

Neighbourhood Arts Network

Arts & Equity Toolkit 

A project of the Neighbourhood Arts Network



neighbourhoodartsnetwork.org

An initiative of



Created by

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Neighbourhood Arts Network

Art is everywhere.

It is being created in our libraries, concert halls, community centres, theatres and parks, as well as on our sidewalks. It transforms our public spaces, allowing our citizens to imprint their identities and stories on to the city as if it was a canvas. Toronto's art makers are diverse, ranging from professional artists and arts organizations, to young people looking to beautify their community through arts and crafts, doing what they can to contribute to the on-going cultural history of the City of Toronto. The arts are a vital part of the fabric of Toronto, helping the city with its goals of beautification, social cohesion and economic development.

Compelled by our vision *Creative City, Block by Block*, Toronto Arts Foundation is committed to building a more creative city through a variety of strategic initiatives. A key component of this vision to increase accessibility to the arts for people all across the city. Through The Neighbourhood Arts Network, an initiative of The Toronto Arts Foundation, The Arts & Equity Project is designed to provide artists and community groups with the tools that they need to reduce the barriers to community participation in the arts, as well as provide a framework for effective collaboration between artists, arts organizations and their growing audiences. In short: this tool kit is a comprehensive document, designed to help our art makers become more effective as they play a key role in building Toronto through the arts.

Claire Hopkinson

Executive Director
Toronto Arts Council / Toronto Arts Foundation

The ongoing work of the Neighbourhood Arts Network would not be possible without the support of:

Toronto Arts Foundation
Toronto Arts Council
Government of Ontario
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**Neighbourhood
Arts Network**





Neighbourhood Arts Network

Since 2010, Toronto Arts Foundation's Neighbourhood Arts Network has been working to provide support to community-engaged artists and arts groups across Toronto through research and information sharing, professional development and networking events, advocacy, and promotion.

On a regular basis, the Neighbourhood Arts Network hosts community conversations on topics that are of interest to our members. These discussions help us to understand the barriers and challenges that artists and cultural workers are facing, and to explore innovative solutions. The Arts & Equity Project has emerged from needs and concerns identified by artists who are working to engage Toronto communities through the arts.

We believe that it's better to work together. By bringing people together and sharing knowledge, we are building capacity for artists and community organizations to do what they do best: enrich Toronto and transform it into a more vibrant, beautiful, liveable city.

To learn more about the Neighbourhood Arts Network and the inspiring work of community-engaged artists in Toronto, please visit www.neighbourhoodartsnetwork.org

Why Community-Engaged Arts?

The arts can be a powerful tool in building and sustaining successful neighbourhoods. Community-engaged arts practice is an approach to art making and community building that fosters collaborative relationships between artists and community members. Artists engage with communities throughout the development, creation and evaluation of arts projects and programs; community members are collaborators in the creative process. Mutual support, mentorship, learning and skill development are emphasized between artists and participants.

Community-engaged arts practices are situated within public contexts, community settings, and neighbourhood spaces. This kind of practice often extends beyond the boundaries of conventional arts venues and challenges conventional art forms and interpretations.

The result can be a dynamic surge of creativity that changes how art is made, how communities are built, and how we live together.

Creative initiatives are taking place all over Toronto – in parks, apartment buildings, libraries, community centres, storefronts and street locations. These locally-rooted projects bring residents and artists together. The result is more vibrant communities, where community members strengthen relationships and skills, community spaces are revitalized, and communal investment in neighbourhoods is renewed. In order to honour and respect the values and contributions of participants, community-engaged arts practitioners must be sensitive and responsive to issues of access, equity and accountability.

The Arts & Equity Project

The Arts & Equity Project is a research and educational initiative of Toronto Arts Foundation and the Neighbourhood Arts Network, with support from Manifesto Community Projects. Launched in the spring of 2011, the project was made possible through the Ontario Ministry of Culture's Cultural Strategic Investment Fund. The Arts & Equity Project focuses on arts and community groups who are working to reduce barriers to community participation and collaboration. The project set out to learn from, document, and share the experiences of these groups.

Interviews and Workshops

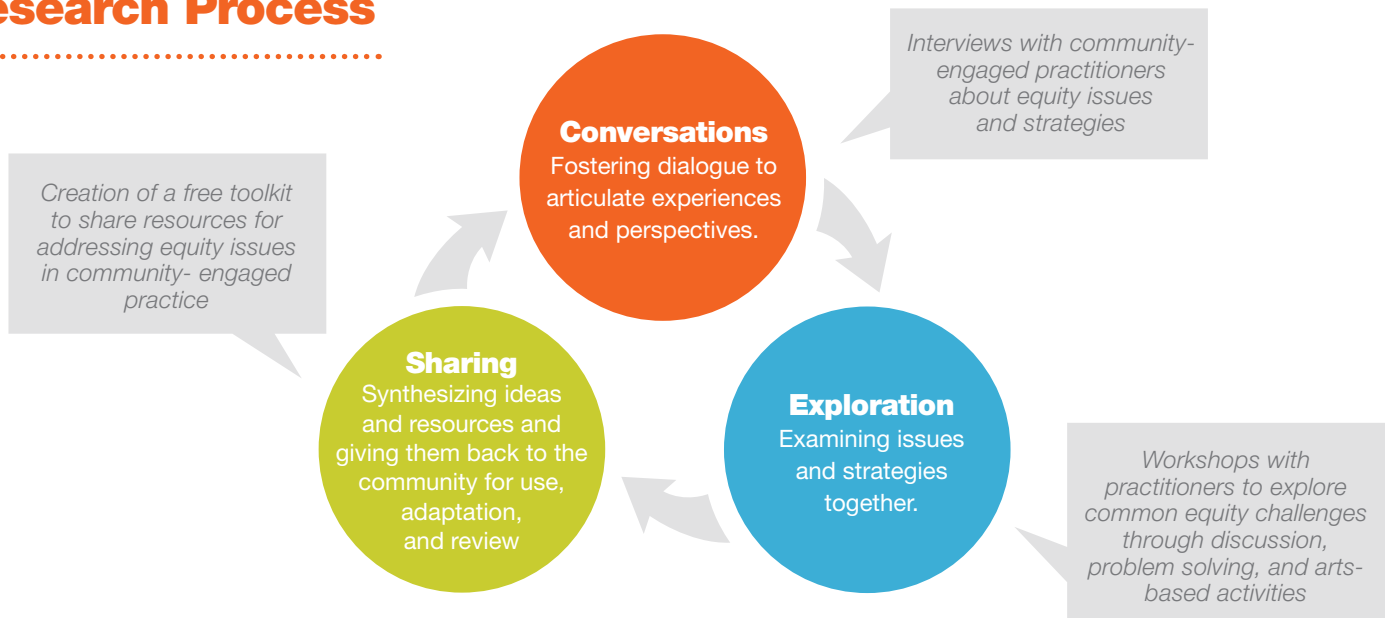
The Arts & Equity Project began through consultations and research interviews with arts and community groups, community-engaged artists, cultural workers, and community-based social service workers. We wanted to develop a better understanding of some of the challenges they face in relation to equity and professional development, as the kinds of strategies they use to address these concerns. Based on what we learned, we created a series of participatory workshops.

The workshops brought people together to examine community arts, equity, and engagement in a collaborative way. They were designed to address some of the common questions and concerns that practitioners identified during the consultations. The workshops provided a space for in-depth exploration of common challenges through discussion, problem-solving, and arts-based activities. They also enabled practitioners to develop stronger networks for peer-to-peer learning, support, and potential partnerships.

Toolkit

Utilizing learning generated through the interviews, consultations, and workshops, we developed this Arts and Equity Toolkit. The toolkit includes three primary components: a reflective section that examines issues and provides a set of principles for working towards community arts equity; examples of equity in practice that zoom in on the work of a variety of local practitioners in relation to six priority issues; and a set of practical resources connected to each of the six priority issues. The toolkit aims both to provide a means of support to those who are working to build more inclusive and equitable communities and to act as a starting point for future dialogue about equity in the field.

Arts & Equity Research Process



Acknowledgements

This toolkit would not have been possible without the generosity of the artists, cultural workers, and community workers who shared their time, knowledge and insights with the Arts & Equity Project. Thank you to all of those who collaborated with us to explore issues of arts and equity through the consultations, interviews, and workshops. We look forward to continuing the journey and deepening this conversation in the future.

Very special thanks to

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Quotations

We want to emphasize that this toolkit would not have been possible without the wealth of contributions, expertise and insight shared by the various artists, cultural workers, social service workers, individuals and organizations that participated in the Arts and Equity Project.

Within this document we sometimes include the voices of these participants using direct quotes. Although all participants gave permission for their words to be used, some participants requested that we maintain their privacy by keeping their identities confidential. To ensure this privacy we have chosen to keep the identities of all quoted participants confidential.

However we recognize that context and identity, or where someone is coming from, can be useful in helping readers to understand a quote or perspective; therefore, we have included basic roles alongside quotes such as: visual artist, community health worker, youth support worker, arts administrator, youth leader, educator, etc.



DUSK DANCES; PHOTO BY SARAH MILLER-GARVIN

Equity as a Lens

How we see or understand the world – our perception – has a significant impact on our choices and actions. A lens is a tool that we look through and use to help us perceive, examine, and frequently represent our environment — eye glasses, microscopes, binoculars, cameras, books, movie screens, the internet, faith, policy, ideas — these are all potential lenses providing insight that may shape what we know and what we do. When we refer to equity as a lens, we mean that equity can be a way of perceiving the world that allows us to shape our actions and representations so that they are more *inclusive* and socially just. In this project, equity as a lens has emerged as a set of principles that can help to inform approaches to *community-engaged arts practice*.

The focus of the Arts and Equity Project, and of the Neighbourhood Arts Network in general, is to create opportunities for sharing and mutual support amongst community-engaged arts practitioners. Listening deeply, asking questions, and communicating stories are three key components of this work. To introduce how equity can act as a lens for envisioning more inclusive and socially just community-engaged arts practices, it helps to start by sharing a story.

On a hot and sticky summer afternoon in June 2011, Skye Louis, the Neighbourhood Arts Network coordinator, and Leah Burns, the recently hired Project Coordinator, sat down at the long oval table in the Toronto Arts Council boardroom to hash out an agenda and key questions for the EDC project. When this project began, it was originally titled Engaging Diverse Communities (EDC). Its aim was **“to strengthen relationships between the arts and social service sectors in order to build capacity for artists and cultural workers to increase access and reduce barriers to cultural participation for culturally diverse communities.”**

One of the first things that came up during that mid-summer meeting was: Who are we talking about when we say ‘culturally diverse communities’? The language we were using could be interpreted in many ways. Was ‘culturally diverse’ really code for race or ethnicity? Could it include other kinds of culture such as queer culture, cultures of ability, class culture? Did it imply *marginalized* communities — was that why access and barriers might be an issue? How would the people we planned to interview and support feel about the term culturally diverse? How did this choice of language determine who we intended to contact for interviews, and how might it impact who did or did not respond or agree to participate?

We decided that we couldn’t answer all of these questions on our own so we chose to make this the starting point for the interviews we conducted during the initial stage of the project. Our first questions for participants were: How do you feel about the term culturally diverse or *cultural diversity*? What do you think of the title Engaging Diverse Communities? The following quotes are some of their responses:

“Cultural diversity is something that, from my experience . . . can be embraced but at the same time I think it’s a term that is easily manipulated . . . institutional terms of cultural diversity might not necessarily be the same as [those of] the community . . . Our society in Toronto is very culturally diverse; but, as you see, where power is concentrated, that may not be as culturally diverse [although the term] is used institutionally to set up our frameworks.” — *Youth Support Worker*

“Cultural diversity is a term that governments have embraced kind of like multiculturalism. The City of Toronto’s motto is “Diversity is our Strength” which I think is true; but, I think the problematic part is that . . . it can be watered down to talk about diversity [as] the mainstream, socially-acceptable senses of the term — food and music and festivals — which are great, but there is a lot more complexity to diversity . . . there is racism and discrimination, which is not always addressed in that term . . . I do think that it is the strength of our city; but, I think that the way it is portrayed or used does not always address what the reality is either.” — *Youth Support Worker*

“I think it is a term that people look at differently according to where they sit . . . it is a very subjective term and it is very relative to who is saying it and the context.”
— *Youth Support Worker*

“I am not a fan of the diversity terminology . . . it doesn’t really do very much to deal with substantive issues [which is] one of the reasons I prefer not to use the term... [I prefer] anti-discrimination, anti-racism . . . The sad thing about the term diversity is it really has come to replace multiculturalism; it has come to replace race relations. So when we are talking about diversity we are talking about “the other” and so it’s a masking because we are all diverse. So if you were really to do a project “Engaging Diverse Communities” you would have to be talking to all communities. I imagine you are really talking about communities who are some what outside the loop, marginal, don’t have resources or have barriers to resources . . . so it might be a bit more appropriate to name it in that way so that there is a clear message.” — *Arts Researcher*

“It’s strange in the arts community they tend to use the terms culturally specific, culturally diverse, and I can’t argue because they are all doing it . . . but that really includes everyone. Everyone has cultural specificity. Everyone is culturally diverse in their own right, so . . . “It leaves out the political?” . . . yes, and I think that may often be intentional . . . The language around diversity doesn’t help for getting at structural and systemic barriers and in the arts it doesn’t tend to get at the notion of form, which is really important, and it leaves the dominant group unnamed.” — *Arts Researcher*

We quickly realized that our choice of language was really significant. It needed to be clearer and it needed to more effectively reflect the project goals: strengthening relationships, building *capacity* for inclusive community arts practice as well as naming and addressing barriers to equitable engagement in the arts. Our choice to use “Arts and Equity” as the new project title was a response to the feedback we received in the interviews.

Our selection of the word equity in our new project title was also informed by dialogue and terminology used within *anti-oppression* movements in both the arts and *social service sectors* (Kin Gagnon 2000; Robertson 2006; Williams 2002). Equity as a preferred term or goal has emerged in response to critiques of the concept of equality. Equality implies that everyone should be treated the same way and assumes that therefore they will have equal opportunities; however, this concept does not recognize existing and historical structures in social, political, and environmental contexts that reinforce unequal status based on difference. These structures have privileged and continue to privilege certain groups and oppress others. Sameness does not equal fairness.

Although everyone who resides in Toronto contributes to the cultural diversity of the city, some residents’ cultures are privileged while other residents’ cultures are marginalized. According to the City of Toronto’s Roundtable on Access, Equity, and Human Rights: “Equity means equitable outcomes for all. It requires the removal of systemic barriers and accommodation of differences whereby individuals and groups can benefit equally. Different treatment, rather than treating everyone the same, is necessary to obtain equal results” (City of Toronto 2006).

So what does equity look like in the arts? The Arts and Cultural sector in Toronto and in Canada has been heavily influenced by and dependent on government policies and funding structures at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. Many frameworks of government arts policy and programming were founded on Western European, upper middle class ideas about art forms and art’s value. Despite a wealth of grassroots community-based art forms and traditions throughout the nation’s history, the art forms and practices that have dominated in Canada have been based on Western conceptions of “high or fine” art. “Ethnic” or “folk” art forms were not supported or recognized as part of government arts agendas, and aboriginal culture was actively suppressed. It is only within the past few decades that this has started to shift (Royal Commission 1951; Federal Cultural Policy Review 1988; Political and Social Affairs Division 1999).

The value and legitimacy of community-engaged arts has only recently been acknowledged within Canadian state and professional arts organizations in the form of funding programs, awards and staff dedicated to researching the field and managing resources that aim to foster it. (Canada Council 2006; McGauley 2006; Ontario Arts Council 1998; City of Toronto 2008). Nevertheless,

community-engaged arts practices have existed even if unrecognized and unsupported. Most experienced community arts practitioners are self-taught. They may have developed their practice in response to a need or particular context within communities that they were connected to; they may have been part of longstanding, localized non-professional arts and cultural traditions; or they may have been artists seeking alternative venues and more collaborative processes for creative production that did not fit into conventional Western and/or studio/gallery-based approaches to arts practice. Much of their insight and skill has been developed “on the ground” as they worked, learning by doing.

Currently the conception of community arts as a field or discipline in Canada has resulted in the emergence of training programs or apprenticeship opportunities, as well as university-based courses and certifications. Although existing practitioners and organizations have supported this trend of *professional development*, it does raise a number of tensions. Many children and youth who regularly participated in community-based arts programs over the past few decades are now beginning to take on leadership roles themselves. However, because community arts programming has often targeted under-served or marginalized communities, members of these communities may not be able to readily access programs that require tuition or that are located within educational institutions where they have traditionally been marginalized. This raises concerns about who is able to attain certification and whether this will have impact on perceived legitimacy, future work, or funding resources. Does professionalization compromise inclusiveness and the grassroots origins and intentions of community-engaged arts practice?

In response to the push for training, many community arts organizations in Toronto have developed their own free mentorship and educational opportunities and are working to integrate this kind of learning and skill development within existing programming. Practitioners have also identified professional development, time for critical reflection, peer support within the field, and learning from social service sector partners, as priorities for experienced as well as emerging community-engaged artists. The Arts and Equity Project is one manifestation of a larger mandate on the part of Toronto’s Neighbourhood Arts Network to foster the development and renewal of community-engaged arts in ways that honor the collaborative and inclusive qualities of the field.

We used the interviews conducted in the first stage of the Arts and Equity project to help inform a series of four workshops. The primary outcome of the workshops was the opportunity for practitioners to get together and share their experiences, strategies, and insights regarding key issues or barriers they face in their work and their communities. Taken together, the interviews and workshops have helped us to identify five key principles that inform equitable approaches to community-engaged arts practice in Toronto right now. Many of the practitioners we learned from throughout this

project demonstrate these principles in their practice. In the next section we discuss the five principles along with key terms and quotes from project participants.

We do not envision this lens as a prescription or the principles as set of rules to abide by. What has been most valuable is the dialogue, the talk: telling, articulating, and reflecting on stories of experience together. Through this process relationships were started or deepened and things began to gel. It is this gelling of ideas that you will find represented in this toolkit. Not a rigid lens but a malleable one that is open to change and renegotiation. It needs to be refocused by each particular set of hands according to each specific context.

As we moved from summer heat into the crisp coolness of autumn, the winter chill, and an unusually warm spring, we continued our reflections and discussions, at the table, on the elevator, in transit between meetings. By talking to each other, and continuing the conversation with colleagues and project participants, our sense of what this project needed to be about, began to take shape — a lens through which to consider equitable, community-engaged arts and strategies for enacting it.



Key Terms

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Anti-oppression

“[T]o acknowledge oppression in societies, economies, cultures & groups, and to remove or negate the influence of that oppression” (Wikipedia 2012). “Advocating for change, acknowledging that inequitable practices and resource distribution / utilization create systemic barriers for different communities...The elimination of all forms of oppression in order to create and maintain a safe environment that facilitates open and respectful participation of staff, clients, volunteers, students, community and board members” (Access Alliance 2012).

Capacity

Capacity is the knowledge, skills and capabilities of an individual, group, or organization. “The actual or potential ability to perform, yield, or withstand...ability to engage” (Dictionary.com 2012).

Community-engaged Arts Practice

Arts practice that emphasizes community participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of arts processes, programs and projects.

Cultural Diversity

According to the United Nations Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, “Culture takes diverse forms across time and space. This diversity is embodied in the uniqueness and plurality of the identities of the groups and societies making up humankind...The defence of cultural diversity is an ethical imperative, inseparable from respect for human dignity. It implies a commitment to human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the rights of persons belonging to minorities and those of indigenous peoples...Freedom of expression, media pluralism, multilingualism, equal access to art and to scientific and technological knowledge, including in digital form, and the possibility for all cultures to have access to the means of expression and dissemination are the guarantees of cultural diversity” (UNESCO 2007).

Grassroots

“Grassroots movements are often at the local level, driven by the politics of a community rather than orchestrated by traditional power structures” (Wikipedia 2012).



ART STARTS; PHOTO DOUGLAS HURST

Multiculturalism

In Canada, Multiculturalism was recognized by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982 and affirmed by the Canadian Multiculturalism Act in 1988 to ensure that every Canadian's rights and heritage receive respect and protection by the government. Multiculturalism recognizes the experience and contributions of diverse cultural groups. One of the aims of multicultural education is to promote the understanding of and respect for cultural and racial diversity ("Equity and Inclusive Education" 2009).

Professional Development

"Professional development refers to skills and knowledge attained for both personal growth and career development. Professional development encompasses all types of facilitated learning opportunities, ranging from college degrees and formal coursework, to conferences and workshops, or informal learning opportunities situated in practice" (Wikipedia 2012). The aim of professional development is to improve workers' sense of understanding and ability so they may better fulfill the needs and goals of particular roles or responsibilities.

Social Service Sector

The social service sector seeks to provide services to improve the quality of life and "wellbeing of an individual, group, or community, especially the disadvantaged, helping them deal with life challenges" (National Council of Social Service 2012) "[Social service] research is often focused on areas such as human development, social policy, public administration, program evaluation and inter-national and community development" (Wikipedia 2012).

Inclusive

"Inclusive of the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age and other forms of human difference. Equity and [inclusivity] ... aims to understand, identify, address, and eliminate the biases, barriers, and power dynamics that limit ... prospects for learning, growing, and fully contributing to society. Barriers may be related to gender, race, ethnic origin, religion, socio-economic background, physical or mental ability, sexual orientation, or other factors. It is now recognized that several factors may intersect to create additional barriers . . . These barriers and biases, whether overt or subtle, intentional or unintentional, need to be identified and addressed" ("Equity and Inclusive Education" 2009).

Marginalized and Marginalization

"Individuals or groups that are marginalized are relegated to the fringe of society, out of the mainstream; made to be seen as unimportant" (Free Dictionary 2012). "To marginalize" is an active verb; it is something that is done by someone to someone else . . . [relegating] certain individuals and social groups toward the edge of the societal boundary, away from the core of import. . . Marginalization is a process, not a label – a process of social de-valuation that serves to justify disproportional access to scarce societal resources." (Dei & Rummens 2012) Marginalized individuals/groups may face a lack of access to material resources such as food and shelter; they may also be excluded from or have difficulty accessing public services, programs, and policies.

5 Equity Principles



In the following section we discuss five key principles that inform equitable approaches to community-engaged arts practice in Toronto right now. These principles have emerged out of the Neighbourhood Arts Network's ongoing dialogue with local community arts and social service sector practitioners who emphasize community engagement and collaboration. It is important to recognize that we do not envision these five as the only principles for equity. There are many other organizations that have also developed frameworks and ways of understanding equity. Working towards equity is a continuous process that constantly evolves according to each context, point in time, and group of people.

5 Equity Principles

AFCY TEESDALE MOSAIC; PHOTOS BY SARAH MILLER-GARVIN



The five principles that we identify are shared across the practices of the artists and community-engaged practitioners who we worked with during the process of the Arts & Equity project. They

include: *Flexibility and Adaptability, Reflexivity and Relationships, Relevance and Representation, Embeddedness, and Sustainability.* For each principle we provide:

Discussion - What the principle is and how it relates to community-engaged practices

Questions - Points to reflect on about how the principle might apply to your practice

At a Glance - A quick review of the main ideas and important terms connected to each principle

Quotes from Arts and Equity interview and workshop participants are also incorporated throughout the discussion; their contributions help to provide insight into how each principle plays out in practice.

Flexibility & Adaptability

“You need to make sure that the people that you are asking to come to deliver a program understand how to engage...I think sometimes artists can get caught up . . . they want so much to be an artist, to have their art perfected that they forget . . . they need to step back . . . and there is going to be a lot of issues . . . great things will come out, maybe things that they have never seen . . . you are giving an opportunity to express some of the things [participants] are facing whether it be poverty...violence...lack of voice... whoever is coming in needs to understand cultural sensitivity in relation to the actual community. . . you need to have the skill set to be able to address it and leave room for it to be addressed. . . Art is about expression. Art is about issues that we are all facing and sometimes it's not pretty and working in the community, it's not always pretty . . . so empathy is necessary, patience, flexibility . . .”

—Anti-oppression Educator

Flexibility & Adaptability is really an overarching principle that informs all of the other four principles of this lens. In order to be equitable when engaging communities it is necessary to be responsive. Unlike some conventional art practices where the creative impetus and process is driven by an individual artist's vision, community-engaged arts is frequently motivated in response to the concerns of a large and often diverse group of people. Therefore the inspiration, planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects and programs are developed in response to community needs / interests and in partnership with community members.

As stated earlier, equity is about accommodation of differences rather than sameness. Choosing and adapting art forms and creative processes so that they are appropriate for each community context and for the different individuals involved is essential. Artists and community workers may have a wealth of experience and skills but expertise about a community tends to come from the community itself. Asking community members to help determine what mediums they would like to use and what kind of structures processes, and outcomes will fit their goals, work styles, needs, and responsibilities, is an effective starting point for an inclusive program.

“Some of the most challenging programs are the ones where I didn't prepare the artists. It comes down to challenging the idea of excellence. We need to set [assumptions] by the door, and recognize that it's the collaborative that's generating the expertise.”

—Visual Artist

Yet, even when a process has been developed inclusively, it is important to be flexible and to leave room for the unexpected. Flexibility means being nimble: developing the ability to be alert, sensitive to issues as they emerge, and able to respond quickly and resourcefully to accommodate them. Being flexible may also involve stretching our understanding and challenging our assumptions. Working towards equity requires openness to new ideas and interpretations of social, aesthetic, political and environmental conditions; and it calls for a willingness to perceive ourselves, our ideas, and our actions differently in relation to those we are working with.

Questions to Consider

Community Involvement

How are community members involved in the planning, outreach, implementation, and evaluation of projects, programs, or organizations?

Checking In

What techniques are used to regularly check-in with colleagues and community members about needs, processes, and goals?

Accommodation

How are differences in ability, skill level, income, language, location, perspective, etc. accommodated to ensure that all potential participants are able to take part?

Unexpected

If unexpected issues or developments occur how will they be addressed or responded to?

Training

What kind of training or preparation might be needed to support facilitators and/or participants in negotiating change or being open to difference?

At a Glance: Flexibility and Adaptability

The principle of flexibility and adaptability focuses on being responsive to community needs, skills, interests, and contexts throughout the development, planning, implementation, and evaluation of projects, programs, and organizations.

Main Ideas

Flexibility of Thought and Structure

Keeping an open mind and creating processes for thinking through or rethinking ideas together

Prioritizing Community Contributions

Adapting organizational structures, programs and processes to fit the community context and enabling community input throughout different stages and organizational levels

Planning for Spontaneity

Leaving room in plans for unforeseen developments and responding to issues as they arise

Being Proactive

Preparing facilitators and participants to accommodate differences and adapt to change

Key Terms

Accommodation

An adjustment made to policies, programs, guidelines, or practices, including adjustments to physical settings and various types of criteria, that enables individuals to benefit from and take part in the provision of services equally and to participate equally and perform to the best of their ability in the workplace or an educational setting. Accommodations are provided so that individuals are not disadvantaged or discriminated against on the basis of ability, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc. (“Equity and Inclusive Education” 2009)

Aesthetic

A particular theory or conception of beauty or art: a particular taste for or approach to what is pleasing to the senses and especially sight (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2012).

Assumption

“A fact or statement (as a proposition, axiom, postulate, or notion) taken for granted” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2012). Negative assumptions about a particular mode of cultural expression or a specific community can reinforce existing inequities. Challenging these assumptions can be an important step towards building more equitable arts practices.

Expertise

Expertise is “expert opinion or commentary”. An expert is someone with ‘special skill or knowledge derived from training or experience’ (Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2012). Lived experience can lead to expertise in a specific community or culture.

Reflexivity & Relationships

“There is a lot of evaluation of organizations; but, I think that there is a lot of personal evaluation that needs to happen . . . especially when you are working in community, self is really important because you are bringing your self into it each day . . . self reflection, self care . . . being self reflective taking that time to think about . . . how you are positioned in relation to the work that you are doing . . . Why do you want to work and engage in diverse communities? . . . What is your passion? What’s your motivation? . . . What is that all about?”
—*Anti-oppression Educator*

When working towards equity in community-engaged practices a common reflex is to begin by looking outwards and seeking to understand others: the community context and the different people within it. While getting to know the community you are working with is an essential and important step in this kind of practice, anti-oppression frameworks usually encourage practitioners to begin with themselves when they are aiming for equity. Reflexivity requires that practitioners be aware of and critically reflect on their own position within society and how that may shape their relationships with a community or with others. How do aspects of artists’ and community workers’ identities connect to power dynamics within society?

“[A] piece that is critical from the front end is to recognize privilege. Allowing each person to recognize that they do have a certain degree of privilege. We do have privilege. I have privilege from a gender perspective. I may not have privilege from a race-based [perspective] because I come from a racialized population in certain aspects. I have privilege as a heterosexual male. The program and whatever we do should help individuals to be able to recognize when they are at a position of privilege and when they are at a position of being marginalized, so that they can come at it from a full, holistic experience. So that they can become more compassionate with their understanding.” —*Community Health Administrator*

Recognizing how one may embody or represent different kinds of power or agency and how that may impact the building of relationships with colleagues, community members, and other organizations is vital. What kind of access to knowledge and resources do you have and does this give you an advantage or disadvantage? What qualifies and/or motivates you to work in a particular role or with a particular group? How do you acknowledge and address unequal power dynamics within a relationship? What are the possibilities and limitations of your position in relation to other people? What kinds of accommodations might you need to make in order to form relationships that are more equitable? Getting to know ourselves and our organizations better, including how we are situated and perceived in our communities, can help to build our awareness and strengthen our interactions.

It is also important to recognize that while we bring ourselves (skills, knowledge, sense of self) to a community we also further develop ourselves as we engage with community. Reciprocity is an integral component of equitable community-engagement. Reciprocity means that there is a back-and-forth sharing of resources and an ethic of mutual respect. Everyone involved both gives and receives something; it could be knowledge, materials, ideas, time, energy, space, or other contributions. In equitable community-en-

SUBTEXT FESTIVAL; PHOTO BY EMILIE WONG



gaged arts practice the contributions of the community are just as significant as those of the artists or arts organizations involved. Community knowledge and expertise are valued, sought out, acknowledged and integrated.

“I don’t think any census or Internet research or workshop would really help me understand a community. I think what would, is getting to know some key people . . . trying to go for coffee with some community leaders and having a conversation with them . . . asking them their experience and their questions and their advice and who they think I should get to know.”

—City of Toronto Community Worker

Developing mutual understanding and knowledge requires the building of relationships. Every single person we interviewed identified an investment in relationships as critical for equitable community engagement. This investment requires “lived experience of the community and connections with actual people”: face-to-face dialogue, being present by spending time in and with a community, asking questions, and listening. What skills, resources, and initiatives already exist in the community? What are the important rhythms, spaces, individuals and groups?

Questions to Consider

Identities, Motivations and Experiences

- What are my motivations for engaging in this work?
- What access to knowledge and resources do I have?
- Does this give me an advantage or disadvantage?
- How can this affect my interactions with others?
- What kinds of experiences qualify me to play a particular role or be involved with a particular group?

“Depending on your experience, if you have general knowledge of different cultural communities, different types of communities... and an anti-oppression framework and have previous experience, that’s helpful. But it’s people that really matter and the dynamics of every community are really, really different.”

—City of Toronto Community Worker

Commitment to equity in relationships requires time, transparency and teamwork. Relationships are built and strengthened over time; so, deeper community engagement involves more one than one single project or moment. Long-term investment may be required to develop community trust and build support for a program, an initiative, an individual, or an organization. Strong relationships also involve transparency, letting people in. Being transparent means allowing people to see and understand motives, organizational processes/structures, and power dynamics. It includes sharing information and being honest about what may or may not be achieved with existing skills and resources. It also requires teamwork. More can often be achieved by opening up, collaborating, seeking help/input, and sharing ownership with community members. For more on collaboration see: Many Hands Make Light Work - Red Dress Productions and the Sherbourne Health Centre and the worksheet: Assessing Your Collaboration in the Equity in Practice section of this toolkit.

Relationships and Power Dynamics

- What are the important rhythms, spaces, individuals and groups within the community?
- What are my relationships to the people, places, and ideas involved?
- How am I perceived by others?
- How does this affect the work I am engaged in?
- What are the possibilities and limitations of my position in relation to other people?
- How do I acknowledge and address unequal power dynamics within a relationship?
- What kinds of accommodations or changes do I need to make in order to form relationships that are more equitable?
- How much time is available for relationships to deepen and for trust to be built?

Sharing, Reciprocity and Respect

- Can my relationship with others be classified as either 'giving' or 'taking'?
- Or is there a two-way exchange of knowledge and resources?
- Do my actions demonstrate respect for the people and places I am working with?
- Who gets to be a part of decision-making?
- Who am I willing to share ownership with?

Listening and Learning

- What skills, resources, and initiatives already exist in the community?
- Am I seeking out existing community knowledge and expertise?
- How am I integrating my learning into the work as it moves forward?

Transparency

- Do I share my motivations, processes, and structures with others?
- How do I let others in on my processes and decisions?

SUBTEXT FESTIVAL; PHOTO BY EMILIE WONG



At a Glance: Reflexivity and Relationships

The principle reflexivity and relationships starts with critical self-reflection; reflecting on how our own position (identity, skills, motivation) fits with those we aim to work with. This reflection helps when working to build and maintain relationships. Equitable relationships require time, transparency, and teamwork.

Main Ideas

Practicing Self-Reflection

Critically reflecting on personal, professional, and organizational identity / social positions as well as how these factors inform relationships, perspectives, and participation.

Investing in Relationships

Building time for developing relationships into vision, planning and goals. Being present by spending time in/with a community and by meeting people face-to-face.

Being Transparent

Providing public access and facilitating the sharing of information about decision-making, available resources, goals, organizational structures and processes.

Emphasizing Collaboration

Including active engagement of community members in design, planning, implementation and evaluation of programs.

Key Terms

Privilege

“The experience of freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages, access and/or opportunities afforded members of the dominant group in a society or in a given context, usually unrecognized and taken for granted by members of the majority group, while the same freedoms, rights, benefits, advantages access and/or opportunities are denied to members of the minority or disadvantaged groups” (“Racism101: Definitions” 2012).

Racialized or Racialization

“A group of people who may experience social inequities on the basis of race, colour, and/or ethnicity, and who may be subjected to differential treatment” [racialized]. “The process through which groups come to be seen as different, and may be subjected to differential and unequal treatment” [racialization] (“Equity and Inclusive Education” 2009).

Reciprocity

“[T]he social expectation that people will respond to each other in kind—returning benefits for benefits.” “An ethic of reciprocity works from the understanding that each individual has a right to just treatment, and a reciprocal responsibility to ensure justice for others” (Wikipedia 2012).

Reflexivity

Critically reflecting on one’s own social position and identity in relation to the field / community / people that one is engaging with. Working to understand how social position may impact relationships, power dynamics and processes of engagement or interpretation. This can be applied to organizations as well as individuals.

Transparency

Removing all barriers to—and the facilitating of— free and easy public access to information about the conditions, agendas, power dynamics, finances and social processes that shape cultural organizations and influence cultural workers. Supporting the public to freely join, develop, and improve these processes. (Wikipedia 2012)

Relevance & Representation

“Communities need to understand how they fit, how they benefit . . . there is a lot of that feeling that, especially priority or underserved communities are being used . . . how are the youth going to benefit, how are the adults going to benefit, you know . . . it looks good for you, you are still ticking it off, but at the end of the day you are going to walk out of here and we are not getting the best out of it for us.”

—Anti-oppression Educator

Conventional Western fine arts practices have commonly been critiqued and parodied in North American popular media as elitist or irrelevant to everyday life. In response, the fine arts community has worked hard to demonstrate how these practices do have value; however, it is also important to consider why this feeling of alienation from arts practice might exist. The spaces in which many of these arts disciplines are accessed often formalize and/or prescribe how people are allowed to interact with art. Arts professionals usually determine what art will appear and how it will appear. Invitations to participation or engagement often occur once these decisions have already been made. However the imperative to nurture more diverse audiences has challenged some of these institutions to rethink their approaches. A key concern in working to be more inclusive is that organizations need to commit to change over the long-term through increased relevance and representation rather than fulfilling diversity mandates through tokenistic projects or initiatives that only fleetingly or superficially represent non-dominant groups.

What often motivates participation or investment in any form of social or cultural engagement is a sense of connection and relevance. The goal of community-engaged arts practice is to make the arts more accessible and more relevant to more individuals and communities. It moves beyond the conception of diverse communities only as potential audiences and includes them as collaborators in the creation and presentation of artwork. Art that is relevant has meaning beyond a moment of encounter. The relevance may be found in the subject matter — speaking to or expressing people's lived experiences. It may be embodied by a particular medium revealing a means of expression that resonates and inspires. Or relevance may be found in the learning gleaned through the process of art making itself.



“We are being a lot more intentional in the work that we do . . . we are not doing art for the sake of doing art. We are doing art with a purpose, with a deeper meaning. We are attaching the social aspects to the art that we do, taking on a bit more in terms of the social service side of things, working with young people to address their everyday issues . . . looking at not just the fact that a young person wants to come in and use our studio [but] what specifically do they want to do, why are they coming in . . . what issues or challenges are they coming with? . . . A lot of the young people that we are working with they don't just want to come here to do arts programs. They are learning leadership; they are dealing with life skills issues . . . careers, growth and development.”

— Community Arts Administrator

When artwork is relevant it meets the needs of those who engage with it; it is pertinent to their lives and it has social applicability. Relevance can often be better achieved by being attentive to inclusive representation. The field of inclusive education identifies multiple layers of representation: representation with regards to people (who), representation in terms of form, process and content (what), and representation with concern for setting or environment (where). The Ontario Ministry of Education's guidelines for equity (2009) echoes these forms of representation when describing inclusive learning: “[people] are engaged in and empowered by what they are learning, supported by whom they are learning from, and welcome in the environment in which they are learning” (p. 12). Applying this concept of inclusive representation to arts contexts can be useful for developing more equitable arts practices and organizations. For another example of how to support inclusivity and initiate change within arts contexts try exploring CPAMO's toolkit: *Evidence Based Strategies to Promote Pluralism in the Arts*

<https://sites.google.com/site/cpamotoolkit/home>

Questions to Consider

Is the art form or artwork relevant?

- How does the art being pursued have meaning for community members?
- Does its relevance extend beyond the moment of engagement and connect with community or individual priorities and goals?

Who is represented?

- Are the people in leadership roles such as staff, facilitators, or artists representative of the groups that make up the communities they work with?
- Whose voices or perspectives are sought out and incorporated within decision-making processes?

What is represented?

- What forms of artwork are supported and pursued; do they

represent a range of cultural origins and practices?

- What is the subject matter that the artwork explores; does it investigate issues or experiences that represent some communities more than others; is anyone privileged or excluded?
- How is the creative process constructed; what learning or engagement styles and preferences does it accommodate?

Where are the arts situated?

- Are the spaces in which arts practice is situated accessible in terms of differences in physical mobility?
- Does the environment reflect the perspectives and backgrounds of all community members?
- How are people expected to interact or engage within the space and does this honor different cultural traditions?
- Is it a space in which all contributors will feel comfortable or safe to participate?

At a Glance: Relevance and Representation

The principle of relevance and representation is based on the premise that community-engaged art should have social value beyond art for art's sake. It also encourages arts practitioners and organizations to rethink the who, what, and where associated with art practice.

Main Ideas

Committing to Change

Committing to change over the long-term through organizational and programmatic restructuring that more equitably distributes decision-making and authority. Making inclusion and non-dominant perspectives an integral component of program/project design over the long-term, not as a special event.

Meaningful Engagement

Fostering engagement in or with art forms that have meaning and that connect to the lives of the people in the communities you work with. Creating opportunities for community members to be active participants in the creative process or experience.

People and Content

Being attentive to who is represented in terms of the subject/content of artwork and in terms of who the creators or participants in art practice are. Increase staff, artists, and participants from non-dominant groups.

Form and Location

Recognizing non-Western art forms as legitimate and vibrant / active methods of arts practice. Diversifying the location of arts practice by including different kinds of locations, different ways of organizing art practice in these spaces, as well as different modes of engaging participation in and with art. Ensuring that art forms and venues are accessible and honor the perspectives and traditions of non-dominant communities.

Embeddedness

“Sometimes as organizations we ask so much of people without thinking . . . yes, okay, we have a small budget, but we are asking them for their time . . . what are we doing to engage them, what are we giving them for them to be there for an hour and a half . . .”

—Anti-oppression Educator

A barrier to equitable access within cultural programs for communities is that they are often designed and implemented externally. It is not uncommon that people cite a lack of time, interest, cost, distance, conflicting responsibilities, or a need to prioritize, when questioned about reasons for not participating in cultural activities. They cannot fit it in. They see it as external to their lives and their communities. To embed means, “to cause to be an integral part of a surrounding whole” (Houghton Mifflin, 2012). Embeddedness requires that community-engaged practice be rooted within existing community contexts and initiatives. It encourages recognition of the conditions of people’s lives. Any worthy activity needs to demonstrate a consideration of community priorities and a clear benefit for community participation.

Embedding cultural programming may mean building on or connecting to community initiatives that already exist: social groups, support networks, arts and recreational activities, child-care, other community agencies. For examples of these kinds of connections see Participatory Programming - Manifesto and Creatively Bridging Communities - Scarborough Arts on pages 36 and 43 of the Equity in Practice section of this toolkit. It is important to realize that many communities that are marginalized by dominant cultural practices or circumstances are often very proactive. Members of these communities frequently develop their own means of expression and support. Learning about these initiatives and working in ways that can help communities to build on them rather than imposing programming based on external agendas is part of the principle of embeddedness. This might require rethinking approaches to planning and outreach.

“I often think of outreach...as really gathering information...finding spots within the community where things are happening, formal and informal leadership...places where I could get information, where I could see things, where I would know the community in essence . . . so if the community is one where you hangout and sit and talk then I hang out and sit and talk or I hang out and listen a lot . . . Who are the key people...lets talk about an agenda...get them involved ... How might we work together? Do we need to do community consultations and if so how, when, who . . . How will we build an element of participation in so people feel good about what

they are contributing to . . . [so] they know that they have actually had a hand in it, not that they have been heard and somebody goes off and basically structures it the way he or she wants to.”

—Arts Researcher

Embeddedness may involve physically locating programs or projects within specific geographic communities and neighbourhoods so that they are easier to get to and so that the spaces are more familiar. Or it may mean utilizing on-line or virtual spaces and technologies that the community regularly accesses.

People may feel more at ease participating in activities if they are at ease in their environment. Within this environment, cultural workers and organizations also need to understand themselves and their programming as part of a surrounding whole. For an excellent example of embedded community-engaged arts practice check out Urban Arts Toronto (www.urbanartstoronto.org). Embeddedness requires a commitment to having a presence as part of a community beyond one’s own projects and initiatives.

“We are very active in the community. We participate in as much of what is happening in the community as possible . . . We make sure we are present in any community consultations, any community events, anything that pretty much is happening, we’re there. We have a table; we have staff present. If we cannot be there then our information is there... we connect with the local BIA’s...the local farmers’ market ...our local youth outreach workers . . . its being connected to key people in the community.”

— Community Arts Administrator

Equitable community-engaged arts aims to weave itself into the fabric of community life as an integral thread rather than an add-on or a decoration. The principle of embeddedness works with the understanding that culture isn’t always “out there” in a separate art space waiting to be offered and consumed; it already exists within people’s everyday lives and interactions. Often what a community needs most is for their culture to be listened to, recognized, and supported.



Questions to Consider

Connecting to Community Assets and Priorities

- What activities, assets, initiatives and means of expression already exist in the community?
- How does the activity relate to pre-existing community assets and initiatives?
- How is the activity woven into community life and existing cultural activities?
- How are community priorities being integrated into the project?

At a Glance: Embeddedness

The principle of embeddedness requires that community-engaged practice be rooted within existing community contexts and initiatives. Embedded practices recognize of the conditions of people's lives and demonstrate a consideration of community priorities and a clear benefit for community participation.

Main Ideas

Being Present

Committing to change over the long-term through organizational and programmatic restructuring that more equitably distributes decision-making and authority. Making inclusion and non-dominant perspectives an integral component of program/project design over the long-term, not as a special event.

Connecting

Building on or contributing to existing community initiatives and modes of expression rather than imposing externally derived projects and forms.

Key Terms

Integral or Integrated

When something is integral it is an essential component, central rather than marginal. To achieve equity in the arts, communities that are currently marginalized need to become an integral part of the arts sector. To be integrated is to be part of a surrounding

Location

- Where are programs or activities taking place?
- Are they located in places that are familiar to those involved?
- Who feels welcome there?
- Are they easy to access?
- What barriers might exist, and how might they be addressed?

Participation

- How is this work rooted in the community?
- Who is involved, and what are their relationships to the community?
- Who is making decisions?
- What are the benefits for community participation?

Locating

Considering who community members are when choosing where to locate arts practices. Choosing spaces that are accessible to them and that they feel comfortable in. Finding potential locations by identifying spaces or hubs that community members already use.

Community Priorities & Conditions

Learning from community members the kinds of conditions they are dealing with and what their priorities are. Developing programming in collaboration with the community that addresses these priorities and conditions.

whole. Equitable community-engaged arts are integrated into communities so that they are embedded within or connected to the other parts of a community.

Sustainability

“A lot of the programs that a lot of organizations run go to a particular school and then move to another spot . . . [but] developing sustainability within the community, within the schools [is important]. . . you want the children, the youth, the schools to gain something, you want there to be capacity building but it doesn’t necessarily happen in one session . . . its going to happen with building and creating that trust, a partnership that they can build . . . if we do projects that are [short term] what are the outcomes? How do you track the results . . . if there is no sustainability piece built in [for participants] to still be plugged in at the end of the day? How much are you bringing? What is the follow-up so that they can be sustained?”

—Anti-oppression Educator

ART STARTS; PHOTO BY ERIN SCHACHTER

Sustaining community-engaged arts practice is an on-going challenge. Sustainability is an equity principle because it requires a holistic perspective on community arts. A holistic approach takes into consideration the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of the people, communities, and organizations involved in community arts processes. Sustainability is about creating programming that can endure over time and that nourishes and supports the capacity of individuals, organizations and communities to engage in activities that have meaning for them and to set and achieve goals that benefit them.

Understanding and accommodating the people involved in community arts practices in a holistic way calls for awareness of their physical, social, emotional/psychological, and spiritual needs. They are whole people within and beyond their particular role in relation to the community arts endeavor. Each person brings a life experience and a life context with them — they do not leave it behind even when an arts experience is transformational or when it aims to offer refuge. Creating environments that sustain people may involve provision of food, transportation, secure and accessible spaces. It may also involve learning about, acknowledging and accommodating a range of learning styles, living conditions, or life responsibilities beyond the community arts context.

Applying the principle of sustainability in relation to communities may entail sustaining a longer-term commitment to the community through on-going and evolving relationships and programming or projects. Rather than seeing a particular initiative as an isolated endeavor, it should be considered in relation to the impact it will have over time. How does the project contribute to the well-being of the community? What social, cultural, economic or environmental benefit will the community arts initiative support moving into the future?

Maintaining a holistic perspective is also helpful in the creation of

sustainable organizations. In contemporary contexts environmentally friendly practices and products are often the first things associated with sustainability. “Green” organizations and art forms often make use of materials that are biodegradable and emphasize reducing, reusing, and recycling. Organizational sustainability stresses rethinking and renewal as well. It might focus on rethinking how an organization is structured to sustain, motivate and nourish staff by supporting less hierarchical models and/or increased communication and feedback between staff at all levels as well as building professional development into staff roles and responsibilities. Rethinking may extend to finances and seeking out ways to diversify financial support through partnerships, resource sharing, co-operatives, or social enterprise.

The responsive nature of community-engaged arts practice means that organizational sustainability is also inherently tied to renewal — “a commitment to the on-going review, revision, and re-articulation of defining concepts and practices. This commitment supports the potential of emerging voices and provides flexibility so that those who are already deeply invested are able to renegotiate and renew their relationship to practice in response to new learning.”

Evaluation and mentorship play an important role in renewing and sustaining community-engaged arts. Participatory and collaborative forms of evaluation can be used to assess and improve programming and organizations. For an example of this kind of evaluation see *Significant Change: Art Reach Toronto* on page 63 of the *Equity in Practice* section of this toolkit and check out the tools and resources on evaluation. Mentorship of emerging artists and cultural workers supports the on-going development of new visions and innovations. Mentorship is also an opportunity for experienced practitioners to share their skills and knowledge and to develop new insights, renewing their relationship and understanding of the field as it evolves. This kind of inclusive, mutual support sustains the people, communities and organizations involved in community arts practice.



Questions to Consider

Life Experiences and Needs

- What are some of the physical, social, economic, emotional/psychological, and spiritual needs of the people involved?
- What experiences are people bringing with them?
- How do personal experiences shape community involvement and support of the activity?
- What needs to happen in order to accommodate a range of learning styles, living conditions, or life responsibilities?

Contributions to Community

- How does the project contribute to the well-being of the community?
- What makes it worthwhile for community members to support an activity or initiative?
- What social, cultural, economic or environmental benefit will the community arts initiative support moving into the future?

Relationships and Accountability

- What kind of trust is present in the relationships that exist?
- What factors might influence the level of trust that exists?
- Who is accountable for the outcomes of the activity?
- What is at stake if the project does not go as planned?
- What are the long-term impacts on facilitators?
- What are the long-term impacts on community members or community spaces?

Sustaining Organizations

- What kinds of social, educational, or economic supports does the organization have access to?
- How are stakeholders involved in evaluation?
- How is feedback used to assess and improve programs and activities?
- What can we do to support our staff and volunteers?
- Do staff have adequate training for the work they are doing?
- How can we support staff through communication and feedback?
- What are the opportunities for professional development?

At a Glance: Sustainability

The principle of sustainability refers to practices that can endure and nourish individuals, communities, and organizations into the future. It takes into account the social, cultural, environmental, and economic well-being of all stakeholders.

Main Ideas

Evolving

Developing strategies for response to and implementation of change on an on-going basis in order to better address social and community needs as they evolve. This approach sustains and renews organizations, practices, relationships and the people engaged in community arts.

Aiming for Health

Sustaining your organizations and initiatives by supporting the health of the communities they serve and the people (staff, artists, volunteers and community members) that contribute to them. Considering how you can support their social, cultural, environmental, economic and physical well-being.

Enduring

Nourishing and supporting the long-term capacity of individuals, organizations, and communities to engage in activities that have meaning for them and set and achieve goals that benefit them.

Mutual Support

Providing mentorship for emerging voices and encouraging continued development for experienced practitioners. Recognizing that sharing and learning can be a mutual exchange between new practitioners and experienced ones as well as between cultural workers and community members. Supporting and valuing one another will sustain commitment and keep practices vibrant.

Key Terms

Holistic

The concept that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts and therefore effective interpretation and engagement of a subject or context must consider all of its aspects / parts simultaneously. Holistic health care requires **“care of the entire patient in all aspects”** (The Free Dictionary 2012). A holistic approach means examining something in context rather than isolation, and taking into account that it both impacts and is impacted by its environment.

Well-being

“Well-being is most usefully thought of as the dynamic process that gives people a sense of how their lives are going, through the interaction between their social and material circumstances, activities and psychological resources or ‘mental capital’. Factors that both influence and constitute people’s well-being may include: a sense of individual vitality; undertaking activities which are meaningful, engaging, and which make them feel competent and autonomous; a stock of resources to help them cope when

things go wrong and be resilient to changes beyond their immediate control; and a sense of relatedness to other people, so that in addition to the personal, internally focused elements, people’s social experiences – the degree to which they have supportive relationships and a sense of connection with others – form a vital aspect of well-being.” (The New Economics Foundation 2012)

Social Enterprise

Social Enterprise refers “to business ventures operated by non-profits, whether they are societies, charities, or co-operatives. These businesses sell goods or provide services in the market for the purpose of creating a blended return on investment, both financial and social. Their profits are returned to the business or to a social purpose, rather than maximizing profits to shareholders. Others use a broader definition that includes privately owned ventures that have a very strong blended financial and socially responsible return on investment.” (Enterprising Non Profits 2012)

PHOTO: ARTREACH TORONTO



Equity in Practice



This section focuses on community arts and social service sector practitioners who participated in the Arts and Equity project. We feature six stories of community-based organizations in Toronto whose practices exemplify equity in practice. Each example demonstrates how a local organization tackles a particular equity issue. We provide the context, tell the story, identify key tools and strategies and explore the connection to equity. In this section we also briefly discuss Stress Management, an equity issue that was identified by practitioners as a learning priority. We explain why this issue requires further investigation and we provide links to local organizations, programs and resources that can support learning and skills development in Stress Management for artists and community workers.



PHOTO: ERIN SCHACHTER

Listening First Art Starts

Context and Participants

Art Starts is a neighbourhood-based cultural organization focused on community building through the arts. Programming involves Art Starts staff and board members, program participants, community members and community partners.

A key challenge for an organization embedded in multiple communities is maintaining communication both internally between program staff, administrative staff, and board members, and externally between Art Starts and community members in the neighbourhoods where programming takes place.

Goals

To understand existing community interests, needs, activities and assets; to build and maintain open lines of communication and feedback; to provide staff with opportunities for self-reflection.

Funding

Art Starts receives funding from a mixture of government operating and project grants, foundations, corporations, and private donors.

In-Kind Support

Art Starts receives in-kind support in the form of programming space from Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Toronto

Public Libraries, the City of Toronto, and a variety of partnering organizations, in addition to donations of materials, and professional expertise through volunteer consultants at Management Advisory Services.

Staff and Volunteers

Art Starts maintains approximately 5 core staff, plus approximately 4 contract staff, 9 volunteer board members, and 53 program volunteers.

At a Glance

What began as a small storefront arts space in the Eglinton and Oakwood area in 1992 has expanded to ongoing programming in four neighbourhoods across Toronto. A critical element of the Art Starts approach is developing programs in partnership with community members in order to be responsive to local interests and needs. Working out of multiple locations and communities brings its own set of opportunities and challenges. In order to maintain programming that is relevant and responsive to community needs, Art Starts emphasizes communication, flexibility and adaptability.

When starting to program in a new community, Art Starts begins by listening.

“It’s important to get feedback from the community, to know what types of art are relevant. Transparency is important – we are approachable and want to address the needs of the community. It’s important not to be rigid about our plans - it’s about setting expectations. We have our outcomes, and we have great facilitators.... Staff come with a certain attitude of being open or flexible – which can be especially challenging among artists!”

Maintaining approachability, flexibility and transparency, and listening first helps Art Starts to design and develop arts programs that are reflective of and relevant to community needs and interests.

“Relationship building is such a huge piece of what we do. Everything comes back to transparency – being really clear about ourselves and what we do in the community. We’re coming in as outsiders, so we’re being really really respectful that it’s their space. We’re being honest about our services and what we are able to provide. Being open to feedback, being approachable.”

Through connecting with community leaders, and at drop-in sessions, local community needs and interests gradually begin to emerge.

“We find out about the community beforehand by talking to community leaders. We hold drop-in art sessions....We might not always know what arts they’re interested in, so we do workshops in different forms, showcase previous projects. It’s a collaborative process of coming up with ideas....We also hold neighbourhood walks, where you’re walking around the community, and stories come out of that. Then we take the info back. We’ve got this great roster of artists and a history of addressing community needs and interests creatively.”

As the relationship between Art Starts and the community grows, the process becomes more of a conversation and ideas start to come up naturally. The programs that emerge from this process are relevant because they are initially addressing a need.

Internal communication is equally important. With programs in four neighbourhoods, there is potential for board members and administrative staff to become disconnected from the priorities and needs of program managers working ‘on the ground’ in neighbourhoods with varied and constantly changing needs. Regular check-ins with program managers help to identify the successful elements of programs, and how community needs may have evolved.

“Self-reflection happens organically and collectively amongst the staff. We get together every two weeks and report to one another. This helps to set the direction of where we’re going. I really like the performance reviews – it provides an opportunity to reflect and think about your goals. We are regularly visiting our programming sites and touching down about programs with the program managers. We talk about how needs have changed and what needs have come up, the success of the programs, and anything we can change. This happens at the end of every summer, the end of the year, and in the spring after winter programming is finished.”

Annual performance reviews provide an important opportunity for staff to reflect on their work. They also create space for open communication where staff can express concerns or identify issues. It’s also vital that the program director is aware of any issues and can communicate them to the board via the managing director.

“It’s really important for staff to feel like they’re being heard and for them to be validated, and for communication to be open. If you’re in the office, it can be hard to know what’s going on on the ground, and it’s really important for the board as well, because they are even further disconnected.”

The Art Starts board has also created a committee structure to increase communication between staff and board. Five committees focus on fundraising, finance, human resources, governance, marketing, and communications. Each committee includes at least one staff member and one board member; this provides an opportunity for staff and board members to work together and communicate directly.

Key Strategies and Tools:

Programming that is responsive to community needs must be flexible and adaptable. By starting with drop-in programs and neighbourhood tours when entering a new community, Art Starts is able to build relationships and understand local needs before designing programs. The end result is a collaborative, creative response to community needs, interests, and concerns.

Art Starts builds a culture of open communication by holding regular staff reviews that provide opportunities for staff to engage in self-reflection, raise concerns and observations, and share feedback. These reviews are used to shape decisions about future programming.

Art Starts encourages open lines of communication between staff and board members; the program director acts as a liaison and communicates program staff needs and concerns to the board. The organization's committee structure pairs staff and board members so that they are able to work together and communicate directly with one another.

Connection to Equity: Critical Reflection

For artists working in community settings, critical reflection is a necessity. Equity starts with you. Critical reflection, or reflexivity, encourages practitioners to be more aware of themselves, their motivations, and their impact. The first part of an equitable Community Arts Practice involves practitioners reflecting on who they are and how this connects to the processes, projects and communities they work with. Critical Reflection can provide a way of engaging with power dynamics and fostering a better understanding of the interface between the personal and the professional. Building safe, supportive spaces and processes for reflection within organizational structures and practices is vital for learning, growth and empowerment.



Worksheets: Critical Reflection

Four Principles of Reflection & Sample Reflection Activities

Excerpts from the Bonner Foundation curriculum document, *Leading Reflection: An Overview and Techniques*; used with permission.

The 4 C's of Reflection

Continuous

- Reflection should be an ongoing part of the service performed
- This allows participants to continue seeing the world in new ways
- This fosters a commitment to long-term reflective action and a growing awareness that may lead to more complex service, activism, and social change efforts

Connected

- Reflection should be connected to the other quality components: orientation, training and education
- Used to illustrate (connect) theories to real life
- Fosters more effective service and more effective learning

Challenging

- Individuals ask and answer questions or statements which may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable
- This forces participants to think in new ways and question their perceptions of events and issues

Contextualized

- Reflection is a purposeful way to connect thought and action
- Reflection activities should be appropriate for the setting level of formality

Sample Reflection Activities

Group Story

The Group Story challenges participants to construct a story one line at a time to describe the day's events.

Letters

Have participants write letters to themselves after the project. Mail the letters to them three to four weeks later. This will give participants a chance to process what happened as well as remind them of the event and the thoughts and feelings that they had later.

Nature Walk

Ask the group to spend a few minutes searching the nearby environment for something that symbolizes one thing they will remember about the project. (You can also ask for something that symbolizes a strength they bring to the group, a meaningful experience they had, a person that they met . . .). Bring the group back together to discuss what their treasure means.

Triangle Tool Activity

Adapted for the Arts & Equity Project by Leah Burns from Educating for a Change by Rick Arnold, this tool can be used to help analyze / understand and problem-solve different scenarios. It uses three modes of group dialogue: visual representation; text-based responses to discussion questions; and poster-based presentations and dialogue.

Preparation

Prepare several short descriptions of problem scenarios that are based on situations participants may experience in their work and would like support with. Include who was involved (individuals and their roles, organizations, etc.), state the context (where and when did the incident occur), describe the problem or incident.

Participants

This was designed for a large group of about 20 (however it can be adapted to suit other numbers). The large group would be broken into several smaller groups of 3 or 4 people each.

Materials

Each small group should have three large sheets of paper, markers for drawing and writing and a means of hanging the paper for display.

Activity Steps

1 In your small group choose one of the provided scenarios to explore

2 Working together, create a visual representation of the scenario

(use a large sheet of paper for drawing)

3 Analyze the scenario using the Triangle Tool

(use a second large sheet of paper for recording analysis)

- Each point on the Triangle analyzes a different aspect of a possible scenario.
- Draw the triangle on the paper and then explore each point using the questions provided.
- Work with your group to identify the personal, organizational, and broader social issues reflected in the scenario.

Issues, Ideas & Assumptions



Organizational

Personal

Personal

- What might the different individuals involved be experiencing (feelings, concerns, etc)?
- How might the different people involved be responsible?
- How might each person's identity or role impact the scenario?

Issues, ideas & Assumptions

- What key equity issues are at play in the scenario?
- What assumptions are being made?
- What larger social issues, ideas or trends are reflected in the scenario?

Organizational

- What are the responsibilities of the arts organization or artist-facilitators?
- What other organizations might be implicated in the scenario?
- How?
- What are the organizational conditions of the situation – context, limits, barriers, or vulnerabilities – that may need to be considered?

4 Create recommendations for addressing the scenario equitably

(use third large sheet of paper for recording recommendations)

5 Choose a member of the group to present your analysis and recommendations

6 Gallery

- Display your group's three sheets of paper
- Presenter stays with display to explain it
- Other group members visit other displays to see and ask about their analysis and recommendations
- Rejoin your group and discuss

7 Reconvene in the larger group to review and discuss the different interpretations and recommendations for each scenario



Self-Assessment: Inventory of Societal Privileges and Obstacles¹

Excerpted from the *Educator's Equity Workbook, Harmony Movement, 2012*; used with permission

	True or False	Societal Privilege	Societal Obstacle
You consider your primary ethnicity to be Canadian			
You were called names or ridiculed because of your a) race, b) ethnicity and/or c) class			
You have immediate family members who are doctors, lawyers or other professionals			
You are able to go into any store and are financially able to purchase most things you need			
You avoid walking alone at night because of your gender identity			
You graduated from a post-secondary institution			
You studied the history and culture of your ethnic ancestors in elementary and secondary school			
You spoke a language other than English when you started school			
You can cross a street at a crosswalk during the time given			
You went to art galleries, museums or plays as a child or adolescent			
You have been on a vacation outside your home province			
You can vote for elected officials			
Your parents owned their house when you were growing up			
You have been mistrusted or accused of stealing, cheating or lying because of your ethnicity			
You have feared violence directed toward you because of your a) ethnicity, b) sexual orientation, c) gender identity and/or d) faith			
You have felt uncomfortable or angry about a remark or joke made about your a) ethnicity, b) sexual orientation, c) gender identity and/or d) ability, but did not feel safe enough to confront it			

Sources of Power

Excerpted from the *Educator's Equity Workbook, Harmony Movement, 2012; used with permission*

Acknowledging and understanding our own power and privilege can be an emotional process, but it's a critical step. Consider that knowledge about equity can become a positive force that we can harness to lead to social change.

What types of power or privilege do you possess?	How have you used this power to build equity?	Has this power ever hurt someone?	What are some of the sources of your knowledge about equity? How do these sources strengthen you in your practice?

Tools and Resources: Critical Reflection

The Critically Reflective Practitioner

Sue Thompson and Neil Thompson, 2018

This book provides a clear and accessible introduction to critical reflection. https://books.google.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=rWZNDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR1&dq=The+Critically+Reflective+Practitioner&ots=iHDszm-B_-&sig=pfPPRa66Mi0ihoPvgMgnPgf98_o#v=onepage&q=The%20Critically%20Reflective%20Practitioner&f=false

Learning Through Reflection

Don Clark for *Big Dog and Little Dog's Performance Juxtaposition*, 2004

Provides an overview of critical reflection in relation to education and learning. Useful for facilitators or educators who want to foster critical reflection skills in others. <http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/development/reflection.html>

Creating a Climate for Change: Critical Reflection and Organizations

Fiona Gardner for *Practicing Critical Reflection: A Resource Handbook*, 2007

A discussion of critical reflection and its impact on both individuals and organizations. Includes comments on emotions, empowerment and personal/professional dynamics. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313098762_Practising_critical_reflection_a_resource_handbook

Challenges of Critical Reflection: Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained

Jan Fook & Gurid Aga Askeland in *Social Work Education*, 2007

Based on Fook and Askeland's experiences in critical reflection training workshops, this article looks at critical reflection's relationship to professional (social work and health) cultures. It explores how critical reflection can be used 'to challenge cultures, that is, the preconceived ideas which are embedded in practices, in order to examine and change them if they do not fit with the stated ideals of individual professionals.' https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228354523_Challenges_of_Critical_Reflection_'Nothing_Ventured_Nothing_Gained'

PHOTO: NEIGHBOURHOOD ARTS NETWORK





PHOTO: CHAR LORO

Participatory Programming Manifesto Community Projects

Goals

Manifesto Community Projects is a youth-led non-profit organization working to 'unite, energize, cultivate and celebrate Toronto's vibrant, diverse youth arts community'. Manifesto provides a platform and resources to advance the growth of the arts as a tool for positive change across the Greater Toronto Area, Canada and abroad. Manifesto has recently developed a model for participatory programming, in the form of a Programming Council.

Funding

Ontario Trillium Foundation, Laidlaw Foundation, Ontario Arts Council

Challenges

Managing council member expectations, what decisions require council buy-in, meeting facilitation, ongoing engagement (online and in person).

The annual Manifesto Festival came about as a response to a community townhall meeting held at Toronto's City Hall in 2007. A group of young artists gathered to discuss issues they were facing, including a lack of adequate performance fees and platforms for exposure of emerging artists. The townhall meeting provided the opportunity to discuss solutions to these challenges as well as avenues for working together to help make these solutions a reality. From these townhalls, the idea of a multi-arts festival rooted in hip hop culture was conceived.

"For almost three years, Manifesto received no operational funding, but the Manifesto team was able to organize what is now Canada's largest festival of urban music and art because of the immense community support and "love capital" that this event was founded on."

The fifth year of the Manifesto Festival provided the opportunity for 'beta-testing' a new Programming Council, an advisory group created to facilitate collaborative decision-making around festival programming.

"Manifesto is very much 'by the community, for the community'. We are interested in artists at every level, so it's about creating accessibility. Our Programming Council model engages interested youth, community leaders and industry experts in programming decision-making. Each Programming Council discusses Manifesto's proposed programming for their discipline and reviews applications. For each discipline, the Programmer does initial assessments. For music, for example, we may get 400-500 submissions. The Music Programmer will whittle that down to 100 or 200 submissions, and then the Music Council will get together for 2 short days to listen to the music, get background information, and to discuss. The Programming Councils' advice is taken very seriously when programming decisions are made by the programmers and the core team. Final decision-making is based on scores from the councils; it's also about the right fit for the events."

The Programming Council model creates a mechanism for community members to shape festival programming decisions, as well as the format of the festival. Manifesto will eventually transition completely into the new model, with the majority of programming developed and curated by the Programming Councils. The makeup of the councils includes a broad range of experiences and approaches, with programming recommendations developed through thoughtful dialogue.

"We want to empower each Programming Council to use the Manifesto platform and our resources - space, marketing, creative support, administrative support - to program regular activities throughout the year. Manifesto has always aimed to be a conduit

for the community and we feel that this new process of participatory and collaborative co-creation is the direction we would like to move towards.”

Regular activities might range from a monthly movie night, to a speaker’s series or weekly yoga classes. The Programming Director and the core Manifesto team vet the ideas from the Programming Councils, with decisions based on a set of criteria linked to the Manifesto mission and mandate and organizational capacity. One of the challenges of adapting to the new model is clarifying

Key Strategies and Tools:

The Programming Council model is a key strategy for supporting an inclusive and accessible programming process for the festival and related activities, allowing Manifesto to involve multiple stakeholders in decision-making for programming.

Organizing councils by discipline encourages more informed programming recommendations. Councils use a mix of set criteria that apply to every council, and specific criteria for each discipline. Guidelines for Council Members are a key tool for clarifying

Connection to Equity: Equitable Organizational Structures

“...We have the 7 grandfather teachings, the 7 principles. One of these is humility. In a wolf pack, you have leaders, but nobody can achieve anything without the support of the pack. . . . When I go to a meeting, I frame the meeting by using circles instead of desks. I’m saying, let’s all sit down at the same level and share in the collective.”

The structure of an organization can have a big impact on how accessible it is to new people and new ideas. Who is responsible for what? Who has input that shapes decision-making? Planning space for input and feedback along the way helps an organization to address the changing needs of its community

Many organizations, across all sectors, are structured according to hierarchies. People are organized into positions in an order from high to low where authority increases with each increase in rank. The higher the position the more power it holds. Hierarchy is often critiqued as reinforcing inequality and creating barriers to fair communication between those at the top and those at different points below them. Some alternative forms of organization include collectives or cooperatives where responsibilities, power, and decision-making are more evenly distributed between members. The kind of structure that is most appropriate depends on the organizational context and goals. Who does the organization serve and how do they want to be involved? What are the organization’s goals and objectives?

the role of the various players, and who has final decision-making power or which decisions require buy-in from the councils.

“From industry experts to activists, elders to youth, we expect the programming coming from these councils to be inter-generational, of high integrity and quality, and inclusive of both emerging and established artists. Ultimately, it will be programming that reflects the community.”

the roles and responsibilities of the members, and where decision-making lies (an excerpt of the Council Member Guidelines is shared on page 39).

Simple intake forms for each discipline make it easier for artists to apply and have their work considered. Online tools, including a private Facebook group allow council members to communicate online as a complement to in-person meetings and discussion.

What are the social, financial or legal conditions that might impact the structure? Sometimes a more centralized leadership can be more effective if stakeholders are unable to invest time or are not interested in taking on a lot of responsibility for organizational management. In some cases legal requirements such as charitable status may make the establishment of certain kinds of roles and organizational structures mandatory.

However no matter what the structure, a climate of openness and inclusion can support more equitable organizational practices. This kind of approach may entail: including and/or informing staff and stakeholders in relation to decision-making; defining roles and responsibilities collectively; sharing authority; recognizing and valuing the knowledge of each organizational position; engaging in reflexive internal evaluation processes; fostering and responding to dialogue amongst staff and stakeholders about organizational effectiveness.

Worksheets:

Equitable Organizational Structures

Collaborative Decision-Making

Developed by the Centre for Collaborative Planning; used with permission.

By choosing the best styles for decision-making, the collaborative achieves a balance of ownership and productivity. We achieve the greatest ownership when everyone is aware of all the information and participates in all decisions. Begin by asking these questions of the collaborative:

- How is your collaborative governed — who makes decisions and what authority do they have to make them?
- How will governing responsibilities be rotated over time?
- How will governance reflect and respect the collaborative's diversity?

Productivity may be enhanced when the collaborative empowers individuals and small groups to act together to make decisions. The collaborative can empower the smaller groups to make decisions on their behalf, as long as a clear and open reporting mechanism is employed. Collaboration can offer members full responsibility for achieving change. By enhancing members' roles in governance and decision-making, buy-in to implementation and the outcomes will be strengthened.

Collaborative Decision-Making

- Everyone knows how — and agrees to how — decisions are made
- Ensure all members have an opportunity to participate in decision-making
- Choose the right decision-making tool
- Understand the benefits of using consensus
- Use data to make informed decisions

Collaborative Decision-Making Approaches: Some Distinctions*

The most common approaches collaboratives use to make decisions are either a consensus or democratic process or some combination thereof. Your group should discuss, agree on, and then post guidelines for reaching decisions.

Consensus

The consensus process allows the entire group to be heard and to participate in decision-making. The goal of consensus decision-making is to find common ground, probing issues until everyone's opinions are voiced and understood by the group. Discussions leading to consensus aim to bring the group to mutual agreement by addressing all concerns. Consensus does not require unanimity. Rather, everyone must agree they can "live with" the decision. Though it can take longer than other decision-making methods, consensus fosters creativity, cooperation and commitment to final decisions. There are no "winners" and "losers" in this process, as discussion continues until consensus is achieved. We close discussion by restating agreements made and "next steps" in implementing decisions made.

Democratic

Options are discussed fully so that members are informed as to the decision's consequences. The important ground rule here is that the "losing" side agrees to support the decision, even though it was not their choice. Decisions are made by majority vote.

Straw polling

Straw polling entails asking for a show of hands (e.g., thumbs up or down) to see how the group feels about a particular issue. It is a quick check that can save a great deal of time. Silent hand signals can be an invaluable source of feedback for a facilitator working with a large group.

Voting

Voting is a decision-making method that seems best suited to large groups. To avoid alienating large minorities, you might decide a motion will only succeed with a two-thirds (or more) majority. Some collaboratives limit voting to people who have come to three or more consecutive meetings to prevent stacked meetings and to encourage familiarity with the issues being decided. Alternatively, voting can be combined with consensus. Some groups institute time limits on discussion and move to voting if consensus cannot be reached.

Delegation

The collaborative may agree to delegate certain decisions to small groups, committees, or an individual. A small group may have the specialized knowledge, skills, or resources required to make certain decisions. When delegating decision-making, the group

must clarify any constraints on the authority to act, and institute mechanisms for reporting back to the large group.

Adapted in part from:

The Citizen's Handbook: A Guide to Building Community in Vancouver. Dobson, Charles and Vancouver Citizen's Committee. http://www.aughty.org/pdf/citizens_handbook.pdf. Center for Collaborative Planning, a center of Public Health Institute – www.connectccp.org

Types of Boards

Excerpted from Grassroots Governance: Governance and the Nonprofit Sector, a booklet published by the Certified General Accountants of Ontario.

Collective Boards

In the early stages of a grassroots organization the structure is usually that of a collective. A collective board has no management hierarchy. Board volunteers (and staff, if any) share responsibility for all facets of the organization.

The collective comprises like-minded and enthusiastic individuals, working towards a common goal. While this may sound ideal there is a tendency to become cliquish as the organization grows. Often informal hierarchies occur. If everyone is responsible, then no one is responsible...and work may not get done. The collective board must be vigilant to avoid "group think," wherein the group makes decisions that the individuals may not support.

Working/Administrative Boards

As the organization grows, the next stage is usually that of a working board. Often there is no executive director or chief operating officer, meaning the chair of the board generally takes the lead role. At this stage, various committees are formed drawing on a larger body of volunteers.

The board is responsible for providing direction, often in the form of a more formal strategic plan. Budgets become part of the formal planning of the organization. If the organization has employees, there is often confusion as to who is responsible for what. At this stage it is appropriate for the board to be involved in administration as well as policy. Clear roles and responsibility guidelines are useful but must be flexible.

The board should develop board orientation material, a code of conduct, and clear conflict of interest guidelines. While legal opinion is useful, there are many resources on the Internet to ensure the board is on the right track.

At this stage the organization usually needs and seeks out spe-

cific financial expertise. In addition to assistance in budgeting and financial reporting, the organization will benefit from more formal controls and specific analysis of operations.

The working/administrative board demands a lot from its volunteers. During the attraction and training phases, it is important to provide clear expectations of board member involvement. It does no one a favour to pretend the commitment is only for a two-hour meeting once a month, if the expectation includes fundraising, committee work, administration and attendance at events.

Manifesto Community Council Member Guidelines

Excerpted from Guidelines for Community Council Members, available from Manifesto Community Projects; used with permission

Council Model

Firstly, thank you for agreeing to participate as a Manifesto community council member!

One of Manifesto's founding objectives was to include the music and arts community – specifically the hip hop community – in idea generation and decision-making related to programming selection, program design, organizational mandates, and more. This open and inclusive model proved challenging to implement during Manifesto's early years of development, given the focus required to successfully establish a platform that could support it meaningfully. While Manifesto has made efforts over the years to maintain an active dialogue with the community through Town Halls, informal committees, open submissions infrastructure, and consultations – there has not been a formal methodology put in place to truly empower the type of shared governance and community ownership that the full realization of the Manifesto model demands. We are working to use our organizational remodeling opportunity to put this methodology into action.

This year, Manifesto has embarked on a beta-testing phase of its council model. Artists, industry, young people, and others have been invited to participate as members of a number of Community Councils focusing on specific disciplines and/or programming initiatives related to the 2011 Manifesto Festival of Community & Culture. The councils are meant to work in tandem with Manifesto staff, Programming Directors, our Board of Directors and partners to help shape program decisions, review submissions, identify priorities, and explore new ideas.

In time, we plan to have a representative from each Council on Manifesto's Board of Directors, and Community Councils from international Manifesto activations will be connected into an integrated global network of grassroots arts governance – unlocking

enormous opportunities for collective community-building and knowledge/culture-transfer.

Manifesto Festival of Community & Culture

The critically acclaimed Manifesto Festival of Community & Culture is 10 days of incredible events across the city, culminating in a massive free outdoor concert at Yonge-Dundas Square. The festival brings together hundreds of artists & performers, and thousands of spectators (46,000 last year!) to showcase our city's talented arts community and strengthen its foundations by building a collective sense of pride and possibility. Featuring an array of events including art exhibitions, dance competitions, workshops, free outdoor concerts, film screenings, and more, the festival combines a grassroots, community-focused essence with high production quality.

Initial Assessment

The Programming Coordinators have done an initial assessment of all the submissions and removed those deemed to be incomplete or inappropriate. This represents an extremely small percentage of the total submissions.

Council Members' Responsibility

Your responsibility is to consider and score the submissions (from 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest score and 5 being the highest score) according to the following decision-making criteria:

Message – Does the message resonate with Manifesto's values? Is it relevant to our audience? Is the message topical or timeless? Is the message appropriate for youth and public spaces?

Quality of Work – Is the work of a professional standard? Does it exhibit excellence? Is there attention to detail? Has careful consideration gone into how the final product is delivered?

Notoriety – How big of an audience reach does this work have? (We are looking for artists/groups at various levels of notoriety. Offering emerging artists a platform for their work is an important objective of our organization). This criterion helps determine whether the artist should be considered emerging, mid-career or established.

Originality – Is the work original? Does this artist/group have a unique voice?

Your council discussion should be centered on these criteria, as well as other criteria deemed important by you as a group. The Programming Coordinator will lead the discussion and may, as a curator, also provide their own assessment of the submissions.

The following additional considerations should be taken into account when reviewing the submissions:

- Is this artist/group part of a historically under-represented group at Manifesto (this could encompass gender, region, genre, sexual orientation, cultural diversity, etc.)?
- In which category does the artist/group fit – established, mid-career, or emerging?
- Has this artist/group been programmed at Manifesto in the last 2 years?
- Has the artist/group had any recent career activity of note?

Conflict of Interest Policy

During the deliberations, council members may become aware of a potential conflict of interest. A council member is in a direct conflict of interest with a particular submission if they (or a member of their immediate family/household) have a financial interest in the success or failure of an application, or if the council member is the applicant or is a member of the staff, board or immediate family/household of an applicant.

Council members are asked to immediately declare a conflict of interest when one becomes apparent. The Programming Coordinator and the other council members will determine as a group whether or not the council member is required to leave the room or if they may stay in the room but not participate in the discussion about that particular submission.

Decision-making Process

While the council does not make the final programming decisions, your applicant assessments are taken very seriously when we program artists for the festival. Your short-list is taken to the Manifesto staff and Board of Directors to ensure that artists meet the criteria and align with our organization's core values. You will also be asked to recommend artists who may not have applied but who should be invited to participate in the festival nonetheless. Based on your short-list and recommendations, artists are then contacted to check availability, negotiate fees, etc. Your input is a valuable part of a much larger process.

Confidentiality Agreement

All applicant information is confidential, as are discussions relating to applications. Due to the nature of our organization it is important that you honour our code of confidentiality. This code forbids council members from divulging any confidential and/or client-related information gained while advising Manifesto. Any information that you gain from your experience at Manifesto, no matter whether it is from the system or from something you may see or hear, is absolutely confidential.

Tools and Resources: Equitable Organizational Structures



Diversity at Work: Legislation and Policies

HR Council for the HR Toolkit, n.d.

Provides an overview and links to Federal and Provincial/Territorial legislation related to diversity and equity. Also includes best practices on creating policies for your own organization, and how policy relates to values and accountability.

<http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca/hr-resource-centre/hr-toolkit/diversity-work/legislation-and-policies>

Diversity at Work Toolkit

HR Council for the Voluntary/Non-profit Sector

Created to support organizations in building more 'diverse, inclusive workplaces'; addresses gender equity, intergenerational differences, and more.

<http://www.ccsc-cssge.ca/hr-resource-centre/hr-toolkit/diversity-work/legislation-and-policies>

Don't Make Your Organization's Statement of Purpose a 'Mission Impossible'

Tony Poderis for Raise-Funds.com

Discusses the key components of a mission statement, and a checklist and practical tips for developing a clear and useful mission statement.

<http://www.raise-funds.com/2001/dont-make-your-organizations-statement-of-purpose-a-mission-impossible/>

All About Strategic Planning

Free Management Library, n.d.

Comprehensive overview of strategic planning; includes detailed descriptions of strategic planning tools and steps.

<http://managementhelp.org/strategicplanning/#anchor37202>

Creative Trust: Boards and Governance

Creative Trust, 2011

Creative Trust is a collaborative capacity building organization that helps Toronto arts companies develop skills and achieve financial health and balance. This webpage provides links to a variety of handbooks, guidelines and examples of how art organizations can develop collaborative governance structures and processes.

<http://www.creativetrust.ca/resources-2/boardsandgovernance/>

Grassroots Governance: Governance and the Nonprofit Sector

Certified General Accountants of Ontario, 2008

A look at common governance structures for grassroots nonprofits, and how boards and communication relate to accountability and transparency. Distinguishes between different types of governing groups (boards of directors, advisory boards, working boards, etc) and discusses some common challenges for growing grassroots organizations. https://cdn4.sportngin.com/attachments/document/0131/4984/publication_grassroots_governance.pdf

Models of Youth Work

Andrea Zammit and Alana Lowe for Artreach Toronto, 2011

Looks at various models for youth organizing and explains key differences between nonprofits, charities, social enterprises and other models of working collectively. <https://www.artreach.org/modelsofyouthwork>

Guidelines To Form An Advisory Group

Carter MacNamara for the Free Management Library, n.d.

Short overview of advisory groups; includes basic guidelines for creating a group. <http://managementhelp.org/boards/advisory-boards.htm>

What Is An Advisory Board And Should We Have One?

CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, 2002

Provides some key examples of when an organization might choose to create an advisory group, and includes a sample invitation letter. <http://www.compasspoint.org/board-cafe/what-advisory-board-and-should-we-have-one>

Some of the Common Problems with Advisory Groups that Assist Nonprofit Boards

Nancy R. Axelrod for BoardSource, 2004

Quick list of six common problems with nonprofit advisory groups. <https://boardsource.org/resources/nonprofit-board-dynamics-processes-faqs/>

Your First Advisory Board Meeting

Susan Ward, Small Business Canada

Tips for first-time organizers of an advisory group. <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/your-first-advisory-board-meeting-2947125>



ART SPIN; PHOTO BY SARAH MILLER-GARVIN

PHOTO: SARAH MILLER-GARVIN

Creatively Bridging Communities

Scarborough Arts

Lead Partners: Scarborough Arts, Mural Routes, East Scarborough Storefront, Toronto Regional Conservation Authority, Jumblies Theatre, City of Toronto Cultural Services, The Amazing Place, and Live Green Toronto



SUBTEXT FESTIVAL; PHOTOS BY EMILIE WONG



Goals

The Bridging Project artistically and symbolically unites residents on both sides of the bridge through collaborative art and community services

Context and Participants:

Prior to the Bridging Project activities, the bridge represented a safety concern and physical barrier dividing the community of Kingston Galloway/ Orton Park. Community workshops, a bridging mural and a multi-arts summer festival were a creative response to this community issue. Key participants included residents of the surrounding neighbourhood, local artists and arts groups, KGO Festival Market, Residents Rising, East Scarborough Storefront, Action for Neighbourhood Change, Scarborough Museum, Toronto Culture, Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation, and Live Green Toronto

Timeline:

Planning and fundraising began one year before the festival. Regular planning with key partners began five months before and administration support was made possible two months in advance, after funding was confirmed in the spring.

Challenges:

Ensuring that neighbourhood residents were involved in the festival planning and design, and that the festival was responsive to resident needs.

Funding:

Canadian Heritage Festivals Grant, City of Toronto and Ontario Arts Council, Intact Insurance Foundation, TD Friends of the Environment

In-Kind Support:

East Scarborough Storefront, Action for Neighbourhood Change, Residents Rising, City of Toronto, Lead Partners (provided in-kind support in the form of a planning and steering committee, admin support and workshops)

Staff and Volunteers

Four staff and 70 volunteers; approximately 880 hours of staff time and 280 volunteer hours.

The Bridging Project evolved from the concerns of residents of Kingston-Galloway/Orton Park that a six-lane traffic bridge on Lawrence Avenue was physically cutting the community in two. Many residents perceived the bridge as unsafe; some were unwilling or unable to cross the bridge and access services or participate in activities on the opposite side.

The Bridging Project represents a creative response to this community issue. Through collaborative and creative methods, The Bridging Project aimed to break down barriers and transform the bridge into a connector, bringing residents from different communities together. The project was a summer long initiative involving community workshops, a public mural, and the Subtext festival. Subtext is a multi-arts festival with free community activities including performances, workshops, storytelling, aerosol art, tree planting and more. The festival was designed to activate and enhance the public space surrounding the bridge, linking the community above with the natural environment below.

As a local arts service organization, Scarborough Arts has a mandate to serve Scarborough and East Toronto, providing 'programs and services to promote and encourage development and involvement in the arts, for the benefit of artists and the community'. In the case of the Bridging Project, Scarborough Arts played the role of a catalyst, helping to bring multiple partners together, and securing funding for the project.

“We are part of a small organization with a broad mandate, and we run multiple programs simultaneously. Because we’re not embedded in the neighbourhood itself, we rely on our partners and partnerships to bring resident feedback and community steering elements to the project. We’ve got the creative connections, but not the day-to-day connections in the community.”

Partnerships with local organizations, such as Residents Rising and KGO (Kingston-Galloway/Orton Park) Festival Market are a very important piece of the festival's success.

“We see the necessity of handing off ownership of the project to local groups in whatever way possible. Scarborough Arts is there to secure funding, and we hope to be able to hand the programming over to different groups and organizations within the community. We want it to come from the residents, to be relevant, accessible, and responsive to what's taking place.”

A major question for Scarborough Arts is how to transfer ownership to local residents while maintaining their own accountability in the project, and supporting its continuation.

“Groups helicoptering into Kingston-Galloway/Orton Park is an ongoing issue and an ongoing challenge....we’re working to strike a balance between sustainability and accountability.”



SUBTEXT FESTIVAL; PHOTO BY EMILIE WONG

Key Strategies and Tools:

In this context, community partnerships were used to create a healthy foundation for the project. By working with local organizations that were already active in the neighbourhood, the Bridging Project built on existing community assets and relationships.

Scarborough Arts uses partnership agreements to help define different partners' roles, responsibilities, and commitments to each other and to the projects / programming they are building. This takes the form of a concrete document that clearly outlines these details and that each partner organization signs. The terms are agreed on together so that the commitments from the different partners are realistic and reasonable — taking into account each partner's strengths, expertise, and available resources.

Evaluating organizational strengths and weaknesses helped workers at Scarborough Arts to identify the goals and priorities the organization excelled at and the goals and priorities they needed help with. As a result they were able to seek out support through local partners. These partnerships to help address the gaps or limitations of their organization and working together they are able to meet needs and provide programming more effectively to the extensive range of communities they serve.

SUBTEXT FESTIVAL; PHOTO BY EMILIE WONG



Connection to Equity: Partnerships

“... Who do we want to work with? Why do we want to work with them? Why should they want to work with us? ... Try to figure out ... if you are going to have a meeting, what do you bring to the table? ... Think about partnerships in different ways. It's not necessarily all about money. It could be resource sharing; it could be outreach, marketing; it could be feedback around some expertise that the other organization might have that you don't have ...” – *Anti-oppression Educator*



Working towards systemic change means working together, and building solid foundations for collaborative work can go a long way. Initiating, sustaining, and evaluating partnerships and processes of collaboration are important parts of community-engaged arts. When starting a new partnership it is helpful to be aware of the values and goals of each individual or organization involved, and to work together to establish a shared vision. The values and goals of an organization can have a big impact on the vibrancy and sustainability of a partnership.

A partnership agreement helps to make responsibilities and expectations clear, and establishes a timeline for the partnership.

Like any living relationship, staying connected through on-going communication is critical as partnerships go through periods of growth and change.

Evaluation can help to identify the strengths and limitations of partner organizations. This process can guide decisions about who to partner with and what different partners are able to offer. Integrating on-going processes of evaluation within partnerships can help to identify problems before they reach a critical stage or highlight areas of success where the partnership could potentially develop further.

PHOTO (LEFT): SAMBA KIDZ
PHOTO (RIGHT): ART STARTS; IMAGE BY SARAH MILLER-GARVIN

Many Hands Make Light Work

Red Dress Productions & Sherbourne Health Centre



PHOTO: RED DRESS PRODUCTIONS

Lead Partners

Red Dress Productions and Sherbourne Health Centre

Components A large scale mosaic (18'x 8') designed and constructed through a community collaborative process and installed on the exterior of the Sherbourne Health Centre

Goals To reflect the vibrant spirit of programs and activities at the Sherbourne Health Centre and the communities it serves, and to beautify the neighbourhood

Context and Participants The project involved over 300 SHC community members and produced an important opportunity for Individuals from a broad range of SHC programs to meet.

Timeline Initial fundraising, planning and development took one year. Arts-based research consultations lasted an additional three months, and open studio sessions took place over three months, culminating in the unveiling and reception. The plaque recognizing contributions was installed 4 months after the unveiling.

Sherbourne Health Centre Mosaic was a project initiated by Red Dress Productions (RDP). As local residents of the area, RDP's founding artistic directors Anna Camilleri and Tristan Whiston were familiar with Sherbourne Health Centre's (SHC) programs and services, but felt that the SHC building did not reflect the vibrancy of its programs (a feeling that was strongly echoed by project contributors). RDP had previously led several collaborative

public mosaic projects. They proposed a community-engaged public artwork idea to the SHC. With health centre support, RDP secured funding from the Toronto Arts Council and the Ontario Arts Council.

Project funding enabled RDP to hire a team of community art apprentices. The mural design process was developed through arts-based participatory research with community members (including centre clients, staff, and area residents). The mosaic itself was constructed through a collaborative open studio process. Design elements were carefully planned to reflect community ideas, themes, motifs and aesthetics while accommodating a range of abilities during construction of the mosaic.

Funding

Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council and SHC

In-Kind Support

Both partners, RDP & SHC, contributed significant in-kind resources

Staff and Volunteers

2 lead artists, 2 associate artists, 4 community arts apprentices, 2 installation technicians, 10 member working group committee (RDP & SHC staff), over 300 contributors

"Keep doing this work in communities—it is revolutionary. It changes the world—it is what is meant by creating the world you want to live in." — *Ambrose Kirby, SHC Mosaic Contributor*

Key Strategies and Tools:

Red Dress Productions uses arts-based research consultations to engage community collaborators in the design process for public art projects. Early consultations involved discussion, brainstorming and arts activities that encouraged collaborators to articulate and develop themes, concepts and imagery. The lead artists were then able to use these ideas and themes to inform the final design of the mosaic.



The actual fabrication of the mosaic took place through a series of open studio sessions over a three-month period. Collaborators were invited to construct the large-scale mosaic by contributing to building the artwork. Contributors were able to determine their level of involvement; some contributed to most open studio sessions, while others dropped in whenever possible. Because the workshops were open and engaged a broad range of people, it was important for the lead artist to create a mosaic design that would be accessible to a range of ages and abilities.

RDP works to build organizational capacity by hiring from within their pool of volunteer contributors and apprentices. For example, the current associate artists Katie Yealland and Chantelle Gobeil were formerly volunteer contributors with the 519 Community Mosaic Project, Flux. Former apprentices Jay Stewart and Heidi Cho are now in community artist positions.

By involving hundreds of community members in the design and construction process, Red Dress Productions facilitates public art installations with a deep level of community engagement and ownership.

Worksheets: Partnerships & Collaboration

Partnership Frameworks

Excerpted from *Working in Partnership: Recipes for Success*, developed by Alberta Culture and Community Services; used with permission.

Setting the Partnership Framework

The Partnership Framework is the “road map” to the creation of a partnership. It involves information exchange at a high level between potential partners on the objectives of the partnership, how it will serve the mission and objectives of individual partners, the nature of the resources or activities which will be shared, and identification of any risks or concerns which may be involved. It sets the stage for developing a detailed partnership agreement.

Goal

Decide if you want to continue designing a relationship with the potential partnering organization.

Foundation

Before becoming too deeply involved, look at compatibility issues. Be sure both organizations are willing and able to share their organizational lives.

Establish Compatibility

What to do	Done?
1. Establish the purpose of the partnership and what each partner will commit.	
2. Identify how the partnership will serve the missions and objectives of each partner.	
3. If the partnership involves funding, determine how best to build accountability and equality in the partnership.	
4. Identify any risks or liabilities that might be created by the partnership.	
5. Determine how formal the partnership agreement needs to be.	

Questions to Ask

Our purpose

1. What is the purpose of the collaboration? Can it be summarized in a “mutual mission” statement that all partners will endorse?
2. What level and quality of interaction exists among senior leaders of both partners? Are individuals from each organization personally and emotionally committed to the collaboration?
3. Has each partner determined the functions and relative importance of existing partnerships or relationships in relation to the new partnership?
4. What is each partner committing to the partnership? Does each organization have the ability to execute that commitment?



Alignment of mission, strategy and values

1. Do the partners understand each other’s reason for being and the work each does?
2. What are the mission, values and strategies of each partner? How will they be served by the mutual mission of the partnership?
3. Are the “cultures” of the partners compatible? Do we do things in the same way? Do we respect our differences?
4. What resources of each partner are of value to the other? What specific benefits will each partner get?
5. What social value will be created by the partnership?

The funder, the funded and funding

1. Partnerships that include a donation or funding create their own kinds of tension. If funding is involved, what are the expectations and requirements of the funding partner?
2. Does that require a particular reporting or monitoring protocol?
3. How will the contributions to the partnership by the funded organization be recognized and measured?
4. What steps will each partner take to build equality into the partnership?
5. If both partners are not-for-profit agencies, are there granting programs or other funding sources where they will compete outside the partnership? Does this require special recognition?

Risk management

1. Does the partnership create legal or financial requirements that will need special attention?
2. Will the partnership create potential liabilities that need to be considered now?
3. What is the best way to deal with these potentially serious issues?

Communication between the partners

1. What level of respect and trust exists between the partners?
2. Is communication open and frank and is critical communication constructive?
3. Who will be the partnership relationship manager for each partner, accountable for ongoing communication?
4. Are we ready to go forward? How formal does our partnership agreement need to be? (e.g. handshake, exchange of letters, memorandum of understanding, formal contract)

Sample Partnership Agreement

Cypher: Open Session Hip Hop Program

Scarborough Arts and Scarborough Rec Centre

This PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT is made on June 16, 2011 between Scarborough Arts and Scarborough Rec Centre.

1. NAME AND PROJECT

The parties hereby form a partnership to present various aspects of the Cypher: 'Open Session' Hip Hop Program.

The Cypher Hip Hop Open Session Workshops will be held at the Scarborough Rec Centre for six (6) sessions within two (2) weeks. Dates and times are listed below. The Cypher: Open Session will be open to twenty (20) youth, between the ages 14 to 19.

Event: Cypher: 'Open Session'
Hip Hop Program

Workshop Dates:

Workshop #1:

Wednesday, July 6, 2011 – 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Workshop #2:

Thursday, July 7, 2011 – 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Workshop #3:

Friday, July 8, 2011 – 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Workshop #4:

Wednesday, July 13, 2011 – 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Workshop #5:

Thursday, July 14, 2011 – 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm

Workshop #6:

Friday, July 15, 2011 – 10:00 am – 4:00 pm

2. TERM

The partnership shall commence on **Wednesday July 6, 2011** and will continue until the final day of the Cypher Hip Hop Open Session Workshops - **Friday, July 15, 2011.**

3. MANAGEMENT DUTIES AND RESTRICTIONS

The partners shall reserve specific responsibilities throughout the duration of the project, and each partner shall devote their time to the conduct of the project where their specific responsibilities are concerned. Without the consent of the other partner, neither partner shall on behalf of the partner make decisions concerning each partner's specific roles and responsibilities. The specific functions and responsibilities of each partner are as follows:

Scarborough Arts will provide the following logistical and project management support for the Cypher Hip Hop Open Session Workshops:

- Provide the structure and instruction for each hip hop workshop
- Program registration
- Participant waivers, photo and video release forms
- Outreach and promotion (digital & print posters) to all SA contacts
- On site song recording
- Engineering, design, printing and pressing of final album

Scarborough Arts & Rec Centre will provide following the project support for the Cypher Hip Hop Open Session Workshops:

- Snacks and drinks for program participants
- A SARC staff member will be present throughout the duration of each workshop to ensure smooth facility management, operation and public reception

- Safe, secure program environment
- TTC tokens for each program participant (upon request at each workshop)
- Outreach and promotion (digital & print posters) to all SARC contacts
- Provide Scarborough Arts with youth registration lists from past SARC hip hop programs (privacy and protection of information will be strictly maintained)

4. VOLUNTARY TERMINATION

The partnership may be dissolved at any time by verbal and written agreement of the partners, in which event the partners shall proceed with reasonable promptness to liquidate the partnership.

5. MEDIATION

Any controversy, conflict or claim arising out of or relating to this Agreement, or the breach hereof, shall be settled by consensus problem solving whenever possible. Should any disagreement be deemed unsolvable by either party, a third party conflict resolution service will be contracted to resolve the dispute with any expenses shared equally by the both parties.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Scarborough Rec Centre

Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Scarborough Arts



Assessing Your Collaboration

Excerpted from the article **Assessing Your Collaboration: A Self Evaluation Tool** by Lynne Borden; used with permission.

A Collaboration Checklist

Each of the following factors influences the collaborative process. After reading a brief description for each of the areas place an X in the column (see page 54) that best reflects your opinion of how your collaboration is functioning in each of the areas using the following scale:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree**
 - 2 = Disagree**
 - 3 = Neither Agree or Disagree**
 - 4 = Agree**
 - 5 = Strongly Agree**
-

Each of the factors are identified and defined:

Communication - the collaboration has open and clear communication. There is an established process for communication between meetings;

Policies/Laws/Regulations - the collaboration has changed policies, laws, and/or regulations that allow the collaboration to function effectively;

Sustainability - the collaboration has a plan for sustaining membership and resources. This involves membership guidelines relating to terms of office and replacement of members;

History - the community has a history of working cooperatively and solving problems;

Research and Evaluation - the collaboration has conducted a needs assessment or has obtained information to establish its goals and the collaboration continues to collect data to measure goal achievement;

Connectedness - members of this collaboration are connected and have established informal and formal communication networks at all levels;

Political Climate - the history and environment surrounding power and decision making is positive. Political climate may be within the community as a whole, systems within the community or networks of people;

Leadership - the leadership facilitates and supports team building, and capitalizes upon diversity and individual, group and organizational strengths;

Resources - the collaboration has access to needed resources. Resources refer to four types of capital: environmental, in-kind, financial, and human;

Community Development - this community was mobilized to address important issues. There is a communication system and formal information channels that permit the exploration of issues, goals and objectives; and,

Catalysts - the collaboration was started because of existing problem(s) or the reason(s) for collaboration to exist required a comprehensive approach;

Understanding Community - the collaboration understands the community, including its people, cultures, values and habits.

A COLLABORATION PROGRESS CHECKLIST

Factors	Strongly Agree 1	Somewhat Agree 2	Neither Agree or Disagree 3	Somewhat Disagree 4	Strongly Disagree 5
Goals	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Communication	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sustainability	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Research and Evaluation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Political Climate	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Resources	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Catalysts	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Policies/Laws/Regulations	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
History	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Connectedness	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Leadership	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Community	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Development	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Understanding Community	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Totals	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Grand Totals	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Identifying the collaboration's strengths and challenges assists the collaboration in determining the best course of action to achieve its identified goals. For example, if the group scores from 0-30 the collaborations has many components that comprise a successful collaboration. There are goals, working members, and strong leadership. If the collaborative group scores between 31-48 the group has some of the factors; however, there is some need to develop the inter-workings of the group. The group may need to determine new ways of working together. However, if the group scores between 49-65 the group may wish to refocus their goals and leadership. Establishing a group's strengths and challenges can serve as a springboard to building a more effective collaborative group.

Tools and Resources: Partnerships and Collaboration

Collaborative Decision-Making

Canadian Public Health Association, 2019

This resource provides a basic guide to collaborative decision-making using children's unstructured play as an example. <https://www.cpha.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/resources/play/collaborative-decision-making-e.pdf>

Participating Effectively as a Collaborative Partner

United Way Toronto, 2011

A guide for UWT staff on being more effective community partners. <https://www.unitedwaygt.org/document.doc?id=232>

Working in Partnership: Recipes for Success

Wild Rose Foundation, 2001

A clear, comprehensive toolkit addressing the various stages of partnership development and evaluation. Includes checklists related to partnership frameworks and compatibility, risk management, partnership agreements and conflict resolution. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/dd9c9d8e-5213-492f-9fa6-7db4c73b336/resources/456e2954-0208-4f22-9ab3-c1c8a3769415/download/25889542001workingpartnershiprecipessuccess2001-06.pdf>

5 Key Lessons on Collaboration

Wellesley Institute, 2010

5 key lessons drawn from the evaluation of two multi-sector collaborative initiatives. Discussion points include the importance of staffing, leadership, and balancing progress and process. https://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Final_report.pdf

Nonprofit Arts Development Guide

Oklahoma Arts Council, 2011

Key topics related to nonprofit arts partnerships, including ingredients for a successful partnership and warning signs of a failing partnership. https://arts.ok.gov/Arts_in_Communities/Nonprofit_Arts_Development/Chapter_5.html



ART STARTS; PHOTO BY SARAH MILLER-GARVIN

The Power of Stories

North York Community House



Lead Partners

North York Community House and Seneca College

Context and Participants

The art and stories program was created through a partnership between immigration and settlement organization North York Community House and the Seneca College LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) Program. The program was designed to support soft-skill development for newcomer youth aged 18-29 through English Conversation Circles, critical reflection and digital storytelling.

Goals

A pilot program designed to explore the power of art and stories in an employment readiness context.

Key Challenges

Prioritizing soft-skills development in an employment context; creating a safe space to understand each other while allowing for self-expression; negotiating conceptions of 'art' as self-expression for everyone and not exclusive or elitist, and separate from everyday life; working with a population that is constantly in flux (permanent residents and convention refugees) as immigration statuses, housing, and life situations change.

Funding

United Way, Citizenship and Immigration Canada

In-Kind Support

Seneca College, North York Community House

Staff and Volunteers

One Art and Story Worker, One Employment Readiness Worker, Peer Leaders, Program Managers

The art and stories program is an innovative pilot program that uses art and stories to support personal development and employment readiness. Through a partnership with Seneca College, North York Community House developed the art and stories program.

Using a process of self-reflection and discussion, students in the NYCH/SC program were encouraged to define their employment goals and work towards a career plan.

“We are working with young adults. Some of them moved here with their family and may not need to work right away. Some are wanting to go to school, and others are feeling pressure to think about a career path. There are people who say, ‘I want to be a doctor, I want to go to med school.’ But if you ask them why, they don’t have an answer.”



Employment readiness training often focuses on ‘hard skills’ such as reading level or knowledge of specific software programs. Improving ‘soft skills’ can be an equally important step in the employment search.

“Most newcomer employment programs are hard skills oriented. There’s a lack of attention to interpersonal or emotional skills. There’s no chance to talk about pressures and skills like being on time and engaging in conversation.”

The conversation circles supported the development of critical soft skills for employment readiness, such as punctuality and critical thinking. Through conversation practice, students were encouraged to reflect on their own experiences, motivations and personal goals. Using the medium of personal stories, students defined and articulated their own employment goals and developed a career plan.

“We made 1-minute digital stories in response to the question, ‘What’s your dream job?’ Stories stick in people’s heads more than lists. It was a process of self-reflection, asking, ‘What do I want to do?’ They were writing career plans through storytelling.”

Use of story in a settlement context can produce powerful results, increasing a social service organization’s capacity to refer clients. By exploring their personal stories, clients at North York Community House were able to identify different barriers they and their families were facing. Learning more about clients’ contexts and needs enabled facilitators to pair clients and their relatives with other support services that the organization could provide.

“We ran an arts-based program for tweens, and their parents started coming to other programs. We have a better capacity to refer people to services, because we are getting to know their stories.”

The storytelling program was groundbreaking for North York Community House because it was the first time they had worked

with an artist in a settlement context. This made the program a learning opportunity – not only for participating students from Seneca College, but also for North York Community House as a social service organization. Social service workers and clients had to stretch their understandings about what kind of practices could effectively engage and practically support effective settlement. Accepting that opportunities for creative expression may help to develop employment skills in other fields and that arts activities should be prioritized was daunting at first.

“This is the first position for someone identified as an artist at this organization. When I was first hired, I surveyed my coworkers. I asked them, ‘Where do you see art in your program?’ Some of them said told me, ‘There is no place for art in my program. What does art have to do with settlement?’

There are tensions that arise for artists working in non-arts settings. Coworkers may have varying degrees of appreciation for and understanding of the role of art.

“It’s challenging to be working in a settlement organization as an artist, where I might have trouble convincing our own staff of the process and impact. It’s related to the bigger culture of art and how art is understood. To some, art means just prettiness or luxury.”

Negative attitudes towards art, its value, and who benefits from it can lead to a lack of buy-in and actually undermine support for arts-based programs.

“There’s also a bias in funders and in our participants that art is only art and can be nothing else. People ask, ‘What does art have to do with me?’ This is an issue of accessibility.”

Key Strategies and Tools:

Throughout the project, story was used as a tool to encourage self-reflection and self-awareness, as well as enhancing communication skills. Group discussion was engaged as a way to develop stronger interpersonal and communication skills, and to deepen understanding of various soft skills that relate to employment readiness.

As participants developed their personal stories, they were required to reflect deeply on their own experiences and motivations. They were also given the opportunity to express their feelings and reservations about the challenges of moving to a new country, something that they might be less likely to do within more conventional settlement programming. Discussing and exploring these experiences can help to reduce anxiety and stress; sharing with others also helps to reduce isolation and foster networks – an important part of settlement processes.

Fostering client dialogue and storytelling also increased staff awareness and understanding of the individuals and communities they served. They were better able to respond to and address emerging needs and concerns.



Connection to Equity: Addressing Conflict and Discrimination

Conflict can arise both internally (within an organization among colleagues or within one individual who may feel conflicted about their role) and externally (with individuals, groups, funders or partners that artists and community organizations work with). Rather than avoiding or masking conflict, it is important to provide support and education so that all people involved build skills that aim to maintain safe spaces while implementing strategies that help to untangle the complex conditions that shape conflict. Being proactive by building relationships and understanding the contexts and histories of the individuals, communities and spaces we work with is a key step in the process.

There can be lots of challenges for artists working in a non-arts organization. A lack of understanding or buy-in from coworkers about the value of integrating arts practices when time and budgets are already stretched or insufficient organizational support (e.g. space, tools, and supplies) for the technical processes involved in art making are common barriers.

It is also difficult to evaluate arts programs on the same terms as non-arts programs. A 'one-size fits all' approach to evaluation

in a multi-disciplinary service organization doesn't necessarily work. For example, determining impact and program satisfaction by tracking attendance may work well with some sports related activities but not as well when it comes to arts programs that deeply engage a small group of individuals. Art programs "being evaluated on the same terms as drop-in basketball" may not fairly represent the qualities of the arts offerings.

Tensions may emerge among diverse colleagues working within different disciplines and providing different kinds of programming; budgetary constraints may require prioritizing certain programs and resources over others. Identifying both the intrinsic value of arts programming and how it can enhance skills and strengthen the effectiveness other kinds of social development programming can lead to more equitable evaluation and allocation of funds / resources.

Community arts facilitators may also have to address conflict and discrimination that emerges among arts participants and community members. In a place as diverse as Toronto, people may be exposed to communities and identities that they are not familiar or immediately comfortable with. It is also possible that they may have experiences in other environments where cultural and political conflict between different groups was especially intense. Prior conflict or a lack of knowledge and awareness can often lead to assumptions about certain groups and may result in discriminatory expressions or even conflicts among participants.

Navigating the tension between creating a safe non-discriminatory space and facilitating self-expression can be particularly difficult if hurtful or oppressive statements are framed as ‘self-expression’. It is important for program facilitators to develop skills that enable them to address and prevent conflicts and discrimination within community arts contexts. Partnering with social service organizations that have expertise or offer training in these areas can be a good strategy.

“When a situation arises, how we deal with it could make or break the experience, or the client, or the staff and so we are trying to create the types of partnerships that would help us to support; because we are not social workers . . . [we are] developing partnerships with organizations that can address some of the concerns . . . if we needed to refer a young person for supports that we can’t provide, we have the connections and are able to do so or we can bring [people] in to work in programs or individually . . . knowing that we are limited in our scope . . . We are an arts organization not a social service organization but we have to address those needs and those issues when they come up. So putting the process in place to be able to deal with that and at the same time looking at how we can equip our staff to at least deal with base line immediate needs . . . professional development in terms of workshops . . . dealing with hard to serve clients, dealing with difficult situations, for example UMAB training (understanding and managing aggressive behaviour), [we are] being proactive in dealing with those situations . . . [We are] building skill development into programming with clients ahead of time to prevent those situations from developing down the line.” — Community Arts Administrator

Communication and conflict resolution skills are important for anyone who engages directly with groups of people. Many Toronto organizations offer training in conflict resolution, as well as more general sessions on diversity and equity, working in groups, facilitating dialogue, and developing safe spaces. In addition to conflict resolution, communication training can help prepare a facilitator for addressing issues of discrimination that may arise in workshops and programs. Providing training and creating safe spaces where discussion can occur is useful in helping to prevent conflict or oppression rather than just reacting to it.



Worksheets: Conflict & Discrimination

Norms for Facilitating Courageous Conversations

By Cross Cultural Connections. Four of the Norms come from G. Singleton's "Courageous Conversations About Race".



PHOTO: NEIGHBOURHOOD ARTS NETWORK

Stay Engaged

- It's important that you try to stay present in the room. Pay attention to when you are shutting down. Discomfort and anxiety are normal parts of courageous conversations.
- If you find yourself needing to stand up, please do so.

Speak Your Truth

- We often avoid speaking our truth for fear of what others might say. It's important that we create a safe environment where everyone is free to speak openly.
- Keep in mind that people are in different places in this work. In order for us to grow, it's important that people are able to share their thoughts in a way that's comfortable for them.
- When we share our thoughts, it often creates an emotional reaction from others. Being able to speak your truth does not mean that people will not respond emotionally. Be prepared to experience the discomfort that race conversations bring.
- Speaking our truth does not mean stomping on each others heads. Before speaking, think about what it is that you want others to know. How can they best hear you?

- Remember that everyone does not communicate in the same way that you do. If someone gets loud in the room, it doesn't mean they are angry. If they are angry, it doesn't necessarily mean they are angry with you. If they are angry at something you said, it doesn't mean that that person no longer has a relationship with you. Often times these conversations bring up a lot of emotions from past and present experiences. Try and allow others to experience their emotions without you shutting down.

Experience Discomfort

- One way to think about this is, "Be comfortable with being uncomfortable". In other words, discomfort is to be expected.
- If you are not feeling any sense of discomfort in the dialogue, ask yourself are you fully engaged? Are you giving of yourself fully and taking risk?

Expect and Accept Non-closure

- In our society today, we often want to feel some sense of closure, regardless of the issue. Engaging in race conversations means there will be times of no closure. This is on-going work that does not necessarily leave one walking away feeling like everything turned out the way you hoped. Be willing to take risks and accept that much of this is about changing yourself not others.

Listen for Understanding

- Try and understand where another person is coming from as best you can.
- Be careful not to compare your experiences with another person's. This often invalidates or minimizes a person's experiences.
- Listen without thinking about how you are going to respond.
- Stay present in their pain and your discomfort as you listen.
- If someone is pointing out how what you said left them feeling, try not to explain or rationalize what you said or why you said it. For example, sometimes it's necessary to just say, "I didn't realize what I said was inappropriate...or hurt you in that way, I'm sorry," etc.
- Think about your comments before saying them. Resist the need to explain. Sometimes positive intent is not enough (intent vs. impact). Be careful not to lose the opportunity to just listen by putting the focus back on you.

PHOTO: NEIGHBOURHOOD ARTS NETWORK



Tools and Resources: Addressing Conflict and Discrimination

Diversity Education and Training

Harmony Movement

Harmony Movement provides anti-oppression training and diversity education for youth in schools and for community leaders and educators. <https://harmony.ca/community/>

Training for Change: An Integrated Anti-Oppression Framework

Rainbow Health Network, 2009

Provides an accessible, comprehensive introduction to integrated anti-oppression frameworks, and how it differs from other approaches to equity. <https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/resource-library/training-for-change-an-integrated-anti-oppression-framework/>

Training for Change: Practical Tools for Intersectional Workshops

Rainbow Health Network, 2009

This 'train the trainer' resource includes sample activities and resources for integrated anti-oppression training workshops. <https://www.rainbowhealthontario.ca/resource-library/training-for-change-practical-tools-for-intersectional-workshops/>

Integrating Community Arts and Conflict Resolution

Craig Zelizer for Community Arts Network, 2007

This article provides a broad overview of conflict resolution and how it can relate to community-engaged art. The discussion features key lessons for arts-based practitioners, including observations on the importance of evaluation and dealing with trauma and stress. <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/pcs/vol10/iss2/4/>

Equity and Diversity Workshops

Harmony Movement

Harmony Movement offers workshops for students and educators in schools and communities. Educator workshop topics include 'Diversity and Equity 101, Cultural Competency in the Workplace, Teambuilding Across Differences' and more. <https://harmony.ca/online-training/>

Conflict Resolution Training

St. Stephens Community House

St. Stephens offers a training and conflict resolution process that takes 'cultural differences, confidentiality and power imbalances into account'. In addition to professional training workshops that focus on interpersonal mediation, they also offer a session on 'Managing Conflict with Angry People'. Proceeds from St. Stephens workshops and training courses fund their free community mediation program. <https://www.sscto.ca/Conflict-Resolution-Training/Community-Mediation>

Nonviolent Communication is...

Nonviolent Communication, or compassionate communication, 'involves both communication skills that foster compassionate relating and consciousness of the interdependence of our well being and using power with others to work together to meet the needs of all concerned'. <https://www.cnvc.org/learn-nvc/what-is-nvc>

Norms For Facilitating Courageous Conversations

Cultures Connecting

This one-pager includes a framework and helpful tips that can be used to set the stage for difficult conversations. <https://www.buffaloschools.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=8488&dataid=44952&FileName=norms.pdf>

Sexual and Gender Diversity

Egale Canada, 2021

A variety of resources for working in/with and supporting LGBTQI2S communities and individuals. <https://egale.ca/awareness/#category=resources>

Significant Change Evaluating ArtReach Toronto

PHOTO: SARAH MILLER-GARVIN



Context and Participants

ArtReach Toronto was established to engage socially excluded youth and support youth arts initiatives through grants, training, and professional development. Through consultation with members of Toronto's Grassroots Youth Collaborative, ArtReach was created, based on a model that was 'inclusive, accessible and...would provide a high level of support to applicants'.

At ArtReach, youth voices are incorporated into multiple levels of the organization and its decision-making process. Through youth advisory groups and youth jury members, the organizational structure of ArtReach encourages accountability, participation, and inclusivity. Evaluation was integrated throughout the first five years of the ArtReach program, with a major focus on evaluation during the fifth year. Using variety of evaluation tools, including the Most Significant Change approach, ArtReach was able to identify themes and stories that captured important elements of the program.

Challenges

Understanding and articulating the breadth and depth of impact of the ArtReach program.

Funding

Funds for ArtReach Toronto's first five years were collaboratively generated by a group of 11 funders, consisting of national, regional and municipal arts funders.

Staff and Volunteers

ArtReach Toronto employs one full-time staff person, interns, and volunteers. The evaluation process was coordinated by one full-time external evaluator.

At ArtReach, evaluation is an important part of a larger cycle of decision-making and program planning, and it takes place with input from a variety of stakeholders.

“We hold strategic planning consultations in the community with youth and young artists and with our funders and other stakeholders. Every time we create a report we have site visits and talk to people who were funded but also those who weren't. Feedback can be hard to hear but it's important.”

Feedback from program participants was gathered using a variety of tools. For ArtReach, accessibility is a priority; careful choices about data-gathering tools can help to support accessibility.

“When you're deciding what tools to use, you really want to think about barriers to the community you are working with. If you are working with a group of people with low literacy, a paper survey might not be the way to go. You might choose to use a 'Speakers Corner' video booth to give people the opportunity to talk about your program in their own words”.

ArtReach uses learning circles as a mechanism to connect with representatives of ArtReach-funded projects, and to gain insight into their experiences with the program.

“We use very participatory evaluation approaches....We’ll train a young person, they’ll facilitate the session using an approach that’s really empowering to young people.... We’re bringing them together into this learning circle not just to learn from them - so to say, “What have been your experiences? [What was] your project’s most successful moment, what brings you pride?”, but also to say, “What have been your barriers and challenges?” That helps inform us.”

The learning circles are designed to be useful and beneficial to youth participants. Instead of representing a one-way flow of information, they are a learning and sharing opportunity for everyone involved.

“We’ll couple [the learning circle] with an opportunity for networking so they’re getting something out of it. We’ll launch a new tool that we’ve developed in the workshop series, so it’s really symbiotic. We’re learning and sharing and you’re learning and sharing, so no one’s the teacher here. Everyone is sharing and getting something from it together. From those sessions we learn how to create a better funding program. It’s evaluation, which you think is an accountability mechanism, but it helps us with our learning and with our planning.”

A commitment to participatory and creative processes led to ArtReach choosing the Most Significant Change (MSC) technique as the major tool for their fifth year evaluation.

The MSC technique was used as a tool to help define and understand the impact of the ArtReach program. This approach helped ArtReach to identify common themes and to explore the program’s deeper impacts, as identified by participants.

The MSC technique was applied to six ArtReach-funded projects. For each project, three evaluators were identified and trained. Each group of three evaluators consisted of one external stakeholder, one program participant, and one internal stakeholder. The 18 interviews were then transcribed, and analyzed for common themes. Some of the themes identified included: ethno cultural discoveries, systemic and institutional change, trailblazing and taking risks, new community connections and increased networks, organizations gaining structure and stability, and increased validation, credibility, and confidence.

The next step in the evaluation process was to capture these themes in the form of stories, to be shared with community members, funders, and other stakeholders in the ArtReach program. These stories, and more details on the evaluation process, can be found in the ArtReach evaluation report, available from ArtReach Toronto.

PHOTO: ARTREACH TORONTO



Key Strategies and Tools:

ArtReach used specific tools and strategies to increase the accessibility of the program. Multiple data collection methods, including a 'Speaker's Corner' video booth, were used to make feedback more accessible to participants with varying literacies. Allowing participants to use consistent nicknames created a safer space and allowed them to share feedback while maintaining privacy.

Gift certificates and prize draws were provided (in combination with numbers instead of names in order to preserve privacy) as non-monetary incentives for participation.

Implementing Learning Circles created an opportunity for ArtReach to learn from participants, as well as share valuable professional development training and tools with participants.



Connection to Equity: Evaluation

Clarity around the basic elements of evaluation can help guide the evaluation process so that it is meaningful, productive and enriching. Identifying why you want to evaluate, what you want to learn from the evaluation, who will participate in it, and who will use it, can help to determine how to carry it out — what questions will you ask and how will you ask them.

Evaluation is important at all levels of community-engaged practice. Checking in and assessing how things are going for the people involved and within communities and organizations can help to respond to needs as they emerge, build on strengths, and identify areas for change. All of these factors are necessary in efforts to build more equitable practices or organizations and to support individuals' awareness and skill development. Evaluation is essentially a learning process. In the field of education,

Word Clouds highlighted themes and commonalities during the evaluation process and made them visible.

The Most Significant Change Technique was used as a tool to involve multiple stakeholders in the evaluation process, to provide a professional development opportunity for participants, and to uncover the depth and complexity of the program's impact. The MSC technique offered ArtReach a way to help understand systemic change in relation to a program. It focused on accessibility of the program at multiple levels, from decision making to evaluation, and it considered how youth were included not just in relation to programming activities, but as part of the structure of the organization itself.



rather than just assessing progress or performance at the end of a program, instructors and students assess in different ways throughout the process of learning. Assessment of/as/for learning is a common model within Canadian public education contexts — assessment of learning, assessment as learning, and assessment for learning.

The evaluation process can help to assess what has been achieved (assessment of learning). Evaluation processes can also be learning experiences that help to build skills and knowledge for those engaging in them (assessment as learning). Evaluation can also offer insight into areas that need to be taken into account, strengthened, or changed to improve practices (assessment for learning).

PHOTOS: ARTREACH TORONTO

Evaluation of and for community-engaged practices should be integrated at multiple levels. One may do evaluation of and for organizations; staff/coordinators/artists; participants; audience/community; partners/funders. The key to equitable evaluation is that the process of assessment also makes space for the assessment as learning piece. Making evaluation participatory in ways that value, support and develop the perspectives, skills and understanding of those involved can make evaluation a positive and inspiring experience.

Quantitative evaluation focuses on tracking numbers, statistics, or information that can be measured (for example: attendance, number of participants, number of art works, number of people employed, benefits or skills accrued, etc.). It is useful for identifying patterns, for tracking information over longer periods of time, or for compiling information from large groups relatively quickly. Quantitative evaluation tends to emphasize macro understandings—zooming out for a big picture view, like an aerial photograph.

Qualitative evaluation focuses on the qualities of experiences or practices. It often works to record information that is not easily measured using collection methods such as interviews, observations, testimonials, visual documentation, etc. Qualitative Evaluation may focus in more on the micro or specific qualities and experiences of a particular context, project or individual—zooming for a close up, like a portrait.

Arts-based / Arts-Informed Evaluation is an approach that uses creative processes and art mediums as the method for exploring and representing evaluation questions. The excellence of community arts practices often resides in the processes and the experiences of practitioners and participants; a quality that can set it apart from some more conventional forms of Western arts practice. Arts-based / Arts-Informed Evaluation is often able to get at qualities of experience that documentation of final products, numbers or literal reporting cannot easily convey. Combining it with these forms can enrich and depend evaluations. See ArtReach Toronto's Toolkit on Arts-based Evaluation and Arts for Children and Youth's handbook on Arts-informed Evaluation to learn more about these models.



Worksheets: Evaluation

Participation in the Arts Can...

From the 1997 study Use or Ornament? The social impact of participation in the arts by Francois Matarasso; used with permission.

The Study Shows That Participation in the Arts Can

1. Increase people's confidence and sense of self-worth
2. Extend involvement in social activity
3. Give people influence over how they are seen by others
4. Stimulate interest and confidence in the arts
5. Provide a forum to explore personal rights and responsibilities
6. Contribute to the educational development of children
7. Encourage adults to take up education and training opportunities
8. Help build new skills and work experience
9. Contribute to people's employability
10. Help people take up or develop careers in the arts
11. Reduce isolation by helping people to make friends
12. Develop community networks and sociability
13. Promote tolerance and contribute to conflict resolution
14. Provide a forum for intercultural understanding and friendship
15. Help validate the contribution of a whole community
16. Promote intercultural contact and co-operation
17. Develop contact between the generations
18. Help offenders and victims address issues of crime
19. Provide a route to rehabilitation and integration for offenders
20. Build community organisational capacity
21. Encourage local self-reliance and project management
22. Help people extend control over their own lives
23. Be a means of gaining insight into political and social ideas
24. Facilitate effective public consultation and participation
25. Help involve local people in the regeneration process
26. Facilitate the development of partnership
27. Build support for community projects
28. Strengthen community co-operation and networking
29. Develop pride in local traditions and cultures
30. Help people feel a sense of belonging and involvement
31. Create community traditions in new towns or neighbourhoods
32. Involve residents in environmental improvements
33. Provide reasons for people to develop community activities
34. Improve perceptions of marginalised groups
35. Help transform the image of public bodies
36. Make people feel better about where they live
37. Help people develop their creativity
38. Erode the distinction between consumer and creator
39. Allow people to explore their values, meanings and dreams
40. Enrich the practice of professionals in the public and voluntary sectors
41. Transform the responsiveness of public service organisations
42. Encourage people to accept risk positively
43. Help community groups raise their vision beyond the immediate
44. Challenge conventional service delivery
45. Raise expectations about what is possible and desirable
46. Have a positive impact on how people feel
47. Be an effective means of health education
48. Contribute to a more relaxed atmosphere in health centres
49. Help improve the quality of life of people with poor health
50. Provide a unique and deep source of enjoyment

Information Collection Tools

Excerpted from the Guide to Project Evaluation: A Participatory Approach, by Health Canada.

There is a wide variety of information collection tools that can be used depending on the project's evaluation needs. Examples of tools that have been used in other projects are listed below.



Written survey questionnaire

- Structured questionnaires used to reach large numbers of people
- Provides quantitative data (numbers) that can be statistically analysed and qualitative information that can be summarized
- Used to survey target population in terms of knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviour.

Tips and cautions:

- When developing the questions for the questionnaire, ensure that they are not worded in ways that lead to biased or misleading responses.
- While mass mailing of survey questionnaires has the advantage of reaching large numbers of people, there is no guarantee that people will fill out and return it, so the actual response rate may be low.
- Limiting the number of questions may increase the response rate.
- Using smaller but targeted mailings, followed up by a phone call, may increase the response rate.
- Paying attention to respondents' literacy level, language and visual capacity may increase the response rate.
- All survey questionnaires need to be pilot tested to ensure that the questions succeed in getting the information that is required.

Telephone survey

- Can ask for the same types of information as the written survey questionnaire.
- Has the advantage of increasing accessibility and allowing immediate clarification of questions if the respondent is experiencing any difficulties.

Tips and cautions:

- Telephone interviewers may face resistance from people who are tired of answering this type of call or who are suspicious because of their experiences with telephone soliciting.
- Ensuring that the respondent is provided with clear information on the credibility of the group doing the survey, the purpose of the survey and how the collected information will be used may increase the response rate.
- Finding a convenient time for the respondent to answer the survey questions may increase the response rate.

Reaction sheet

- Simple kind of questionnaire that asks questions about people's satisfaction with a particular activity.
- Easy and fast to administer and summarize.
- Useful tool for getting an immediate response to new resource materials, workshop models and public education events.

Tips and cautions:

- Avoid using leading questions that prompt positive responses. Instead of asking, **“Did you enjoy the workshop?”** ask, **“Did the workshop provide you with enough information to answer your questions about health promotion?”**
- Limit the number of questions to increase the response rate.
- Include open-ended questions to obtain qualitative data. Shape these questions carefully to control the amount of material received. Examples: **“Give three words to describe your reaction to this workshop.”** **“What were the two key learnings for you from this workshop?”**

Face-to-Face interview

- Individual interviews structured around a set of open-ended questions that are developed to guide the interview and to provide consistency in the information collected.
- Useful method for getting in-depth information on project activities.
- Provides an opportunity to clarify responses and probe for further information.

Tips and cautions:

- This tool can be used with a specific group of people (e.g., project staff to gather their opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of the project) or with key informants who are knowledgeable about the project (e.g., frontline service providers about how best to conduct outreach within their community).
- It is a good method to use with respondents who have low literacy levels and might be uncomfortable with written data collection tools.
- The interviewer needs to be trained not to bias the responses through the use of leading questions.

Telephone interview

- Similar process and function as face-to-face interview but conducted by phone
- Less expensive to administer than face-to-face interviews.

Tips and cautions:

- Sending the respondent a copy of the interview guide in advance may promote a more thoughtful discussion.
- Interviews, both in person and by phone, are an alternative to focus groups when you want to avoid group influences on the responses people give.

Focus group

- Group discussion in which 10 to 12 people are brought together in a single session of approximately an hour to generate ideas and suggest strategies.
- Facilitated using a specific agenda of structured questions, similar to the interview guide, that focuses the discussion in the meeting.
- Used to obtain in-depth understanding of attitudes, behaviour, impressions and insights (qualitative data) on a variety of issues from a group of people, e.g., project staff or a project advisory committee.

Tips and cautions:

- The facilitator must remain neutral and non-judgmental and have the skills to keep the discussion moving and on track.
- This is a particularly useful method for reflecting on evaluation findings and identifying key learnings. It may also be useful for developing preliminary ideas for new programs or for testing messages that will be used in educational and media packages.
- It is not a useful method for developing consensus or making final decisions.

Participant - observation

- Involves actual observation rather than asking questions.
- Used to better understand behaviours, the social context in which they arise and the meanings that individuals attach to them.
- Observers compile field notes describing what they observe; the analysis focuses on what happened and why.

Tips and cautions:

- This may be the most feasible way to collect data from some hard-to-reach populations (e.g., individuals who frequent public sex environments or drug shooting galleries).
- As with all qualitative techniques, the results may not be fully generalizable to the entire study population.

Project diary

- Project managers, staff or participants are asked to keep a record of their experiences while working on the project.
- Provides qualitative evaluation data.

Tips and cautions:

- It is important to provide the participants with clear guidelines on keeping a log book: the type of information you are looking for, how it will be used, confidentiality, etc.
- This is a useful method for identifying unintended consequences of a project.
- Some people are very uncomfortable with this method because of the unstructured nature of the writing required.

Program Documentation

- Analysis of written records (minutes of meetings, telephone logs, intake forms, policy directives, financial records, attendance records)
 - Can provide information on people's interests, preferences and patterns of usage of services and service locations
 - Can often, through systematic review, provide important evaluation information, both quantitative and qualitative
 - Inexpensive source of information.
-

Non-traditional methods of documentation

- Non-verbal or non-written evaluation tools used to respect diversity and accessibility issues
- Examples include cartooning, drawing, poster making, photography, videotaping, audio taping, scrap-books.

Tips for designing effective evaluation tools

- Keep them short and simple.
- Use plain language with no jargon.
- For tools requiring written responses
 - Use large print
 - Avoid clutter
- Leave lots of white space
- Provide ample room for responses.
- Ask for key works and key learnings.
- Develop evaluation tools in collaboration with the people who will use them.
- Ask only for information that will be used.

Tips and cautions:

- This tool is limited in that records document only existing alternatives, they don't show other needs, wants or preferences.
- It is important to identify evaluation information needs at the beginning of a project to ensure that the necessary records are kept throughout the project.

Tips and cautions:

- Qualitative data collected may be difficult to analyse and generalize.
- This is a useful method for getting responses from respondents who are uncomfortable with written tools.
- No single evaluation tool can provide all the evaluation information required. A combination of different tools that suit the project needs and available resources has to be developed. Regardless of which tools are selected, they should reflect the following tips to be effective.

Evaluation Chart

Developed by Shahina Sayani for ArtReach Toronto; used with permission.

The following chart shows examples of how ArtReach Toronto has collected different kinds of information to support evaluation of the organization and its programs. These evaluation tools are used to promote dialogue with stakeholders, to build communication skills and strategies, to support organizational learning and development, and to represent the community impact and achievements fostered by ArtReach.

Type of Information Needed	Tools
<p>Statistics and Numbers</p> <p># of youth attending workshops # of youth attending events benefit in \$ for each participant</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance / registration forms (Excel) • Cost Benefit per participant involved (i.e. budget for each workshop divided by average number of participants)
<p>Quotes, Testimonials, Stories (paper and film-based)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with people that received a certificate for attending 5 or more workshops • Speakers Corners ("To me, ArtReach has been...") http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wO3APIhlclo • Most Significant Change (MSC) approach
<p>Feedback</p> <p>Responses to ArtReach (AR) granting program and monthly workshops</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey handed out at each workshop • Learning Circles every 2 years • Project reports include a question on how ArtReach can improve • Site Visits / interviews
<p>Longer-term Impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most Significant Change (MSC) approach • Electronic surveys

Tools and Resources: Evaluation

Evaluating Collaboratives

University of Wisconsin-Madison, Extension, 1998

An in-depth examination of how collaboration can be evaluated. Includes helpful questions to ask, worksheets, and examples of data collection methods. Also looks at the importance of interpretation and communicating results.

<https://learningstore.extension.wisc.edu/products/evaluating-collaboratives-reaching-the-potential-p1032>

Collaboration Factors Inventory

Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 2008

Online questionnaire that helps to assess current or potential collaborations based on 20 factors that can affect success.

<http://wilderresearch.org/tools/cfi/index.php>

Assessing Your Collaboration: A Self Evaluation Tool

Lynne Borden and Daniel Perkins for the Journal of Extension, 1999

A self-assessment checklist to help evaluate current or potential collaborations based on 13 success factors.

https://atrium.lib.uoguelph.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10214/3117/Borden_Assessing_Your_Collaboration_%20A%20Self_Evaluation_Tool_complete.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Evaluation Toolkit for the Voluntary and Community Arts in Northern Ireland

Annabel Jackson Associates, 2004

Introductory toolkit designed to make evaluation 'as easy as possible' for the arts. Includes an overview of evaluation concepts and steps for planning, recording, and monitoring, and lists different types of evaluation.

<https://www.artshealthresources.org.uk/docs/evaluation-toolkit-for-the-voluntary-and-community-arts-in-northern-ireland/>

Learning Together: Five Important Discussion Questions to Make Evaluation Useful

Ontario Nonprofit Network, n.d.

A discussion guide for understanding stakeholder needs towards evaluation design.

<https://theonn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ONN-Evaluation-Discussion-Guide.pdf>

Planning a Program Evaluation

Ellen Taylor-Powell, Sara Steele, and Mohammed Dougla for the University of Wisconsin-Extension, 1998

A clear and accessible introduction to key concepts and steps for planning to evaluate a program

<https://learningstore.extension.wisc.edu/products/planning-a-program-evaluation-p1033>

The Power of Reflection: An Introduction to Participatory Evaluation Techniques

HC Link, 2016

A theoretical introduction to participatory evaluation and three simple evaluation techniques that can be used by any community group or network

http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ph-sp/resources-ressources/guide/appendix_1-eng.php

The Logic Model: A Blueprint for Describing Programs

Nancy L. Porteous, Barbara J. Sheldrick, Paula J. Stewart for the Ontario Ministry of Health

An introduction to logic models, this comprehensive primer includes worksheets and steps for learning how to apply a logic model to your own program. From the Program Evaluation Toolkit developed by the Ontario Ministry of Health and the Region of Ottawa-Carleton.

http://med-fom-familymed-research.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2012/03/logic_model_e.pdf

At A Glance: The Ten Steps for Conducting an Evaluation

Public Health Ontario, 2015

Step-by-step guide for those new to evaluation.

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/A/2015/at-a-glance-10step-evaluation.pdf?la=en>

ArtReach Toronto Granting Program Evaluation Report

First Leadership Ltd., 2011

https://artreachtoronto.files.wordpress.com/2015/12/evaluation_report2011_summary0119.pdf

Arts-informed Evaluation: A creative approach to assessing community arts practices

Arts For Children and Youth, 2012

A handbook for artists and community workers on how to use arts processes as evaluation tools. Provides a step-by-step guide, example activities, and background information about community arts and evaluation. Contact the organization for a copy (sliding scale fee for printed version).

<https://icasc.ca/resource/arts-informed-evaluation-a-creative-approach-to-assessing-community-arts-practices/>

Arts for Health and Wellbeing: An Evaluation Framework

Public Health England, 2016

Provides guidance on appropriate ways of documenting the impacts of arts for health and wellbeing.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/765496/PHE_Arts_and_Health_Evaluation_FINAL.pdf

Toward Asset-Based Community Cultural Development

Tom Borrup, 2004

A narrative reflection on asset-based community cultural development and how community cultural development intersects with issues of civic engagement, planning and design, and other related areas.

http://wayback.archive-it.org/2077/20100903214951/http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom/archivefiles/2005/09/radical_whats_r.php

Use or Ornament? The social impact of participation in the arts

François Matarasso for Comedia, 1997

A broad study of the impact of participation in the arts. Focuses specifically on if/how participation in the arts affects people's social lives, and how this can be measured.

<https://www.artshealthresources.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/1997-Matarasso-Use-or-Ornament-The-Social-Impact-of-Participation-in-the-Arts-1.pdf>

Culture Counts in Communities: A framework for measurement

Maria-Rosario Jackson and Joaquin Herranz, 2002

Based on four guiding principles for measuring arts and creativity in neighbourhood settings, the Arts & Culture Indicators in Community Building Project introduces a framework for working with these four principles.

<http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=310834>

Gifts of the Muse

Kevin F. McCarthy, Elizabeth H. Ondaatje, Laura Zakaras, Arthur Brooks for RAND Corporation, 2004

Explores the ways in which individual and societal benefits of the arts are connected.

https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2005/RAND_MG218.pdf

Five Quality of Life Questionnaires and Assessments

Nicole Celestine, 2021

A brief review of quality-of-life definitions and five useful questionnaires to apply in practice.

<https://positivepsychology.com/quality-of-life-questionnaires-assessments/>

Towards a Local Culture Index: Measuring the cultural vitality of communities

François Matarasso for Comedia, 1999

A discussion of the motivations and challenges of measuring cultural vitality, and an outline of possible indicators that could be used.

<https://www.culturenet.cz/coKmv4d994Swax/uploads/2014/11/Towards-a-Local-Culture-Index.pdf>



Stress Management

A Learning Priority

DUSK DANCES; PHOTO BY SARAH MILLER-GARVIN



With heavy workloads, lack of time, inadequate compensation, and other contributing factors, working in communities can be a very stressful occupation. Due to their inclusive aims, community-engaged art initiatives often include participants who are part of vulnerable populations and who face higher rates of stress and potential harm. In addition, some arts processes can be very evocative — supporting personal as well as collective explorations and challenges. In order to support those participating in community arts initiatives, it is important for cultural workers to be equipped to recognize and understand the causes of stress, and to have access to tools for stress management. It is equally important for cultural workers and organizations to take steps to prevent and address stress in artists, staff and volunteers.

This learning priority for community arts and cultural workers can be supported through the development of partnerships with social service sector and health organizations that focus on well-being, stress reduction and crisis intervention. Some Toronto-based organizations that work in this area who have experience collaborating with arts groups and who have excellent on-line learning resources as well as workshops and training are: The Wellesley Institute (Check out their publications & resources webpage <http://www.wellesleyinstitute.com/publications/>); The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health – CAMH (See their Education and Resources web pages: <http://www.camh.net/education/index.html>); The University Health Network offers courses on mindfulness and stress reduction with some programs designed specifi-

cally for artists (Go to their website for more information: https://www.uhn.ca/Medicine/Clinics/Artists_Health_Centre).

The Neighbourhood Arts Network is seeking examples of how community arts practitioners and organizations have addressed stress management and how they have integrated equitable practices for participant, staff and volunteer support / training.

Worksheets: Stress Management

PHOTO BY HELLO FOTO



Vicarious Trauma

Developed by the Headington Institute; more information is available online, including resources for managers.

Excerpted by CARE from: Understanding and Addressing Vicarious Trauma L.A. Pearlman and L. McKay (2008) Headington Institute

www.headington-institute.org

Humanitarian workers often assist people who have been victimized. They work in and with communities that have been devastated by natural forces or conflict, and this work can be extremely challenging. They themselves are sometimes the targets of violence. As a result of all these things, humanitarian workers are likely to experience lasting psychological and spiritual changes in the way that they see themselves and the world. Some of these changes can be positive. Humanitarian workers often talk about how witnessing (and sometimes sharing in) the sufferings of people they are there to help has led to personal changes they appreciate – such as more compassion and gratitude, and a deeper understanding of what they value in their own lives and why. However, some of the changes that can come from witnessing and experiencing suffering can be more problematic, leaving potentially permanent scars.

What is Vicarious Trauma?

Vicarious trauma (VT) is the process of change that happens because you care about other people who have been hurt, and feel committed or responsible to help them. Over time this process can lead to changes in your psychological, physical, and spiritual well-being. If you are a humanitarian worker, it is important to understand the process of vicarious trauma, because it will almost certainly impact you in some way. But that's not all. It will also impact your family, your organization, and the people you are working to help.

- Vicarious trauma is a process that unfolds over time. It is not just your responses to one person, one story, or one situation. It is the cumulative effect of contact with survivors of violence or disaster or people who are struggling.
- Vicarious trauma happens because you care – because you empathize with people who are hurting. Empathy is the ability to identify with another person, to understand and feel another person's pain and joy.
- Vicarious trauma happens because you feel committed or

responsible to help and at times, you are unable to fulfill that commitment. It can lead to very high (and sometimes unrealistic) expectations of yourself and others, and for the results you want to see from your work. Your sense of commitment and responsibility can eventually contribute to you feeling burdened, overwhelmed, and hopeless in the face of great need and suffering. It can also lead you to extend yourself beyond what is reasonable for your

own well-being or the best long-term interests of beneficiaries.

- A key component of vicarious trauma is changes in spirituality, which can deeply impact the way you see the world and your deepest sense of meaning and hope.

Who may be most at Risk for Vicarious Trauma?

- VT may be more problematic for people who tend to avoid problems or difficult feelings, blame others for their difficulties, or withdraw from others when things get hard.
- Those who have experienced trauma themselves may identify more closely with particular types of pain or loss others have experienced, and may be more vulnerable to experiencing vicarious trauma.
- Added stress in other areas of your life can make you more vulnerable to vicarious trauma
- A lack of connection with a source of meaning, purpose, and hope is a risk factor for developing more problematic vicarious trauma.
- Lack of good social support—having people to talk to who care about you and your welfare—puts you at increased risk for vicarious trauma.
- Unsustainable professional and work-life boundaries and unrealistic ideals and expectations about work can contribute to more problematic vicarious trauma.
- Research suggests that humanitarian workers who have more work-related exposure to trauma survivors are likely to experience more problematic vicarious trauma.
- Humanitarian organizations that don't foster an organizational culture of effective management, open communication, and good staff care, increase their staffs' risk of vicarious trauma.
- Not understanding cross-cultural differences in expressing distress and extending and receiving assistance can contribute to an increased risk of vicarious trauma.
- Humanitarian work as a profession is often characterized by self-neglect, toughing it out, risk-taking, and denial of personal needs. All of these can contribute to more severe vicarious trauma.

Common Signs of Vicarious Trauma

Some common difficulties associated with vicarious trauma include:

- Difficulty managing your emotions;
- Difficulty accepting or feeling okay about yourself;

- Difficulty making good decisions;
- Problems managing the boundaries between yourself and others (e.g., taking on too much responsibility, having difficulty leaving work at the end of the day, trying to step in and control other's lives);
- Problems in relationships;
- Physical problems such as aches & pains, illnesses, accidents;
- Difficulty feeling connected to what's going on around and within you; and
- Loss of meaning and hope.

Vicarious trauma can negatively affect your work, your colleagues, the overall functioning of the organization, and the quality of assistance being provided to those you are working to help.

Vicarious trauma influences the way you act and interact with people you love. This affects your family and friends.

Coping With Vicarious Trauma

Coping with vicarious trauma means identifying strategies that can both help prevent vicarious trauma from becoming severe, and help manage vicarious trauma during times when it is more problematic.

Good coping strategies are things that help you take care of yourself – especially things that help you **escape, rest** and **play**.

Among other things, these might include:

Escape: Getting away from it all, physically or mentally (books or films, taking a day or a week off, playing video games, talking to friends about things other than work);

Rest: Having no goal or time-line, or doing things you find relaxing (lying on the grass watching the clouds, sipping a cup of tea, taking a nap, getting a massage); and

Play: Engaging in activities that make you laugh or lighten your

spirits (sharing funny stories with a friend, playing with a child, being creative, being physically active).

Transforming Vicarious Trauma

Transforming vicarious trauma means something deeper than just coping with it. Remember that, over time, one of the key components of vicarious trauma is changes in your spirituality. You can come to question your deepest beliefs about the way life and the universe work, and the existence and nature of meaning and hope. At the deepest level, **transforming** vicarious trauma means identifying ways to nurture a sense of meaning and hope. What gives life and work meaning, and what instills or renews hope?

You likely have sources of meaning, purpose, hope, and perspective in your life. Some ways to connect (or reconnect) with these may be:

Reminding yourself of the importance and value of humanitarian work;

Staying connected with family, friends, and colleagues;

Noticing and deliberately paying attention to the little things – small moments like sipping a cup of coffee, the sound of the wind in the trees, or brief connections with others;

Marking transitions, celebrating joys, and mourning losses with people you care about through traditions, rituals, or ceremonies;

Taking time to reflect (e.g., by reading, writing, prayer, and meditation);

**Identifying and challenging your own cynical beliefs; and
Undertaking growth-promoting activities (learning, writing in a journal, being creative and artistic).**

Tools and Resources: Stress Management



A Look at the Self-Care Wheel: Templates, Worksheets and Activities

Jeremy Sutton, 2020

Exploration of a wellness tool that helps to regain control and focus on a busy life. <https://positivepsychology.com/self-care-wheel/>

Understanding and Addressing Vicarious Trauma

A thorough resource related to vicarious trauma; includes information about risk factors, signs and symptoms, ways to address it, and specific preventative tools for the workplace. Also includes a worksheet to help develop a vicarious trauma action plan. <https://www.headington-institute.org/resource/understanding-vt-reading-course/>

The Gerstein Centre: Counselling, Crisis Intervention and Training Workshops

The Gerstein Centre provides “crisis intervention to adults, living in the City of Toronto, who experience mental health problems. The Centre provides supportive counselling for immediate, crisis issues and referrals to other services for on-going, non-crisis

PHOTO (LEFT): SARAH MILLER-GARVIN
PHOTO (RIGHT): NEIGHBOURHOOD ARTS NETWORK

Centre offers workshops in Crisis Intervention, Suicide Prevention and Intervention and Mental Health Awareness. Fees for these workshops are reasonable. A sliding scale is also available.” www.gersteincentre.org/

Distress Centres of Greater Toronto

Distress Centres provides 24-hour support, 7 days a week and 365 days a year to individuals. <https://www.dcoft.com/home-support>

Workplace Stress

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, 2012

This overview of workplace stress includes signs and symptoms of stress, general tips for workers dealing with stress, and ways in which employers can help.

<http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/stress.html>

Preventing Burnout: Signs, Symptoms, Causes, and Coping Strategies

Melinda Smith, Jeanne Segal, and Robert Segal, 2012

This article introduces the idea of burnout, and presents various practical tools for identifying and addressing burnout.

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/burnout-prevention-and-recovery.htm>

Workplace Wellness

Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, n.d.

A set of articles and tools related to work-life balance, wellness programs, stress management and occupational health and safety programs for Canadian nonprofits.

<http://www.cpsc-cssge.ca/hr-resource-centre/hr-toolkit/workplaces-work/workplace-wellness>

Solving the Problem: Preventing Stress in the Workplace

Chair in Occupational Health and Safety Management, Université Laval, 2005

A thorough introduction to the primary, secondary and tertiary causes of workplace stress, and how management and individuals can work to address them. Also includes steps for creating a plan of action and tackling the issue within an organization. Part of a larger series titled, "Mental Health at Work: From Defining to Solving the Problem". <https://www.irsst.qc.ca/en/publications-tools/publication/i/100025/n/mental-health-at-work-from-defining-to-solving-the-problem-solving-the-problem-preventing-stress-in-the-workplace-r-427-3>

Enough Workplace Stress: Organizing for Change

Canadian Union of Public Employees, 2003

Designed for CUPE members, this guide frames stress as a workplace health and safety hazard and examines causes, solutions, and related legislation and policies.

http://cupe.ca/updir/stress_guideline.pdf

DUSK DANCES; PHOTO BY SARAH MILLER-GARVIN



Summary



The profile of community-engaged arts practice continues to grow within Toronto, Ontario, and Canada. The diverse range of art forms, approaches to engagement, and community contexts makes this field challenging and cutting-edge. Working with communities effectively requires flexibility, responsiveness, and a commitment to integrating change.

Community-engaged arts have emerged both out of grassroots communities and cultural traditions as well as from artists seeking alternative and more collaborative art forms and spaces. Community-engaged art has stimulated debate about the value and goals of arts practice within the arts field, generating important and revitalizing dialogue. Simultaneously, it has strengthened the connections between the arts and other sectors: social services, environmental initiatives, education, political and economic development.

Making the arts more accessible and relevant to more people advances the arts sector as a whole. Just as community arts or studio-based work requires constant creativity to meet the needs of each new project or context, meeting the needs of our changing society requires an on-going dedication to equity. There is no “right way” to be creative and there is no single recipe for equity; they are both continuous processes of learning and innovation.

Equity, like creativity, is not simple. It is easy to feel overwhelmed or blocked by change. The arts and equity project has demonstrated that to achieve equity, dialogue and critical reflection are necessary. Sharing our insights, experiences and asking difficult questions collectively can help us to be proactive. Equity is a gift, a goal, and a question that can benefit everyone and that can only be met if we work together.

Next Steps



This toolkit represents a snapshot of questions and ideas related to issues of equity and the arts. It is our hope that these resources and tools will be a helpful starting point for individuals, groups, and organizations that are working to reduce barriers and engage communities through the arts.

Join the Discussion

We invite you to join us as we continue to explore equity and the arts:

- By hosting a community conversation
- By profiling innovative artistic approaches to issues of arts and equity
- By sharing resources and materials on the Neighbourhood Arts Network site

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