

Budget 2018: Submission to the Pre-Budget Consultations

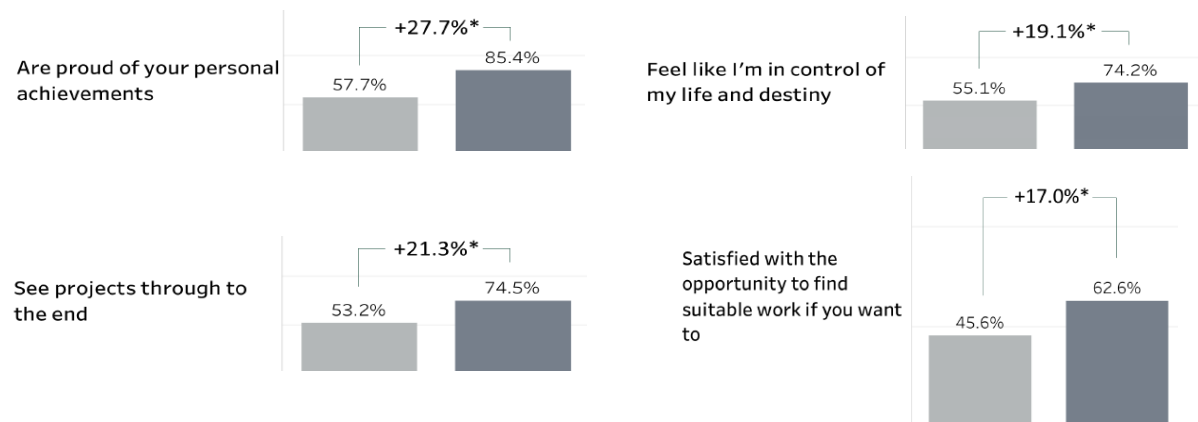
Executive Summary

Across Canada and around the world, artists are working with communities to create positive change through processes of participatory art making. Art for social change (ASC) practices are used to create dialogue and to address issues in intercultural tensions, the environment, economics, settlement, crime reduction, and other complex challenges. In Canada, this work happens with groups such as at-risk youth, immigrants, and isolated seniors. It takes place in a variety of settings, including in social enterprises and strategic planning for businesses, prisons and community centres, schools and hospitals.

ASC work is cross-sectoral and involves partnership and collaboration with many diverse businesses, non-profit and charitable organizations, individuals, and professional artists. Such collective creation on issues enable new and innovative forms of dialogue and action, and provide safe ways for citizens to express and exchange ideas, develop solutions and act. The impact of ASC is holistic, as it involves empowering community members to increase their wellbeing and in turn, their productive contribution to our society.

As one example, *Cirque Hors Piste* in Montreal conducted three circus creative intensives from 2013-2015. The program involved youth participants, many of whom “expressed traumatic childhoods and/or were involved with drugs, crime, and other social difficulties.”

Cirque Hors Piste evaluation with participants (N = 98). A selection of comparative results before and after participation in the program:¹



¹ Cirque Hors Piste. “Re-Approaching Community Development Through the Arts: Synthesis of research conducted by Dr. Jennifer Spiegel.”

Furthermore, at the start of the *Cirque Hors Piste* program, only a small proportion participants who had dropped out of school wanted more education. After the program, that number doubled. The same can be said for the before and after change in number of participants who had a job and were happy with it.

There are well over 200 ASC organizations in Canada, many of them over 25 years old, community-based (often as small non-profit organizations) and economically supported through a mix of private and public funding. Federal funding for ASC is relatively low, at around 8% of total sector funding, while municipal, provincial and foundation support is growing.² Practitioners in the field access some funding through the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Canada Council for the Arts. And, since ASC is driven by the needs of the community rather than by the art form itself, non-cultural federal departments have a history of modest support for the field: Health Canada funded a national ASC initiative to address teen suicide and addiction. At the Department of Justice, funded projects have addressed gang violence and youth radicalization.

These two recommendations for Budget 2018 aim to utilize ASC work to better serve Canadian communities:

1. Develop an all-of-government structure to coordinate cross-sector initiatives across federal departments.
2. Make continued investment in the Department of Canadian Heritage's *Canada Cultural Investment Fund – Strategic Initiatives* program.

Recommendation 1: Develop an all-of-government structure to coordinate cross-sector initiatives across federal departments. It is recommended that the Department of Canadian Heritage conduct start-up operations, using ASC as a pilot for this work.

In a rapidly-changing and increasingly connected world, Canadians are challenged to address complex issues. Canada is often identified as a progressive, inclusive and forward-thinking country; our cultural, environmental and economic place in the world is certainly one of relative privilege. But we still face many challenges in the creation of effective policies and programs that reflect and address the multifaceted issues of Canadian communities.

Individuals and businesses are addressing such issues with new approaches and solutions that are innovative, cost-effective and sustainable. Cross-sector collaboration is a core element of these strategies. It enriches the work in bringing together expertise from diverse sectors that share common purpose. One of the greatest challenges to these collaborative approaches are silos, which create

² Simon Fraser University, ASCI, ICASC. "State of the Arts: A Report on Art for Social Change in Canada." April 2016. https://icasc.ca/sites/default/files/resource_attachments/stateoftheart_en.pdf

duplication, a lack of useful exchange, as well as much-reduced sustainability for positive change. Experience and research consistently demonstrate the power of cross-sector partnerships to create positive outcomes, particularly for initiatives that involve multiple challenges and diverse stakeholders.

We propose a structure which takes an all-of-government approach to enable collaboration within the federal government. While we recommend that the Department of Canadian Heritage leads and operationalizes start-up, we foresee many connections across departments and ministries such as with Health Canada, the Department of Justice, Indigenous and Northern Affairs, the PMO, Open Government, and others. ASC can serve as an example, and perhaps as a pilot, to test this new structure. While this recommendation will involve an investment of money and time to get it off the ground, its long-term benefits include:

- Increased capacity for collaboration on a wide range of change agendas on the government mandate,
- Improved practices for the cost-effectiveness and sustainable effects within federal systems,
- Enhanced cross-sector access for community organizations, businesses, and individuals working on complex issues.

The federal government can take action on this recommendation by assembling representation of key stakeholders from federal government departments and utilize the Department of Canadian Heritage to lead implementation and testing. Furthermore, community-based changemakers and innovators can participate throughout the process to explore interest and develop a strategic plan that outlines operational and administrative structures, consultative and design processes, communications strategies, timelines, and budgets.

In honoring this recommendation, the government will lead by example and increase their collaborative capacity in our increasingly complex and intersectoral country.

Recommendation 2: Make continued investment in the Department of Canadian Heritage’s *Canada Cultural Investment Fund – Strategic Initiatives* program.

The Department of Canadian Heritage’s *Canada Cultural Investment Fund – Strategic Initiatives* program provides funding for “projects involving multiple partners that help arts and heritage organizations improve their business practices.”³ The intended outcomes of this government program is in alignment with the professional aspirations of the ASC field – to encourage collaboration and knowledge sharing. This funding program, to which ICASC intends to access, helps a wide range of businesses be more productive in the ways that they share and improve best practice.

³ Government of Canada Website. “Strategic Initiatives – Canada Cultural Investment Fund.” Culture, History and Sport – Funding Opportunities. 2017. <http://canada.pch.gc.ca/eng/1455810486741>

Over the last 40 years, the ASC field has developed methods (including impact evaluation) that attest to the potency of partnerships. ICASC will be proposing, to the *Strategic Initiatives* program, a two-year pilot program involving five test cases, each in a different part of the country, to address a different sector's agenda for positive change. Each case would involve collaboration between government and private sector funders, small to mid-sized community-based organizations in both rural and urban settings, the network of 200 ASC organizations, and artist/facilitators and researchers. In addition to these test cases, ASC communications channels would be enhanced. The ASC field requires specific skills, knowledge, and experience. An ASC-funded initiative through the Department of Canadian Heritage would nurture the reach, depth and social impact of participatory arts across the country.

Continued investment in the government's *Canada Cultural Investment Fund – Strategic Initiatives* will help fund the productive capacity and resiliency of arts organizations and their collaborative partners.

About the International Centre of Art for Social Change (ICASC)

ICASC is a partnership between Judith Marcuse Projects (JMP) and Simon Fraser University to support the field of ASC practice in professional development, national and international networking, research and archival work, and promotion for ASC in advancing social change agendas. Please see www.icasc.ca for more information and resources about this work, including results from a five-year, \$3 million study on ASC in Canada.

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