into the mainstream policy process, rather than being consigned to the fringes. Without the understanding and support of politicians, the bureaucracy and society at large, it will be impossible to take full advantage of the benefits that engagement with creative activity can bring.

Delegates' suggestions in this regard ranged from the an annual "information day" in Victoria at which the united cultural community can put the case of the arts in front of the members of the legislature, to the appointment of national and international cultural attachés, whose task would be to make sure that the world knew about the B.C. creative community – not simply to generate awareness, but also contribute to the provincial economy by creating new revenue streams for our arts organizations.

Other suggestions included the institution of a "free night" policy (free access to theatre, dance, music, art) on the same day across the province; mainstream TV commercials that provide vivid demonstration of the many vital contributions (music, design, architecture) artists make to the daily lives of us all; the revival of the B.C. Festival of the Arts, where professional and emerging artists in a range of disciplines celebrate their work together; collaboration between Translink and neighbouring arts institutions to decorate and program exhibits in each RAV station; and an integrated, province-wide publicity campaign – a single message carried to every level of the community under a "cultural canopy" with regional coordinators and a province-wide website.

*Objectives:*

- Redefine the arts and culture to make clear their relevance to individual, social and economic well-being, and reframe the arguments so that these benefits are seen as complementary, rather than competitive.
- Position arts and culture as one of the central pillars of British Columbia's economic prosperity and quality of life.
- Make B.C. known as a centre for the implementation of global best practices in support for arts, culture and heritage.
- Integrate arts and culture workers into the broader discussion of community-building and policy-making.
- Encourage the evolution of supportive public policies and programs for arts and culture in British Columbia.
- Allow British Columbians of all backgrounds to recognize and value the contribution that arts and cultural activity makes to the sustainability of life in the province – both in terms of personal health and happiness, as well as the economic and social health of the communities in which we live.

*Strategies:*

- Identify and build on existing communications successes.
- Reinforce the role of the creative sector with improved public awareness of its multiple benefits to society, and raise community recognition of artists through a province-wide arts award program that celebrates their contributions to the province and to their communities.
- Promote the advantages of a creative-based economy through a sustained program that provides government partners and policy shapers with hard evidence of the individual, economic, social, educational and health benefits of participation in arts and cultural activities.
- Encourage the development of a B.C. Arts Coalition - an advocacy agency/network including members of the cultural community, citizen members of arts boards, and representatives of government and the business and education sectors, to spearhead a province-wide program to promote arts awareness and the importance of cultural support. Under its umbrella would be such activities as a B.C. public arts information hub linking existing festivals, performances and presentations, and a system of information-sharing to circulate cultural statistics and other information on a regular basis to municipal and regional administrations and elected politicians.
- Demonstrate to British Columbians and the world the province's creative and ethnic diversity, its strength as a bridge between Asian and European culture, and the distinctiveness of the BC culture that is emerging.

- Develop new ways to identify and talk about cultural activity and its value to society as a whole, and find ways to brand artists as social “heroes” like sports and entertainment stars.
- Build a roster of advocates for cultural engagement from outside the cultural sector, such as politicians, business leaders and sports luminaries.
- Coordinate an advocacy speaking circuit from outside the cultural community.
- Provide training in media relations for artists and other workers in the cultural sector.
- To improve the public perception of the artist, establish a range of significant awards, modelled on the B.C. Achievement Foundation’s B.C. Book Prize, to celebrate the province’s creative talent and the contributions made by artists to their communities.

## RESEARCH

One of the major stumbling-blocks preventing a more integrated recognition of the importance of arts and culture in modern British Columbia has been the perceived lack of hard evidence to support the important assertions that are made about its contribution to economic and social sustainability.

Much evidence of this kind has in fact been generated in recent years, and steps are already under way to amass numerical and evidential data regarding the impact of creative activity on the B.C. economy.

To provide a solid foundation of information on which to build investment decisions, and to bring clarity and focus to planning in the sector at every level of government and across government departments, it is necessary to build on this resource by providing ongoing access to up-to-date information and evidence on the economic benefits of culture, the social effectiveness of cultural engagement and the impact of programs involving arts and cultural activity in education.

These materials should be complemented by comparative studies of compensation within the sector, analyses of training effectiveness, inventories of our tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and significant scans of the sector's human, organizational and infrastructure resources.

*Objectives:*

- Develop an on-going repository of statistical data related to cultural activity.
- Develop cultural indicators and quantifiable deliverables to enable evaluation of cultural activity and encourage accountability within the sector.
- Establish sound and tested methodologies to provide ongoing evidence of the benefits of sectoral investment as an integral element of government policy.

*Strategies:*

- Under the aegis of the British Columbia Arts Council, which already conducts significant research in this area, strengthen the resources devoted to the collation, analysis and dissemination of scientific research. In collaboration with national research and statistics centres, assemble materials that demonstrate the economic and social benefits of arts and cultural activity (social cohesion, youth at risk, arts and health, arts and education, etc.), relating those benefits to the goals of the province. At the same time, strengthen the BCAC's also function as a data base and arts and culture observatory to develop inventories of artists, arts agencies, cultural industries, heritage structures and repositories, intangible heritage, funding sources, etc.

## CONCLUSION

The strategic plan outlined in the previous pages is predicated on the widespread recognition of the value of our cultural identity and the creativity of our artists, arts organizations and cultural industries as an essential element of the way we conduct and share our lives together as citizens of this great province. Its success will be dictated by the extent to which partnerships can be forged among the multiple players in this sector – creators, producers, presenters, distributors – and the various investment sources inside and outside government.

Taken together, this new approach to British Columbia's cultural sustainability will integrate cultural activity into the fabric of society's prosperity and liveability, by building the competitiveness of our arts organizations and cultural industries, expanding the skilled workforce, and maximizing the creative potential of the province in its response to the needs of the new imagination economy.

It will also enable British Columbia to become a national and international leader in the recognition of creative activity as a fundamental contributor to social health and to the happiness, well-being and personal fulfilment of all British Columbians.