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# **BEYOND HOPE? THE NORTHERN CULTURAL SECTOR IN CRISIS**

*North Central British Columbia  
Cultural Sector Labour Market Study*

**Final Report – March 2002**

**Prepared for Island Mountain Arts  
by Judy Campbell, Ecogistics Consulting**



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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This study was made possible through the support of Human Resources Development Canada Labour Market Partnership Initiatives. Island Mountain Arts would like to thank all of the people – artists, administrators, volunteers – who participated in the focus groups and interviews. Their enthusiasm, dedication and incredible wealth of information were invaluable to this report. Thanks are also due to the IMA Board, staff and project advisors who contributed ideas and text, and read and commented on the work in various stages of development.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

*“Why is the making of government cultural policy of such key importance? Because in our knowledge-based economy, the well-being of society depends on minds – on a multiplicity of questing, restless individual minds working with a large degree of freedom and some degree of support. It rests ultimately on a quality that corporations call innovation, and individuals call creativity.”*

Dr. Shirley L. Thomson  
Director, Canada Council of the Arts

Island Mountain Arts (IMA) has been involved in the development of the cultural sector in northern British Columbia since 1977, when it offered its first summer school of the arts. Based in the tiny mountain community of Wells, 80 kilometres east of Quesnel and eight kilometres from historic Barkerville, Island Mountain Arts attracts participants from all over the province to study the visual, literary, and performing arts. Building from an initial one week summer program, IMA has expanded to include a year-round curriculum of courses and workshops, artists’ retreats, the International Folk (Celtic) Harp School, the Bridget Moran School of Art, the Wells Artists’ Project and a public gallery that features work of local and visiting artists.

Island Mountain Arts, a registered non-profit society, strives to respond to the cultural needs of the central and northern region of the province. During the early years, many entry-level courses were offered, but over the years the demand has changed to more professional level or specialized courses.

During 25 years of operation, IMA has provided programs which have contributed to the development of the cultural labour force. Courses and workshops have provided emerging and practicing artists with opportunities for the development of technical skills. In the mid 1990s, a series of three conferences, “Your Art is Your Business,” provided information on a full range of business skills from bookkeeping and taxes to marketing and presentation.

IMA has continually lobbied and advocated on behalf of artists and the cultural sectors and promoted and implemented policies that better the lot of artists and cultural workers. Yet through their work, the board

and staff of IMA continue to hear from artists about the difficulties and barriers they experience in trying to make a viable living in the cultural field in the north. Many relocate or find other career paths. Some try to combine work with teaching as a way to make a full-time living. Others try to pursue their art as a sideline.

“Beyond Hope” is the phrase that artists participating in this project chose to describe their location north of Hope, but more importantly, outside of the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island where the cultural sector is growing rapidly.

A recent National Graduate Study by Statistics Canada studied the employment success of graduates in various sectors. The study found that, despite overall growth in the cultural sector in the 1990s, fewer than half of all individuals defined as cultural workers in the study had attained jobs in the cultural sector five years after graduation.<sup>1</sup>

Ironically, IMA, Barkerville and other cultural institutions in the area have difficulty in hiring qualified individuals from the regional labour pool. This is due, in part, to the fact that most cultural workers are drawn to larger centres and may be reluctant to relocate to smaller communities.

The current research was undertaken to determine the issues that need to be addressed to change the picture to one of greater success for the cultural worker, and increased availability and retention of qualified workers for employers. Island Mountain Arts believes that an overall lack of data about the cultural sector has resulted in a low awareness of the contribution of the cultural sector to local economies and has also led to inequitable spending on the part of the federal and provincial min-

istries mandated to support the arts. This inequity has compounded the problems for the individual worker trying to make a living in the study area.

A sense of isolation, lack of venues for exhibiting and presenting work, limited training opportunities, difficulty in recruiting and retaining employees, and difficulties accessing funding are key factors limiting the development of the cultural labour force.

Nonetheless, the study revealed, as have previous studies<sup>2</sup> that the north has an active, diverse and vibrant arts community with strong potential for growth and job creation.

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<sup>1</sup> Luffman, Jacqueline. *Labour market outcomes of arts and culture graduates* in *Focus on Culture*, Vol. 12. No.3.

<sup>2</sup> Ewart, Peter. *Visual Fine Arts Needs Assessment*. College of New Caledonia, 2001.

## 2.0 STUDY METHODOLOGY

*“When a community invests in the arts, they are not opting for cultural benefits at the expense of economic benefits. Extensive research shows that in addition to being a means of social enrichment, the arts are also an economically sound investment for communities of all sizes.”*

Robert Lynch  
President and CEO  
National Association of Arts Councils, USA

### 2.1 *The Study Area*

Island Mountain Arts is situated in the North-Central delivery area for Human Resources Development Canada which includes 100 Mile House, Williams Lake, Quesnel, Vanderhoof and Prince George. This is also the region from which IMA draws approximately 50 to 60% of its students (1997 figures). The jurisdictional boundaries that were found most useful when considering statistical data (see Section 3) were the Cariboo Development Region which comprises the areas covered by the Fraser Fort George Regional District and the Cariboo Regional District.(see Map 3.3 and 3.4).

The research focused on this geographical area, although focus group participants were not restricted to these boundaries and occasionally included people from outside the area. Group participants defined this area as ‘beyond Hope’ and indicated that the same issues which affect this area are relevant to any area in the province outside the Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island. Although issues are discussed in terms of the north central interior, the study results should be useful to other rural areas.

### 2.2 *Focus Groups*

The nature of the data to be collected lent itself to in depth and detailed discussion with informants. While a survey could have recorded individual opinions on certain issues, the information that could be gained from group discussion was felt to be more useful. Focus groups or structured group interviews allow participants to explore issues with each other as well as the facilitator/interviewer. This method also allows participants to explore potential solutions to issues.

For this reason, a series of 14 focus groups were used to collect the bulk of the data. The first series of focus groups, held in July and August of 2001 in Wells, were sectorally based. Participants were drawn from the students and instructors attending Island Mountain Arts' Summer School and from other artists in the region. The second set of focus groups was geographically based and held in Prince George, Williams Lake, Horsefly and Quesnel, drawing artists from all disciplines. A final set of sectorally based groups brought together arts administrators and workers within a specially defined sub-sector of value-added wood-working. In total, 113 people participated in the focus groups, exclusive of the facili-

tator. For a complete list of participants, see Appendix 1. The facilitator introduced a standard list of questions; however, each group was allowed to take the discussion to topics that seemed important to the group. The facilitator assisted in keeping the group on track and ensured that all questions were covered.

During the introductions, each participant was asked:

- where they lived,
- what kind of work they did,
- how much of their income they derived from their art, and
- whether or not their location influenced the practice of their art.

Figure 2.1: Focus Groups

Date	Location	Participants	Number
01/07/12	Wells	Visual Artists	13
01/07/18	Wells	Visual Artists	6
01/07/28	Wells	Visual Artists	10
01/08/04	Wells	Visual Artists	4
01/08/11	Wells	Writers and Musicians	7
01/08/19	Wells	Musicians (Harp/Celtic)	20
01/10/26	Prince George	All Disciplines	7
01/11/30	Quesnel	All Disciplines	9
01/12/06	Horsefly	All Disciplines	6
01/12/07	Williams Lake	All Disciplines	10
02/01/09	Quesnel	Administrators	4
02/01/11	Prince George	Administrators	7
02/01/15	Quesnel	Woodworkers	7
02/03/22	Vancouver	Harp Therapy	3
		TOTAL PARTICIPANTS	113



Additional topics that were covered during the interview were:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of practicing your art outside of the major population centres?
- Have you felt the right training opportunities have been available to you at various stages in your career?
- Have you experienced any barriers to accessing training?
- How do you get your work to the public? (Marketing issues)
- How do you feel about your access to government, foundation or corporate support programs?
- What are some 'do-ables' or action items that could improve your lot as an artist?

These questions were adapted somewhat for the arts administrator groups.

Each focus group was recorded on audio tapes that were then transcribed to give a complete record of the discussion. From these transcriptions<sup>3</sup> the consultant developed a list of key issues which are discussed in depth in Chapter Four.

Each participant was also asked to complete a short survey that recorded basic demographic information. The survey also explored participants' perception of themselves as professional artists or cultural workers and gathered an indication of the amount of their income that came from their art or cultural work. The results of this survey are presented in Appendix 2.<sup>4</sup>

After the data from the interviews had been compiled, a series of key informant interviews (see list Appendix 1) was conducted to further explore some of the concepts that emerged from the research or to gather additional information on potential recommendations. Additional information was also gathered from BC Stats, Statscan, the

Internet and other sources.

A draft report was produced and posted on the IMA website at [www.imarts.com](http://www.imarts.com). Project participants, advisors and key members of the cultural and economic development community were asked to comment. The report was revised in consideration of the comments received.

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<sup>3</sup> There were more than 500 pages of transcription notes for the 14 focus groups

<sup>4</sup> The sample for this study was not random. This participant data is descriptive only.

## 3.0 THE CULTURAL LABOUR FORCE

*“Strong, creative communities are known to attract business and industry, bringing employment opportunities and additional wealth to the community. Industries of the emerging information-age economy value quality-of-life issues for their employees, and are attracted to communities, regardless of geography, that actively support arts and culture.”*

From Creative Connections: Arts and Culture  
in British Columbia Communities,  
Union of BC Municipalities, 1997

### 3.1 Defining the Cultural Labour Force

In order to develop consistent information about the cultural sector, Statistics Canada has developed the Canadian Framework for Cultural Statistics (see Figure 2). This framework determines what industries and occupations are considered to be part of the Cultural Sector.

Statistics Canada lists 43 cultural occupations classified using the 1991 Standard Occupational Classification System. This “includes persons whose occupations are concerned with creating and executing artistic works, by sculpturing, painting, drawing, engraving, etching; creating designs for product and interior decoration; taking photographs; conducting and performing musical works and dances; producing, directing and acting in theatrical, motion picture and broadcast production; writing, and other means of informing.”<sup>5</sup> Similarly culture industries consist of 13 categories classified by the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS). The Canadian Framework for Cultural Statistics organizes both industries and occupations into 14 cultural categories, which includes heritage, libraries, architecture, photography, design and advertising. The framework also takes into account the creative process from inception through to production and consumption.

Unfortunately, the information about British Columbia available through Statistics BC was not compiled using this framework. The labour force data available aggregated ‘Information, Culture and

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<sup>5</sup> *Standard Occupational Classification* as cited in *Occupation Artist: A Profile of the Demographic, Economic and Employment Characteristics of Artists in Ontario*. Ontario Council of Arts, no date.

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Recreation’ into one sector which included the following sub-categories.

- Publishing industries
- Motion picture and sound recording industries
- Broadcasting and telecommunications
- Information services and data processing services
- Performing arts, spectator sports and related industries
- Heritage institutions
- Amusement, gambling and recreation industries

It was not possible for the purposes of this study to isolate only the cultural industries as defined in the Canadian Framework for Cultural Statistics. The main categories that would not apply would be telecommunications, information and data processing services, recreation and sport. However, it is assumed that the trends illustrated by the cultural data alone would be the same or

similar to those trends exhibited by the larger body of data.

For the purposes of the current research, the focus was on the ‘arts’ of ‘arts and culture’. Heritage, libraries, and sport were not included. Focus group participants were involved in the visual, literary or performing arts or were administrators of organizations involved in these sectors.

The study also included a sub-set of value-added woodworkers – those dealing with high-end, low volume or one-of-a-kind products, such as carvers or instrument builders. Previous work by Island Mountain Arts identified that this sector did not qualify for many programs offered to value-added businesses and workers because their production levels were too low. They tended to be grouped with artists and artisans.

Figure 3.1: Canadian Framework for Cultural Statistics<sup>6</sup>

CULTURE CATEGORIES	FUNCTIONAL ELEMENTS							
	SUPPLY							DEMAND
	ARTISTIC CREATIVE EXPRESSION AND HERITAGE CONSERVATION				MANUFACTURING AND DISTRIBUTION <sup>1</sup>			CONSUMPTION
	Creation	Production <sup>2</sup>	Preservation	Support Activities <sup>3</sup>	Manufacturing	Wholesale Distribution	Retail Distribution	Consumers
<b>CULTURAL INDUSTRIES</b> Writing and Publishing Film Industry Broadcasting Recording & Music Publishing New Media								
<b>ARTS<sup>2</sup></b> GROUP I Performing Arts Visual Arts Crafts  GROUP II Architecture Photography Design Advertising								
<b>HERITAGE</b>								
<b>LIBRARIES</b>								

<sup>1</sup> Culture equipment is included and allocated by cultural category when possible.  
<sup>2</sup> Includes festivals, which are allocated by cultural category when possible.  
<sup>3</sup> Includes activities supporting creation, creative production and heritage conservation: government, associations, unions, education, artist promoters, cultural facilities, etc.

### 3.2 The Cultural Labour Force in Canada

According to a Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey (LFS) there were 578,000 individuals working in the cultural industries in 1999 and of these 278,000 were in cultural occupations.<sup>7</sup> Another Statistics Canada publication, Canadian Culture in Perspective: A Statistical Overview<sup>8</sup>, which was compiled using the Canadian Framework for Culture Statistics, estimates there were 363,400 culture workers in 1997.

However these surveys still underestimate the size of the cultural labour force because they do not capture those individuals whose primary job is not in the cultural sector but who do hold secondary or tertiary jobs in the area. Also excluded are those individuals who are involved in the sector but not in a creative capacity e.g. sales staff at gallery gift shops, administrative staff at heritage sites, and support staff for photographers, architects or artisans.

Canadian Culture in Perspective: A Statistical Overview also examined the demographics of the cultural labour force. Gender and age distributions are similar to the overall labour force; education levels are significantly higher.

Figure 3.2: Demographics of the Cultural Sector

	GENERAL LABOUR FORCE	CULTURAL LABOUR FORCE
SEX	55% male 45% female	53% male 47% female
AGE	Similar pattern due to baby boomers	30% – 35 to 44 20% – 45 to 54
EDUCATION	22% have university degree	36% have university degree

Ontario and Quebec have the largest concentration of culture workers (3% of the work force) with Newfoundland having the lowest (1.4% of the work force). These concentrations reflect favourable economies of scale, related infrastructure concentrations, and provincial economic conditions. The Statistics Canada Culture in Perspective report indicates that “artists in non-urban areas may have fewer opportunities for employment and/or recognition than city-based artists.”<sup>9</sup>

Human Resources Development Canada in its *Job Futures* publication predicts the labour market outlook for recent graduates on a three point scale (poor, fair or good). In general the cultural sector has only a fair outlook.

The *Job Futures* publication of Human Resources Development Canada confirms what the culture community already has suspected. The difficulty of finding permanent employment and earning a stable living has put occupations such as writers and editors in the fair job outlook category up until the year 2001, while performing artists, announcers, librarians and creative designers are expected to experience poor job outlooks.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada. Canadian Culture in Perspective: A Statistical Overview. 2000, pg. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Luffman, Jacqueline. *Labour Market Outcomes of Arts and Culture Graduates*. In Focus on Culture, Vol.12, No.3, Statistics Canada #87-004, pg.1.

<sup>8</sup> Statistics Canada. Canadian Culture in Perspective: A Statistical Overview, pg. 37

<sup>9</sup> Statistics Canada. Canadian Culture in Perspective: A Statistical Overview, pg. 39

<sup>10</sup> *Job Futures 1997-1998*, Human Resources Development Canada as cited in Statistics Canada. Canadian Culture in Perspective: A Statistical Overview, pg. 43.

The National Graduate Survey conducted by Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada looks at the long term labour market experiences of graduates. The findings show that culture graduates two and five years after graduation in 1990 were more likely to be moonlighting, to have changed employers, or to have found temporary work. In addition, although 84% were working after five years, fewer than half of the graduates found work in the cultural sector.<sup>11</sup>

This is surprising considering the cultural sector grew considerably during that time. Between 1990 and 1999 individuals in cultural occupations grew by 23% while the overall labour force only increased 11%. Much of this growth had to do with increases in part-time and self-employment, but also the number of jobs available in the cultural industries grew by 26%.<sup>12</sup>

Examining data from the Labour Force Survey indicates some of the reasons for this paradox.

Earnings data shows that most culture occupations are ranked in the bottom half (averaging less than \$30,000 annually) of all types of earners in Canada.<sup>13</sup> The cultural sector may find it difficult to compete with other sectors when recruiting staff.

Culture workers experienced labour market fluctuations more keenly than all other employed workers during the early 1990s. During the 1990-92 recession, the number of full-time workers in the economy as a whole decreased by 4% while part time workers increased by 6% and self-employment increased by 3%. Culture workers were hit much harder.

Between 1990 and 1992, fine and commercial arts occupations took a serious hit in full-time employment (-

22%) and full-time heritage/library jobs declined by 10%. Although the pace of full-time employment generally picked up during the late 1990s, culture workers have remained more likely than all employed workers to work part-time. In 1997, 25% of culture workers worked part-time compared to 19% for the total labour force.<sup>14</sup>

Self-employment is a striking characteristic of the culture labour force. Many cultural occupations rely heavily on entrepreneurial skills and therefore have a high incidence of self-employment.

More than three-quarters of the job growth in Canada since 1989 has been related to self-employment. The number of self-employed culture workers in the labour force was approximately 144,300 in 1997 compared to 83,000 in 1987.<sup>15</sup>

It is unclear from the Statistics Canada reports what proportion of the culture labour force is self-employed, but using the 1997 estimate of the culture work force used in *Canadian Culture in Perspective*, this would translate to 39% of the sector.<sup>16</sup>

The Labour Force Survey did not examine how many workers are voluntarily or involuntarily part-time or whether or not cultural workers are seasonally employed or have permanent jobs. Further research in this area would indicate whether issues such as job security, work schedules and training requirements are prominent. High levels of part-time and self-employment means that artists are less likely to qualify for EI benefits or any of the training programs that require EI eligibility.

Strategies to help individuals make the transition from school to work are vital in replenishing the culture labour force. New

graduates may find it difficult to enter the labour market as a self-employed worker. Starting one's own business requires financial resources and entrepreneurial skills which labour market entrants rarely have. In some fields the transition is highly dependent upon one's ability to establish professional credibility and rapport with colleagues.

Leaner resources caused by reduced spending in arts and culture have meant fewer opportunities for human resource training and development. The province of Ontario is predicting a shortage of senior managers in the arts because workers are not developing the necessary skills through ongoing professional development.<sup>17</sup>

It is clear that although the cultural sector is expanding, the labour market is not keeping pace with the skill development and training necessary to take advantages of opportunities.

### 3.3 The Cultural Labour Force in British Columbia

According to Statistics BC, 106,200 people were employed in the 'Information, Culture and Recreation' industries in 2001. Because of the way these statistics are aggregated it is difficult to tell exactly how many of these were cultural workers as defined by Statistics Canada. However, if two categories are removed – 'information and data processing' and 'amusement, gambling and recreation industries' – the total is 70,100 people. This figure still includes spectator sports but may exclude things such as zoos and botanical parks which are included under Statistics Canada's Canadian Framework for Cultural Statistics.

Like the Canada-wide sector, the cultural sector in BC is expanding. Cultural sector employment in BC has been growing at more than twice the rate of the general labour force since 1981.<sup>18</sup> Between 1990 and 2001, the provincial labour force increased 24.9% while the cultural labour force increased 55.3%.

Demographically the sector resembles the Canada-wide sector, although there is slightly less participation by women than there is on a national scale. Fifty-six percent of the culture labour force is male, and 44% female.<sup>19</sup>

Self-employment appears to have dropped slightly from 20% of the labour force in 1997 to 18% in 2001.<sup>20</sup> This is below the 1997 Canada-wide figure of 39% of the culture work force.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pg. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Luffman, Jacqueline. *Labour Market Outcomes of Arts and Culture Graduates*. In *Focus on Culture*, Vol. 12. No. 3, pg.6.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. pg. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Statistics Canada. *Canadian Culture in Perspective: A Statistical Overview*, pg. 37.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. pg. 38.

<sup>16</sup> This proportion this very high, but was calculated using available Statistics Canada data. A research query to Statistics Canada confirmed (02/05/06) this figure.

<sup>17</sup> Luffman, Jacqueline. *Labour Market Outcomes of Arts and Culture Graduates*. In *Focus on Culture*, Vol. 12. No. 3, pg. 2.

<sup>18</sup> BC Stats. *Employment by Industry for British Columbia, 1990-2001*. [www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca)

<sup>19</sup> BC Stats. *Employment by Class of worker and Industry (NAISC) by Gender, 1997-2001*. [www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca)

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

The figures for the 'Information, Culture and Recreation' sector are broken down by Economic Development Region. The Cariboo Development Region aggregates the Cariboo Regional District and the Fraser Fort George Regional District and is a good approximation of the study area. There were no statistics available for the other two northern BC regions, North Coast/Neckako and Northeast (Peace), possibly because the numbers were too small to report. (see maps Figure 3.3 and 3.4)

The graph in Figure 3.5 presents sector employment figures for all of the regions from 1996 to 2001. The majority of employment in the cultural sector is found in the Lower Mainland. The Cariboo Development Region had the lowest employment in the cultural sector, an estimated 2,700 workers. This is not surprising given regional populations, but it is important to note that the gap between rural and urban is increasing. While the size of the sector has been increasing on a provincial level, this growth is occurring exclusively in Vancouver, the Lower Mainland and the southwest corner of the province. Employment in the more rural areas has remained relatively constant.

Figure 3.6 examines the culture labour force as a proportion of the total labour force in the regions and in the province as a whole. Again the Cariboo Development Region was the lowest of all the regions with 3.3% of the regional work force in the cultural sector.<sup>21</sup> Vancouver Metro and the Lower Mainland/Southwest have the highest with 6.2% and 6.4% respectively, both above the provincial average of 5.6%. Again the trend is for the rural areas to have a smaller cultural labour force.

Although there is no information specific to the cultural sector, unemployment rates for the entire work force in the Cariboo Development Region are higher than the provincial average (Northeast excepted).

Lack of investment in the arts may be the reason for the weaker cultural sector in the north. While the average per capita spending by the BC Arts Council in 2000/01 was \$3.57, the per capita spending in the Cariboo Regional District was \$.92, up from \$.75 in 1997/98. Per capita spending in 2000/01 in the Fraser Fort George Regional District was \$1.86.

All indications are that the demand for cultural products in the interior of the province is increasing. Cultural Tourism is expanding. The City of Kelowna recently launched a major initiative to develop cultural tourism that resulted in the construction of a multi-million dollar arts centre.<sup>22</sup> The City of Prince George opened the Two Rivers Gallery in 1999. The Gold Rush Trail development initiative is focusing marketing on cultural attractions between New Westminster and Prince George. The Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association continues to promote cultural tourism on its website and through printed material.

And yet, the statistical data, both national and provincial, paints a picture of a sector in which the labour force cannot meet the demands of sectoral growth due to gaps in skills and training. The labour force outside the urban centres is under supported and therefore is experiencing little or no growth. It is assumed that many of the problems identified in the national cultural sector such as high levels of part-time work, self-employment and contract work and difficulty in entering the work force are prevalent in BC and especially in the rural areas.

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<sup>21</sup> BC Stats. *Employment by Industry for BC, Development Regions and Metro Areas, 1996-2001*. [www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca)

<sup>22</sup> Thorne, Steven. *The Economic Impact of Arts and Culture in the Central Okanagan*, Arts Development Office, City of Kelowna, 1998.

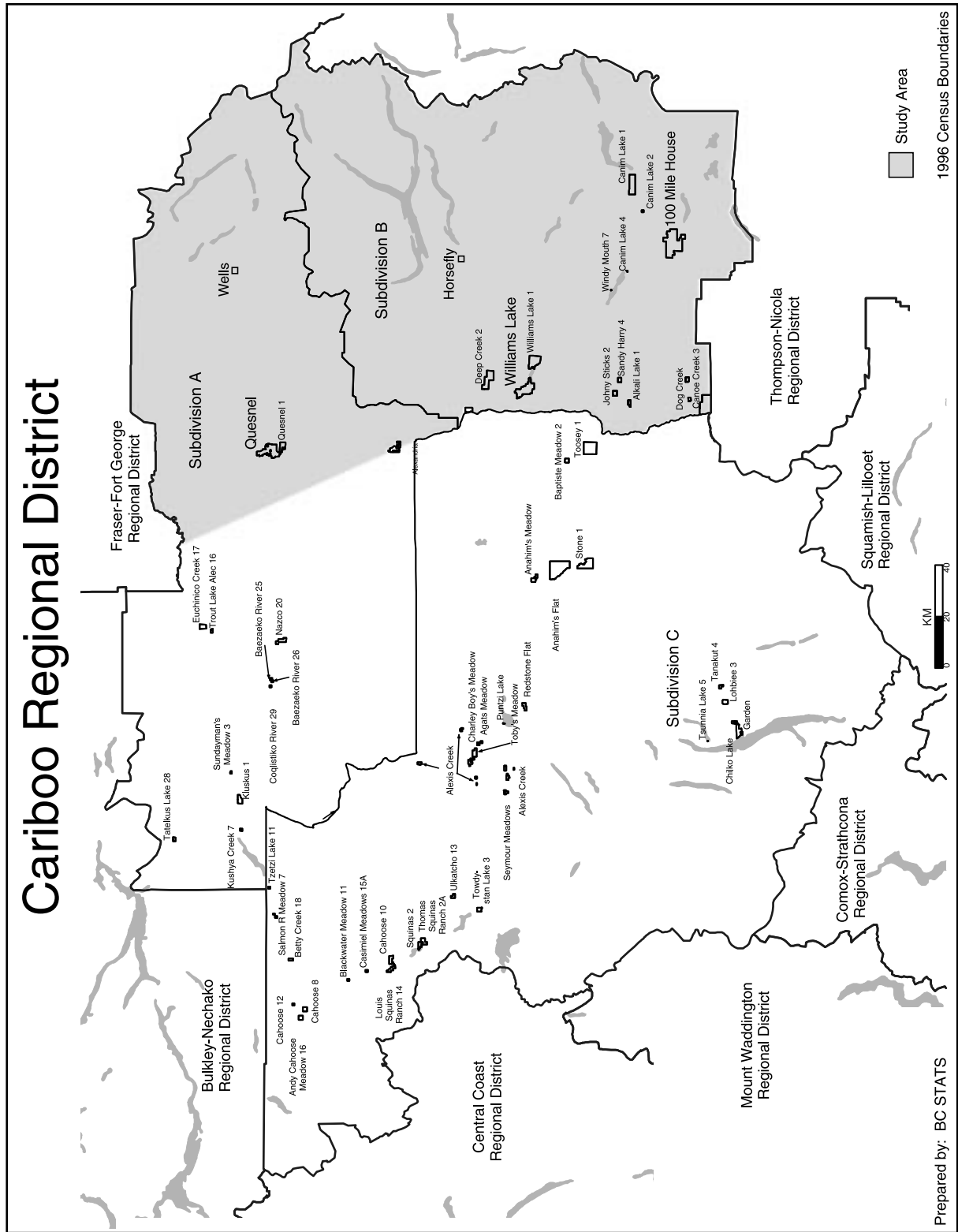


Figure 3.3



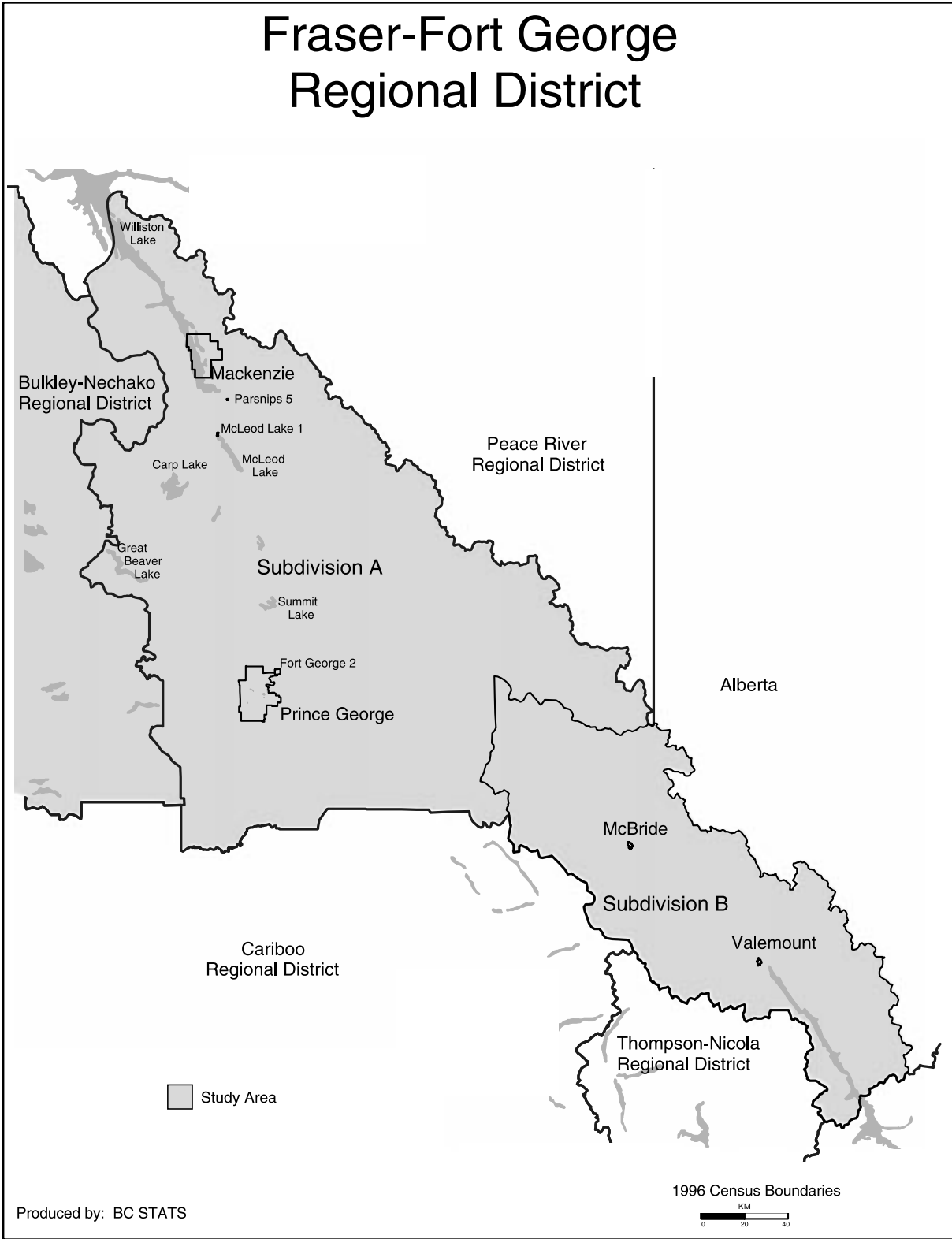
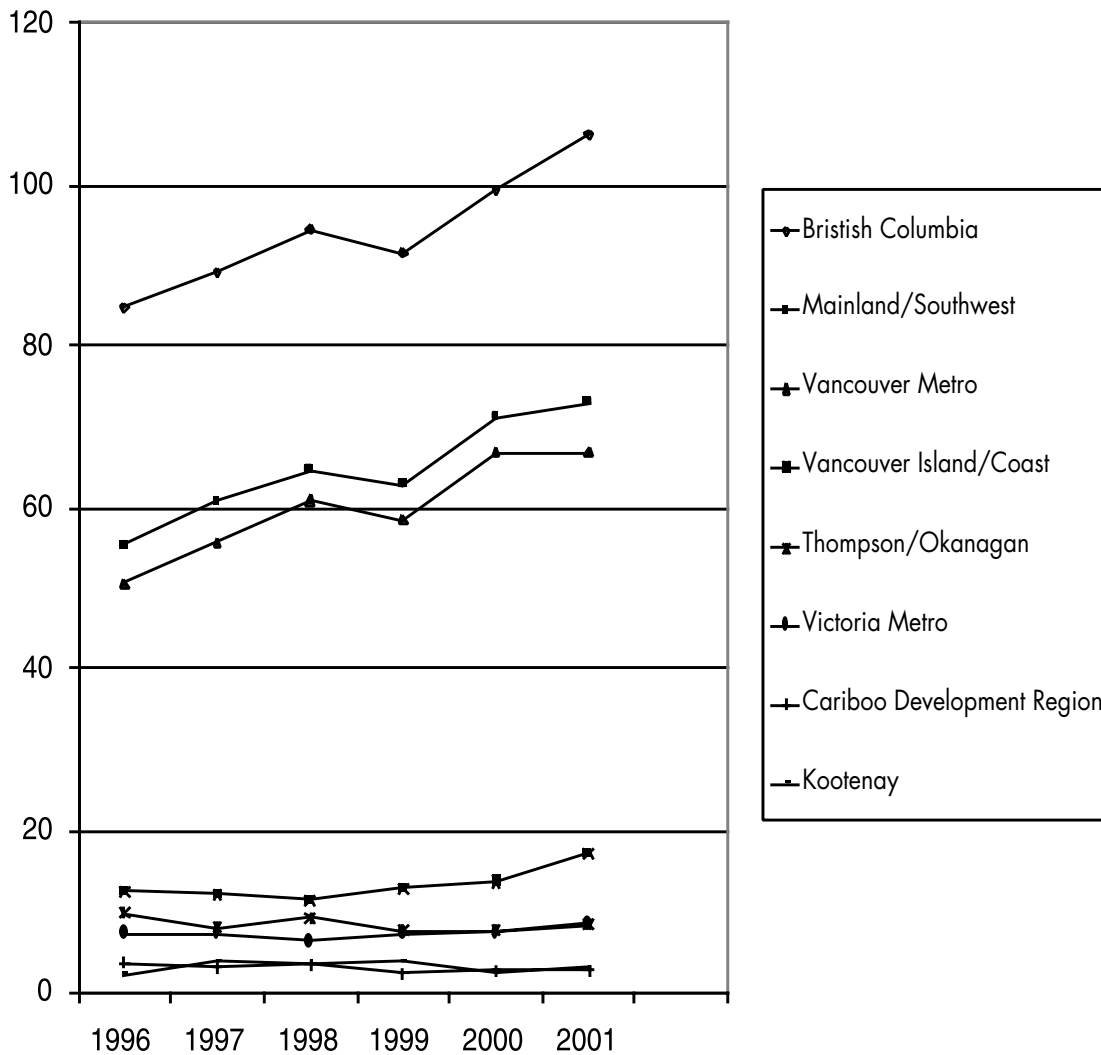


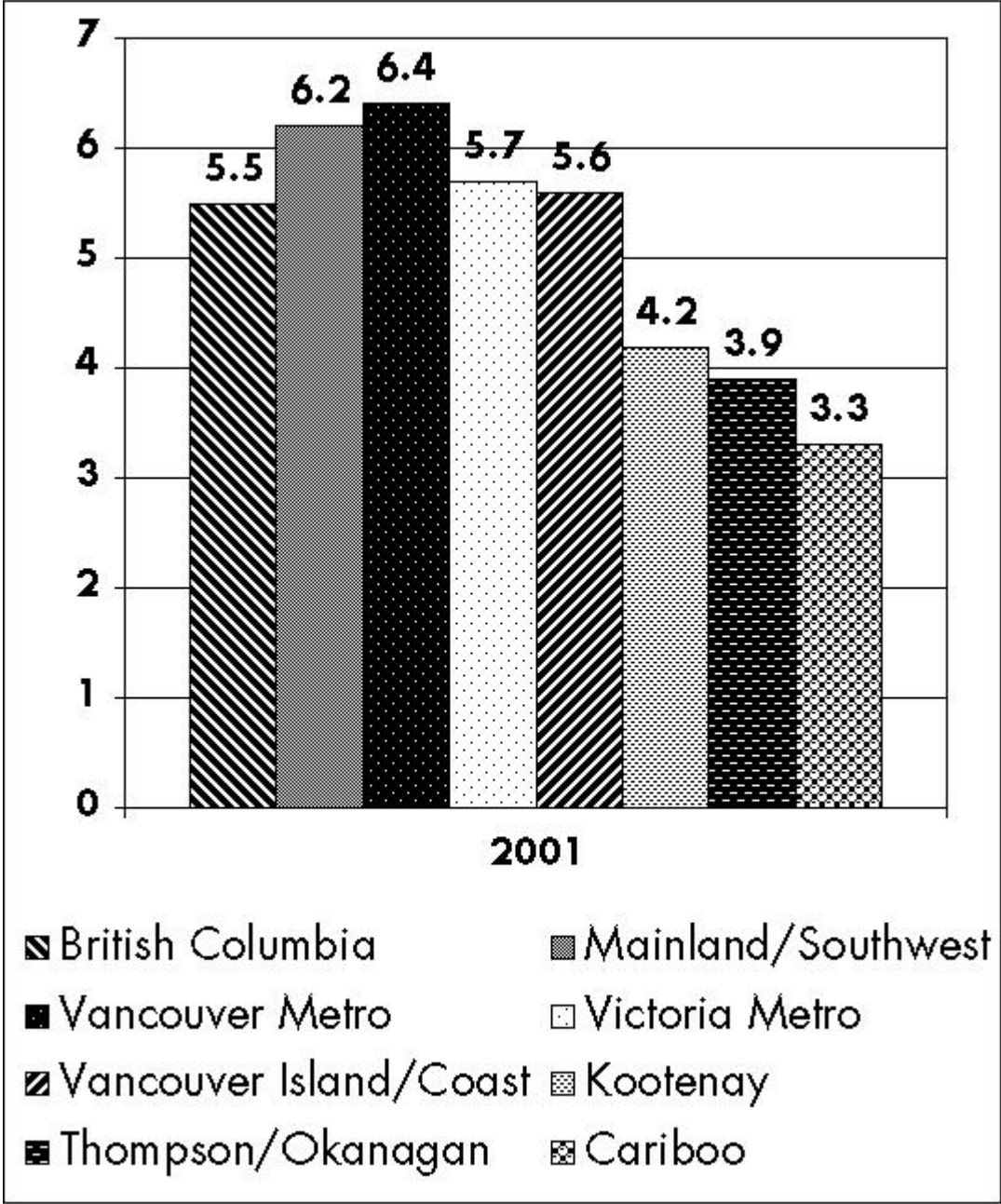
Figure 3.4

Figure 3.5: Annual Average Employment in BC's Information, Culture and Recreation Sector in the Province and Economic Development Regions.<sup>1</sup>  
 (Figures down left side represent the number of thousands of applicable people.)



<sup>1</sup> BC Stats. The North American Industry Classification Survey (NAICS) aggregates culture with information services and data processing as well as spectator sports, gambling, amusement and recreation. For the purposes of this study it was not possible to isolate cultural employment. However, it is assumed the trends would be the same.

Figure 3.6: Cultural Labour Force<sup>1</sup> as a Percentage of Total Labour Force in the Province and Economic Development Regions.



<sup>1</sup> NAICS category includes information and data processing and recreation.

## 4.0

# ISSUES, CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

*“Those communities that are richest in their artistic tradition are also those that are the most progressive in their economic performance and most resilient and secure in their economic structure.”*

John Kenneth Galbraith, Economist

The focus groups discussed an incredibly wide variety of topics ranging from the philosophical tenets of culture to the nitty-gritty routine of daily practice. The discussions confirmed many of the trends referred to in the statistical descriptions of the cultural sector in Section 3 of this report, especially that artists tend to be underemployed and have difficulty finding successful self-employment or attaching themselves permanently to the work force. They also indicated that in the north, arts organizations have recruitment and retention problems. Focus groups participants discussed the reasons for these problems. Quotes taken directly from the transcripts reflect the experiences of individual artists. Although this research is anecdotal, it supports in a compelling way the conclusions drawn by other more rigorous analyses.<sup>23</sup>

In this report issues have been separated into ‘global’ issues and issues specific to the north.

### 4.1 *Global Issues*

#### 4.1.1 **Culture/Artists Not Valued**

On one hand, society appears to value art and culture. Visiting dignitaries are always shown our museums, galleries and public art. On the other hand, artists are often not adequately reimbursed for their work and often their efforts are not viewed as ‘a job.’ This was a common topic mentioned in many of the focus groups. Typical comments were:

- Artists’ work is often regarded as ‘play,’ not work.

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<sup>23</sup> For example: Statistics Canada. [Culture in Perspective: A Statistical Overview](#). 2000 ed.

- Artists are often considered to have a 'calling' (somewhat like Florence Nightingale) which they would do even if they were not paid.
- Artists are often the first asked to donate to fundraising events.
- The professional dancer and manager of a dance school in Prince George still must explain that her job is not a 'hobby.'
- In Europe, art and artists occupy a much higher place in society. The spin-off value of the creative forces in artistic endeavor for innovation in other areas of industry is recognized. The person on the street in Italy can whistle opera tunes. A Vancouver artist recently went to France where she sold more work in a month than she did in a year in Vancouver.
- There is a lack of appreciation for the arts in the education system.
- Careers in cultural occupations are not stressed in high schools.

The arts, unlike sports, is an industry in which the least benefit from sectoral activities accrues to the originator or artist. If a visual artist sells a painting in a gallery for \$200, the gallery takes a \$70 commission (35%), matting and framing costs \$80, leaving \$50 for the artist for what probably took more than 25 hours to complete. Although federal law<sup>24</sup> requires that visual artists be paid for exhibiting in public galleries, many artists are expected to exhibit for the 'exposure' to the public and the hope of future sales.

In 1995, federal Status of the Artist legislation was enacted that was intended to improve working conditions and economic circumstances for artists in Canada. The Act recognized the importance of artists in Canadian society and established the Canadian Council on the Status of the Artist, to support and promote the profes-

sional status of artists in Canada. The Act also established a framework to govern collective bargaining between associations of self-employed professional artists and producers within federal jurisdiction. However, the lack of similar legislation on the provincial level prevents provincial associations representing artists to negotiate similar standards.

For instance, the Canada Council requires that galleries participating in their grant programs pay artist fees as dictated under the Copyright Act; however, the BC Arts Council does not make the same requirement of galleries it funds. In fact, artists pay entry fees for Arts Fest<sup>25</sup> and other regional festivals and if chosen for the BC Festival of the Arts must pay to attend the workshops in addition to their expenses. This penalizes rural<sup>26</sup> artists in particular, and also runs counter to the Exhibition Right in Canada's Copyright Act. If artists do not receive adequate remuneration for exhibits, it becomes difficult for them to continue to produce work.

In the focus groups, many participants linked the lack of value placed on artists and their work to the decline in arts instruction in public school education.

- "There is a whole generation of children who will not have learned the 'language of art.'"<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Bill C60, Copyright Act, 1988. Exhibition rights are a right under Canadian copyright law. If work is exhibited in a publicly funded gallery where they are not primarily for sale, the artist is entitled to a fee as set by the relevant professional organization.

<sup>25</sup> The regional juried art show for the north and a preliminary step to the BC Festival of the Arts.

<sup>26</sup> 'Rural' in this paper refers to areas outside Greater Vancouver, southern Vancouver Island and Victoria, i.e. all of the Cariboo is considered 'rural' including the urban areas.

<sup>27</sup> Professional Artist, August 11 focus group.

Participants noted that it is hard to value art if you do not understand or appreciate it.

For artists to flourish their work needs to be recognized as such and fair remuneration paid for it.

**Recommendations:**

1. Arts organizations and artists need to lobby for provincial Status of the Artist legislation that would officially recognize artists and their professional associations and permit negotiations with producers.
2. Ways and means need to be found to ensure childhood education in the arts, which will in turn foster a society in which the arts are valued. Island Mountain Arts could investigate extension programs into regional schools or providing Pro-D training for teachers.
3. With changes to the School Act, there is the opportunity for schools to operate as 'magnet' or 'choice' schools offering enhanced curricula in fine arts or other specialization. Certain northern schools, particularly in areas where there is a 'critical mass' of artistic activity, could build upon existing resources to enhance childhood education in the arts.

**4.1.2 Declining Support For the Arts**

Cultural institutions have been operating in a climate of fiscal restraint for several years. At all levels of government, spending on culture has been declining. This was a common theme in the focus groups and it is supported by statistical evidence.

Between 1990 and 1998 federal spending on culture fell \$11 per capita (to \$93), provincial/territorial spending fell \$2 (to \$62), and municipal spending is the same as at the beginning of the decade (\$45). This was in spite of the fact that overall spending

increased. The spending of the three levels of government was \$5.7 billion in 1997/98, up 2.3% in constant dollars, the first real increase since 1990/91.<sup>28</sup> There was an additional increase of 1.5% to 5.9 billion in 1999/2000, but this still does not restore levels from the beginning of the decade, especially when considered in constant dollars.<sup>29</sup>

British Columbia has one of the poorest records for funding the arts.

- In 1996/97, BC ranked 8th in Canada for the per capita level of provincial funding to arts, culture and heritage (library spending excluded).<sup>30</sup>
- In the same year, when provincial cultural expenditures are considered in terms of a percentage of total budget, BC ranked 9th (.36%).<sup>31</sup>
- In 1996/97, BC ranked 10th in Canada for the per capita level of municipal funding to arts, culture and heritage (library spending excluded).<sup>32</sup>

One of the most crucial impacts of this decline in funding, which was identified repeatedly in the focus groups, was the

<sup>28</sup> Statistics Canada. *Government Expenditures on Culture in The Daily*, Thursday, January 25, 2001.

<sup>29</sup> Kennedy, Sarah. *Culture Funds Make a Comeback*. Monday, May 27. www.globeandmail.com.

<sup>30</sup> Office of Cultural Affairs, City of Vancouver. Government of BC Expenditures on Culture 1987/88 to 1996/97. Note: BC's funding for libraries is the highest in Canada. This distorts the picture when looking at other areas of culture. For this reason, this study removed libraries from some analyses.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Stats Can and BC Stats as quoted by *Culture Acts Now*, Media Release, Jan. 1997.

decimation of music and art programs in public schools. This has been linked to 'the crisis in creativity and innovation' reported in *The National Post*, in difficulties in audience development and in a lack of understanding of the value of art (as discussed in the previous section).

In a climate of diminishing resources it is likely that funding for the arts will continue to decline. More emphasis is likely to be put on municipal level funding particularly in BC, where the provincial government is becoming more and more a 'policy only' body. To date, there is a tendency for these policies to benefit urban areas. For example, according to a recent article in the BC Museum Association's *Roundup*, when Premier Gordon Campbell was asked how "the government can ensure the protection of our cultural resources which form the backbone of cultural tourism, the leading sector in BC tourism, Campbell replied that they were 'continuing to fund the RBCM and have also designated \$5 million to an Olympic Arts Fund.'"<sup>33</sup> The former initiative is centred in Victoria and the 2010 Olympic Bid plans to showcase Whistler and Vancouver.

It appears that the cultural sector in the north will need to develop new and non-government funding sources where possible, at least for the foreseeable future.

However, artists and arts organizations must continue to hold the provincial government accountable for certain services. For instance, considerable federal training dollars have been reallocated to provincial government. In BC, none of these training dollars appear to be allocated to meet training needs in the cultural sector. Specific skill and training gaps are identified later in this report.

### *Recommendation:*

4. Artists and arts organizations should continue to lobby federal, provincial and municipal governments for increased funding for the arts and for the specific allocation of training dollars to meet the needs of the cultural sector.

### **4.1.3 Lack of Awareness of the Economic Impact of the Arts**

Arts and Culture are often viewed as a frill. Until recently there were few studies that measured the economic impact of the sector. In 1998, the City of Kelowna published a report on the impact of culture in the Central Okanagan.<sup>34</sup> The report showed the clear link between culture and the spending of tourists and, based on demographics, predicted a growth in demand for cultural products and a decline in traditional recreational products such as golf. Based on this research the city made major investments in the cultural infrastructure of the area.

Estimates of the direct and indirect impact of culture in British Columbia are \$2.5 billion.<sup>35</sup>

All cultural activities have an impact on their local gross domestic product (GDP), but most have not been measured. In 1997, Island Mountain Arts undertook a detailed study of the impact of its organizational spending and the spending of its participants on the local economy (the Quesnel trading area). The net annual direct, indirect and induced income impact was

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<sup>33</sup> Geall Christin. *BC's Liberalization: Notes on Government Reform, Politics and Advocacy*, *BC Museum Roundup*, No. 219, Winter 2002.

<sup>34</sup> Thorne, Steven. *The Economic Impact of Arts and Culture in the Central Okanagan*, Arts Development Office, City of Kelowna, 1998.

<sup>35</sup> *Culture Acts Now*, Media Release, Jan. 1997.

\$168,677 and the net employment impact was 8.23 person years of employment. These impacts included the impact associated with more than \$76,000 of annual ancillary spending by participants. It did not include the value of the contributions of volunteers to the local GDP – over \$38,000 annually.

The cultural sector generates an incredible level of volunteerism. The value of this economic activity should, but does not, appear in either the provincial or regional GDPs. This volunteerism results in direct and indirect income and employment impacts as well as significant ancillary expenditures connected with non-local participants. The benefit of this economic activity does not accrue to artists and cultural organizations but to the local business community and government through taxes. For instance, a theatre that hosts an exhibit which attracts out-of-town visitors only gains the direct revenues through entrance fees. The surrounding businesses, such as hotels and restaurants, gain the ancillary spending connected with these visits. There is often little recognition of this contribution. However this is one of the main justifications for government funding of the arts.

The Ontario Arts Council has a handbook<sup>36</sup> that can assist organizations in measuring their local economic impact. And economic impact assessment can be a powerful tool for lobbying local and regional funders, especially local government. Organizations can also contact the author of this report (or other consultants across the province) if they feel they need professional assistance in developing an assessment.

As well as measuring economic contributions, arts organizations and artists should tally their less tangible benefits such as in-kind contributions to community efforts

and the effects on quality of life. Regular communication with local politicians and regular press releases should remind the community of the value of artists, culture, and cultural organizations.

**Recommendation:**

5. Arts organizations and artists need to measure the economic and intangible contributions they make to their communities and be more vocal about these benefits to local decision makers.

#### **4.1.4 Regional Disparity in Funding**

##### **Federal**

Federal per capita spending on culture in BC is well below other provinces and well below the national average. It has never been more than 45% of the national average.<sup>37</sup> In 1996/97 it was 36%; this rose slightly in 1998/99 (the last year for which statistics are available) to 41% of the national average. Federal spending on culture in BC is the lowest of all of the provinces and territories.<sup>38</sup>

##### **Provincial**

The BC Arts Council attempts to balance the interests of arts organizations and individual artists through its program offerings. The Council is also committed to supporting the arts in rural areas through its support of community and regional arts councils. However, it was the perception of several cultural workers interviewed that

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<sup>36</sup> Informetrica Ltd. *Assessing the Local Economic Impact of the Arts: A Handbook*, Ontario Arts Council, 1997. Available from OAC. (416) 961-1660.

<sup>37</sup> Office of Cultural Affairs, City of Vancouver. *Government of BC Expenditures on Culture 1987/88 to 1996/97*.

<sup>38</sup> Statistics Canada. *Government Expenditures on Culture in The Daily*, Thursday, January 25, 2001.



the requirements of programs were loaded against people applying from rural areas.<sup>39</sup>

In 1997/98, the BC Arts Council distributed \$11,830,090, of which .4% or \$49,784 was in the Cariboo Regional District (CRD).

However, the CRD is home to 1.8% of BC's population. On a per capita basis, one would expect approximately \$213,000 in cultural awards to be distributed in the CRD in 1997 and \$261,397 in 2000/01.

Looked at another way, the provincial average of BC Arts Council spending was \$3.18 per capita in 1997/98 and \$3.57 in 2000/01. However in the Cariboo in 1997/98, only \$.75 per capita was spent (24% of the provincial average). In 2000/01 \$.92 per capita (26% of the provincial average) was spent in the CRD and \$1.86 (52% of the provincial average) was spent in the Fraser Fort George Regional District. (See Figure 5.)

Focus group participants cited a number of reasons for this disparity:

- Rural issues are different from urban issues. It was felt that art addressing rural issues was often not recognized nor understood by urban jurors.
- There is little money to bring rural jurors to many provincially-based competitions. This may result in artists based in rural areas being significantly less successful in these situations.

No museums, art galleries or cultural organizations in the Cariboo Regional District receive operational support from the BC Arts Council. However, several key organizations in Prince George receive significant support.

### Other

Two other extremely important sources of funding for artists and cultural organizations in British Columbia are the Canada Council for the Arts and the Vancouver

Foundation. In 2000-2001, the Canada Council provided funding grants worth \$14.2 million to the arts in British Columbia. While this amount is proportionate to BC's population, when looking at how these awards were spread across the province we again see a urban/rural disparity.

In 2000/2001 within the Cariboo Development Region, no Canada Council awards were received in the Cariboo Regional District and the Fraser Fort George Regional District received only \$101,620 or .7% to an area which contains 4.4% of the province's population. The Northeast Development Region (Peace River area) received \$22,450 and the North Coast/Nechako Development Region received \$53,500.<sup>40</sup>

Of the \$1,050,551 awarded by the Vancouver Foundation directly to artists and cultural organizations through their Arts and Culture Program in 2000, only two awards were made in the entire north of the province and only one within the Cariboo Development Region – \$15,000 to the Fraser-Fort George Museum Society. This is only 1.4% of the total awards.<sup>41</sup>

Focus group participants felt it was difficult to attract corporate support for the arts. Although much corporate wealth is generated in the north (e.g. logging, mining), the

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<sup>39</sup> For instance, the lack of rural representation on juries, the requirement of some programs that artists be recognized by senior artists in their field, requirements to include project partners.

<sup>40</sup> Canada Council for the Arts. *Profile of Funding to BC, 2000-2001*, May 2001. <http://www.canadacouncil.ca>

<sup>41</sup> *Vancouver Foundation Annual Report 2000*. [Http://www.vancouverfoundation.bc.ca](http://www.vancouverfoundation.bc.ca)

major corporate donations tend to be distributed in the Lower Mainland. A 'stumpage fee' for the arts was suggested.

Some areas have regional development corporations such as the Nechako-Kitimaat Development Fund and the Columbia Basin Trust that redirect a portion of the wealth generated locally into community development projects. During 2000/2001, the Cariboo Economic Action Forum and local governments developed a proposal for a regional development corporation. The proposal received broad local support and support in principle from the federal government but it did not receive approval from the new provincial government.

The weak growth in the cultural sector in the north, noted in Section 3, may be the result of this lack of federal, provincial and corporate financial support. With little infrastructure or support to pursue careers in culture, northern youth choose other pursuits or in the words of one participant, "No one rides the bus, if there are no busses."

***Recommendations:***

6. Strategies need to be developed to increase the success of northern artists and arts organizations when competing for federal and provincial funds. This would include a complete review of BC Arts Council policies and procedures to pinpoint areas of bias. Affirmative action programs may be necessary for several years to bring northern areas to a more acceptable level of per capita funding.
7. The regional arts councils along with community arts councils needs to open a dialogue with the Canada Council of the Arts to develop an understanding of why more awards are not made in the north and to develop strategies to rectify the situation.

8. Strategies need to be developed to return wealth to the north. Another way to look at funding is in relationship to the amount of wealth that is extracted from the area. Arguments need to be developed that will attract federal, provincial and corporate funding.

## BEYOND HOPE? THE NORTHERN CULTURAL SECTOR IN CRISIS

Figure 4.1: BC Arts Council Spending

Program	1997/98 Province	1997/98 Cariboo RD	2000/01 Province	2000/01 Cariboo RD	2000/01 F-Ft. George RD
Operating Assistance	\$7,600,900	0	8,848,530	0	0
Block Funding for Book Publishers	448,760	0	765,981	0	23,918
Professional Arts Special Projects	711,267	3,600	1,683,604	5,000	10,000
Community Arts Councils Assistance	586,990	17,614	584,600	20,201	20,045
Regional Arts Council Assistance	84,400	0	68,760	0	18,300
BC Festival of the Arts	750,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Community Development Projects	130,925	0	142,248	0	0
Community Training Assistance	1,275	0			
Community Initiatives			600,000	0	0
Aboriginal Arts Development	106,213	5,000	415,000	0	0
Community Presenter Program	104,582	6,161	118,834	7,500	0
Artists in Education	275,000	13,209	275,000	26,595	17,000
Touring Exhibition Assistance	9,977	0			
International Touring Assistance	86,200	0	75,215	0	0
Touring Initiatives	35,000	0			
Professional Development Assistance for Individuals	23,800	0	25,900	0	0
Project Assistance for Visual Artists	232,634	0	234,366	3,476	0
Project Assistance for Creative Writers	179,931	5,000	219,360	5000	0
Film and Video Production Assistance	253,386	0	256,431	0	0
Scholarship Awards	218,850	0	208,211	0	2,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$11,830,090</b>	<b>\$49,784</b>	<b>\$14,522,042</b>	<b>\$67,772</b>	<b>\$198,911</b>
<b>% of Total Budget</b>		<b>.42%</b>		<b>.47%</b>	<b>1.4%</b>
<b>% of Provincial Population</b>		<b>1.8%<sup>42</sup></b>		<b>1.8%<sup>43</sup></b>	<b>2.6%<sup>44</sup></b>
<b>Per Capita Spending</b>	<b>\$3.18</b>	<b>\$.75</b>	<b>\$3.57</b>	<b>\$.92</b>	<b>\$1.86</b>

<sup>42</sup> 1996 Census Profiles. Cariboo Regional District Population was 66,475. Total BC Population was 3,724,500.

<sup>43</sup> BC Stats. *Population Estimates for 2000*. Cariboo Regional District population estimate is 73,492. Statistics Canada population for BC in 2000 is 4,058,833.

<sup>44</sup> BC Stats. *Population Estimates for 2000*. Fraser Fort George Regional District population estimate is 106,850. Statistics Canada population for BC in 2000 is 4,058,833.

## 4.2 Issues Specific to the North

Focus group participants discussed the positive and negative aspects of living 'beyond hope,' i.e. north of Hope, but more importantly outside the major population centres in the Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island.

Many artists were emphatic about the fact that living in the north is integral to their work as an artist and that they could not pursue their work in another setting. Many reasons were listed but 'connection to the land' was the most common. Affordability was also an important factor. Artists had more access to studio space at affordable prices. Some said they had more time to pursue their work than they would in an urban setting. Several artists noted that they could afford to have their own studio/galleries which meant they did not have to deal with commercial galleries or pay commissions.

- "I like the land. ... People say it's a great place to have a family and it is. And it's close to nature so that's important to me. ... I can't imagine living anywhere else. ... It's part of who I am. I'm an artist and an illustrator."<sup>45</sup>
- "... in the North, you can have a very low cash lifestyle, which allows you to invest into your business in terms of tools that you need, or in terms of time to develop the experience that you need you know. And also, another issue is space; it's much easier to have space in the North than it is in downtown Vancouver."<sup>46</sup>
- "At some time during your creative process you need to be isolated, where you can really focus your attention. I think the North can do this better. It doesn't mean that you cannot do this in a more populated area, but it is not a chore, you know, it takes less willpower

or less determination."<sup>47</sup>

One musician noted that, as a result of growing up in a small community, she had many opportunities to perform and at a much younger age than she might have had in a large community. She also started teaching at a younger age.

Disadvantages to living in the north were seen as:

- Small market for work.
- Poor transportation infrastructure. Many communities do not have large carriers, or carriers who will insure for large amounts (e.g. >\$5,000).
- Lack of utility infrastructure – no natural gas or 3 phase power in many places.
- Difficulty in getting supplies or tools.

These findings echo earlier research conducted by the College of New Caledonia.<sup>48</sup> The College held 18 focus groups while conducting a needs assessment for fine arts programming in the north. Participants felt the "remoteness of the region can be highly inspirational. It sparks a 'maverick' or 'pioneer' spirit of self-reliance and initiative that is reflected in all spheres of life."<sup>49</sup> On the negative side participants cited having to leave the north to receive post-secondary education, lack of exposure to a variety of arts and lack of stimulation.

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<sup>45</sup> Emerging artist from north of Prince George, July 12 focus group.

<sup>46</sup> Professional woodworker, January 15 focus group.

<sup>47</sup> Professional woodworker, January 15 focus group.

<sup>48</sup> Ewart, Peter. *Visual Fine Arts Needs Assessment*. College of New Caledonia, 2001.

<sup>49</sup> Ewart, Peter. *Visual Fine Arts Needs Assessment*. College of New Caledonia, 2001, pg. 12.

Artists tended to make their living in a variety of ways. Teaching, either privately or within the school system provided some artists with a major portion of their income. Musicians combined performance, teaching and CD sales. Many artists indicated that administration and bookkeeping took a disproportionate amount of their time. Musicians in particular mentioned the value of having an agent.

A number of inter-related problems – sense of isolation, lack of peer support, artists not taking themselves seriously – arose from the discussions.

### 4.2.1 Isolation/Lack of Peer Support

One of the most commonly cited issues for artists in the focus groups was a feeling of isolation and a lack of a peer group with which they could share ideas. Participants expressed a need for peer support and critique. The experience shared during Island Mountain Art's summer school was held up as an example of the type of networking needed, and participants struggled to find ways to be able to continue this contact with peers, given the geography of the north.

- “Part of the loneliness up here is because I can't get together with other artists to critique work and to talk about art issues that ... are part of our lives and that's what I'm missing – the support group.”<sup>50</sup>
- “There is one other thing that you need as a writer. You simply can't develop yourself without reading other people and I think if you don't live in Vancouver or Victoria your access to your contemporaries is just that much more limited.”<sup>51</sup>

All participants expressed a need to discuss and share technical knowledge as well as underlying concepts and ideas. Interestingly, most participants did not view moving

to urban areas as a solution to this problem, often due to issues of affordability.

This peer isolation is closely related to another common comment in the groups – that artists ‘beyond Hope’ did not take themselves seriously and therefore were not taken seriously by outside funding agencies.

- “I really think it's more about a combination of artists not taking themselves seriously enough or plateauing ...”<sup>52</sup>

This perception is also closely related to issues of how artists are valued in our society. Participants felt that this problem was greater in the north.

Without this peer review, emerging artists have difficulty establishing “whether you're just crazy doing your own little marks on a paper or whether it is something that is actually substantial.”<sup>53</sup>

Emerging artists also expressed that without peer support they were afraid of the jury process and of submitting their work to galleries for exhibition.

Writers also expressed the need to interact, but felt that it was easier for them to network through email, especially if initial face-to-face contact had been made in the past (e.g. through a course or workshop).

Musicians expressed similar needs but their main frustrations related more to lack of audience appreciation, which is discussed later in this section.

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<sup>50</sup> Professional Artist living ‘beyond Hope’ in July 12 focus group. This artist previously got together monthly with a group of artists in Vancouver.

<sup>51</sup> Poet and bookstore owner, August 11 focus group.

<sup>52</sup> Professional artist at July 19 focus group.

<sup>53</sup> Emerging artist (with Fine Arts Degree) at July 19 focus group.

Participants felt that it was difficult to participate in professional associations (e.g. The Writers Union of Canada) due to geographical isolation.

Other aspects of isolation included difficulty in getting necessary materials and supplies, (e.g. visual art supplies) and the high cost of these outside the larger centres. Some supplies are up to 30% higher and large orders are needed to obtain them.

Many participants also put a positive face on isolation. The 'hothouse' atmosphere of artist communities in larger centres was perceived as leading to an adherence to trends, fads and a certain 'sameness' of approach.

Visual artists and, to a certain extent, writers and poets were strongly influenced by their surroundings. This is not surprising given that "a connection to the landscape is a hallmark of Canadian art."<sup>54</sup> Another artist expressed this as a "relationship to space" that is more pronounced in the north.<sup>55</sup> It was felt that isolation contributed to the development of a distinct northern style that was not influenced by the urban trends and styles.

- "... when you are suddenly stuck in a place where there isn't very much of what is trendy or contemporary you are much more self reliant. It doesn't take you very long to dig into yourself and find out what makes me the individual I am."<sup>56</sup>
- "... I was on my own and I wasn't feeding off art magazines and art shows and you know all the kinds of activities that you normally have in big centres."<sup>57</sup>
- "In the north, the environment is an important part of your life – it can kill you."<sup>58</sup>
- "One advantage to not ... having access to all of these things is people are not

put into these genre groups or art sets. There is potential for freshness and originality ... people get caught up in trends in the big city."<sup>59</sup>

- "In places like Vancouver or Victoria and I think Victoria more specifically, if you are a poet it can develop quite a hot-house atmosphere. ... I mean Victoria has more poets per capita than rhododendrons and that can, I think for some writers, become a very negative thing. There are the little groupings and you meet at cafes; they are always reading each other's work. There becomes a certain sameness."<sup>60</sup>

For an additional in-depth description of the character of the visual arts in the region see the College of New Caledonia report Visual Fine Arts Needs Assessment.<sup>61</sup>

Musicians commented that isolation provided an opportunity to 'woodshed' or build technical skills.

- "I think musicians have a term they use when they are developing their craft called 'woodshedding' ... I was playing with this band and I just wasn't up to standards so I woodshedded for six months. Being isolated in order to get

<sup>54</sup> Lyndal Osborne, professional artist and IMA instructor, July 12 focus group.

<sup>55</sup> Professional artist, July 12 focus group.

<sup>56</sup> Professional artist, July 12 focus group.

<sup>57</sup> Professional artist, July 12 focus group.

<sup>58</sup> Emerging artist, July 12 focus group.

<sup>59</sup> Professional artist, July 12 focus group

<sup>60</sup> Poet, August 11 focus group.

<sup>61</sup> Ewart, Peter. Visual Fine Arts Needs Assessment, College of New Caledonia, 2001, pg. 16-17.

your playing skills together is an important thing. Ultimately you know, you have to take it in front of an audience if you want to make a living. That's a real problem."<sup>62</sup>

There was also a sense of the artistic community being fragmented as well as isolated. This fragmentation could lead to competition for human and financial resources. One graphic example of this was film companies, who can pay higher wages than local organizations, taking local human resources for short-term but higher paying jobs. It was felt that the competitive atmosphere, which sometimes develops among artists in smaller communities, is a sign that these artists are not being well supported by the community. There was also a feeling that there should be ways to share resources rather than be competitive.

- "... there's all of these little versed groups and you don't actually know what is going on."<sup>63</sup>
- "They would have taken our stage manager and everything. They wanted everybody. Financially that has put the theatre in a compromised position. We don't have the bucks that the movies do."<sup>64</sup>
- "I think a lot of the problems in Prince George are created by lack of funding because everyone is protective of the funding that they are getting. They don't want to share. They can't share. They wouldn't survive."<sup>65</sup>
- "... we are so isolated against each other. I don't think, for instance that Theatre Workshop and Theatre Northwest compete. They don't. It is a whole different thing all together and there is room for that kind of thing ... we would together be able to create more situations and more of an opportunity for people. But individually and isolated, it's like there aren't enough people to go around."<sup>66</sup>

- "I suspect perhaps that the method of funding for a lot of groups, the fact that they are probably project based are also ... big issues in terms of creating some of these problems. If you have a particularly defined project and the funding is focused at that, you tend to pull all of your resources pretty close to yourself until you have completed that project."<sup>67</sup>

Ironically, the main venues that participants noted were valuable for peer interaction were the regional arts festivals (such as Arts Fest) and the BC Festival of the Arts. Recently the provincial government withdrew funding for these activities and it is questionable whether or not they will continue. Not only did these venues provide for peer group interaction they also provided opportunities for training and skill development.

Many artists indicated that once face-to-face contact had been made, some communication could continue through remote means such as the Internet. However, visual artists indicated that while email was helpful, they needed to see each other's works in reality as opposed to digital images. Digital images often could not convey the technical or more subtle aspects of the work such as scale and texture.

- "The experience of viewing a work in the real can be quite different than the

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<sup>62</sup> Professional Musician, August 11 Focus Group.

<sup>63</sup> Professional actor and director, January 11 focus group.

<sup>64</sup> Theatre Manager, January 11 focus group.

<sup>65</sup> Arts Administrator, January 11 focus group.

<sup>66</sup> Arts Administrator, January 11 focus group.

<sup>67</sup> Arts Administrator, January 11 focus group.

mere idea of the work which a photograph relays."<sup>68</sup>

The focus groups and previous work conducted for the Premier's Summit on Economic Opportunity – Cariboo-Chilcotin (1999) indicated that a comprehensive inventory would be helpful to identify the extent of the cultural sector in the north, and to establish more connectivity within the sector.

**Recommendations:**

9. Lobby for the reinstatement of funding for regional arts festivals and the BC Festival of the Arts and other opportunities that provide for face to face contact between artists.
10. Investigate opportunities for electronic communication between artists.
11. Conduct a comprehensive inventory of artists and cultural resources in the north.

**4.2.2 Mentoring**

Another common theme in the focus groups was the lack of opportunity to have a senior artist critique work. Traditionally this has been a form of professional development in the visual arts and it was this group that identified the strongest need. The College of New Caledonia study<sup>69</sup> indicated a general "lack of 'critical atmosphere' so necessary for the arts to mature and develop."

- "I mean you are so far away ... to ask a mentor to come to Vanderhoof isn't going to happen. I'm not going to go to Victoria. That's not going to happen either."<sup>70</sup>
- "What strikes me is that there is only limited value to Internet mentorship because to me there is a big difference between the image you can show [and] the real object with hands-on interaction."<sup>71</sup>
- "The eye contact is very important.

...The best thing about being a mentor is ... that they have the ability to dialogue about the work. The mentor can objectify. They can look at the work and tell the artist what he or she sees there. ... The most valuable time spent at the BC Festival [of the Arts] ... is that dialogue with individual people. There were line-ups for discussions that were very long."<sup>72</sup>

- "I'd want to meet with the artist and I would want to see the real work because you're just guessing ..."<sup>73</sup>

Potential mentors in the focus groups indicated that photos or digital images could never replace seeing the original work.

Focus group participants repeatedly pointed to programs of Island Mountain Arts as an example of an ideal mentoring situation, in particularly the Wells Artist Project which brings together emerging artists and senior artists in a retreat-like atmosphere to develop their conceptual approaches.

**Recommendations:**

12. The BC Arts Council needs to provide funding for the Wells Artists Project and other similar projects that provide mentoring opportunities for northern artists.
13. This type of mentoring needs to be recognized as training specific to the cultural sector and funded by government agencies that fund sectoral training programs.

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<sup>68</sup> Professional artist, follow-up communication, spring 2002.

<sup>69</sup> Ewart, Peter. *Visual Fine Arts Needs Assessment*, College of New Caledonia, 2001, pg. 19.

<sup>70</sup> Emerging artist, July 12 focus group.

<sup>71</sup> Professional artist, July 12 focus group.

<sup>72</sup> Norman Yates, professional artist and mentor, July 12 focus group.

<sup>73</sup> Lyndal Osborne, professional artist and mentor, July 12 focus group, discussing distance mentoring.



### 4.2.3 Exhibiting and Presenting Work

Some participants felt that there were not enough venues for exhibiting visual arts in the north. Others indicated that almost every small town had a gallery of some sort. Others indicated they had shown in many non-traditional venues such as restaurants, offices and 'parlour' exhibits (artists showing in their own homes). Many indicated that sales were not good in smaller communities or that they couldn't get an appropriate price for their work.

- "The evidence that there [are] no venues happens every year at Arts Fest when you see people entering that have been there several times or they are teaching and competing in the jurying process against their students. And if they are doing that then really it tells you that there aren't enough places for them to show their art. ...I think that the Prince George Art Gallery [now called the Two Rivers Gallery] has done a really good job of having a variety of shows and calls and you know I think that they are having an impact on the region to a certain extent."<sup>74</sup>
- "... I stopped applying to Arts Fest. I consciously said to myself that I want to make space for other people. I can go into Arts Fests and I can be chosen but it's just not fair because I am taking away an opportunity for someone. What that meant was that I had to start right from the beginning again. ...It is hard to start at the bottom again. I mean I know what it means to be a professional artist and know how to experience pitfalls but there are so many things to learn all at once."<sup>75</sup>

The lack of venues also contributes to the difficulty in promoting northern culture to residents. Cultural artifacts and artists' work needs to be in the streets and on the

walls of our local communities. Increasing venues does not necessarily mean building new art galleries, performance centres or museums (although these things are sorely needed in some communities) but can include things such as:

- encouraging summer street theatre, children's festivals, concert series, Art in the Park, Art Walks, guided heritage tours and other cultural events featuring local artists,
- encouraging local banks, restaurants, motels and offices to hang local work, and
- capturing a percentage of the capital budget of new development to go into purchase of local art.

It appears that as a visual artist first begins to exhibit there are a number of options around the region. However, many of these galleries do not pay artist fees. As artists become established and are looking to exhibit in larger galleries and to command artist fees there become fewer and fewer options.

The inability of small galleries in many communities to pay artist fees has been identified by CARFAC<sup>76</sup> and was raised as an issue in the focus groups. Canadian copyright law demands that exhibiting artists be paid minimum fees as set by their professional organizations. A solo show in the north should pay approximately \$1200. Although, this barely covers the material and transportation costs for artists, very

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<sup>74</sup> Professional Artist, July 19 focus group.

<sup>75</sup> Professional Artist, July 19 focus group.

<sup>76</sup> Canadian Artists' Representation/le Front des artistes canadiens is the national voice for visual artists. For more information: <http://www.carfac.ca>

few galleries in the north pay fees as set by CARFAC. This makes it difficult for artists to earn even a portion of their living through exhibiting; in fact many artists claim exhibiting costs them money.

- “[One problem is] ...that so few galleries in BC pay the minimum fees that are stipulated under the Copyright Act. They are breaking the Copyright Act and the provincial funding agencies, BC Arts Council and Cultural Service Branch, are complicit in that because they have been ignoring this and denying any involvement for years despite ongoing campaigns.... So one, we need to be organized and two, we need to know that Copyright Act and be able to nail them on it.”

Ironically, the very organizations that wish to support the work of artists are in fact put in the position of exploiting them.

Galleries are most often under funded and run by volunteers. Few public galleries in the north receive operational funding, although some receive some support from their municipality. Most would have difficulty in paying CARFAC fees. However, if this became a requirement for receiving provincial funding as it is with Canada Council funding, more galleries would make these fees a priority.

Funding programs for operational costs (as opposed to project funding) would assist galleries to create better opportunities for artists. Currently the requirements of provincial and federal programs to meet strict museum standards are an impediment for most small galleries. These criteria should be staged and be based on targets that it is reasonable to expect galleries to meet over time.

A number of musicians indicated that they had better turnouts and sold more CDs in

smaller communities. They felt that this was because there were fewer choices in these communities and usually no record stores.

**Recommendations:**

14. It is essential that public art galleries in the region be provided with stable, secure operational funding in order that they may pay the legally required artists' fees. This may mean that standards will have to be adjusted to be flexible to conditions in the north.
15. Lobby the BC Arts Council to make the payment of artists' fees a mandatory condition of receiving support.

#### **4.2.4 Audience Development**

Some visual artists found that their work appealed more to markets in larger centres and was not saleable in local markets.

Many participants felt that people in the interior would not pay for art or did not appreciate its value. This was linked to influence of mass media as well as lack of education in public schools.

- “One of the reasons I went south is because I found that the work I did was difficult to sell. I mean there were people that were interested in my work but there just wasn't the market.”<sup>77</sup>
- “A lot of the comments that we are making have to do with the quality of the audience for paintings or music. I think we want to be careful not to attribute that to people being second-generation loggers and miners. I don't think that's the problem at all. I think the problem has to do with the effect of mass media, which is a very different thing. I think

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<sup>77</sup> Professional Artist, July 19 group, previously lived in north but moved to Gulf Islands.

living in the north perhaps that is a bigger problem than in the cities because the effect of mass media is much more homogeneous because there is a smaller range of alternative experiences.”<sup>78</sup>

- “... people seem to believe that art can only exist, or quality art exists, only if it is coming from the television screen or the movie screen, from your stereo, that it’s good art. Live art is ok but live music is fine if it sounds like the record. ... And when you are living in isolation your exposure to art comes only from, or primarily from the mass media, and you begin to develop the attitude that if it’s coming from an electronic source then it’s art.”<sup>79</sup>

There are few commercial galleries in the north. One operated in Quesnel for approximately two years before closing its doors. It appeared that the market was insufficient for higher end items such as fine art and craft. People do not understand the value of ‘one-of’ pieces and have been educated to accept offset litho or giclée prints as ‘original art.’ One artist felt that there was an opportunity to capitalize on the fact that there are very few places to buy original art in the north.

Public galleries use programming to draw people into their galleries. The Two Rivers Gallery (Prince George) not only has artist’s talks along with openings but offers children’s birthday parties in the gallery.

Musicians faced different issues in terms of marketing their work. Musicians must either have a local audience or must adopt a heavy travel and touring schedule. Visual artists and writers can more easily export their art. One musician moved from the interior of the province to the Lower Mainland because he was becoming physically ill from issues surrounding not having an audience for his work.

- “I have been a self-employed artist of one sort or another for my entire adult life. I grew up in Prince George and it was there that I realized that I didn’t want to live in that town because there wasn’t really a lot of support for people like me.”<sup>80</sup>
- “Vernon was a good place to be as far as making a living, but from a cultural standpoint it was so restricted that I found myself becoming physically ill on a regular basis. I could sit in my studio for hours and hours but then it just seemed so pointless because there was no one to share my music with.”<sup>81</sup>

The theatre/performing arts sector experienced similar difficulties with audience development. One manager indicated she attended every performance and gauged audience reaction constantly. Another theatre operator indicated he had difficulty in communicating to people the importance of buying tickets ahead of time and of arriving on time.

Cultural Tourism can bring markets to local artists and performers and can increase their profile among local audiences. Research indicates that the demand for cultural products is rising.<sup>82</sup> There is an opportunity for communities to capitalize on this by supporting and enhancing their cultural sector.

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78 Poet and book store owner, August 11 focus group.

79 Professional Musician, August 11 focus group.

80 Professional musician and songwriter, August 11 focus group.

81 Professional musician, August 11 focus group.

82 Thorne, Steven. *The Economic Impact of Arts and Culture in the Central Okanagan*. Arts Development Office, City of Kelowna, 1998.

**Recommendations:**

16. Tourism BC, the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association, the North by Northwest Tourism Association and other destination marketing organizations need to target the Partners in Tourism marketing partnerships for the cultural sector. These programs provide approximately 35% funding for marketing initiatives outside the tourism region.

**4.2.5 Education and Training**

**Early Education in the Arts**

This topic was discussed in every focus group and the perceived decline in levels of art education in elementary and secondary schools was seen as a root cause of many barriers to practicing artists. It was felt that people needed to learn the “language of art” in order to adequately appreciate the work of artists.<sup>83</sup>

The current research adds to and substantiates the results of the needs assessment conducted by the College of New Caledonia.<sup>84</sup>

Arts education in the public schools is not consistent across the province. Some communities make it a priority. However, children in other communities do not have the same opportunities.

- “I’ve had the opportunity to be invited out to Tumbler Ridge for six or seven years and it is a mining community. There is no other industry. It is coal mining and from day one the parent group’s mandate and the teachers’ mandate has been to have every possible cultural influence in that town. All their money was spent on visiting authors, they’ve had visiting authors who have done writing workshops for parents after school. They have had traveling poets.”<sup>85</sup>

Some participants felt that the Ministry of Education should subsidize arts organizations for supplying arts programming in schools. For example, for many years Island Mountain Arts has provided music programming in the Wells-Barkerville School at no charge to students or the School Board. The School District provides this programming in other schools in the District.

The Art Starts in Schools Program of the BC Arts Council gives money directly to School Districts to bring artists into schools. Not only do students receive instruction in the arts, but they are exposed to practicing artists as career models. Participants saw this as a valuable program. Examination of the BC Arts Council Annual Report indicates that some northern school districts received awards under this program, but that use of this program may not be universal. It is unlikely that a systematic review of curricula has been conducted to identify and fill gaps in fine arts programming.

**Recommendations:**

17. The BC Arts Council should continue to support Art Starts in Schools as a valuable way to bring practicing artists into the school system.
18. Community Arts Councils and arts organizations need to be proactive in ensuring school districts maximize their use of this program and to ensure programming fills identified gaps in the curricula.

<sup>83</sup> Professional musician and songwriter, August 11 focus group.

<sup>84</sup> Ewart, Peter. *Visual Fine Arts Needs Assessment*. College of New Caledonia, 2001.

<sup>85</sup> Artist and administrator, August 11 focus group.

19. Community Arts Councils and arts organizations can also assist in the creation of 'magnet' or 'choice' schools within school districts, which provide enhanced fine art programming.
20. The Provincial Government needs to be held accountable to ensure that Arts and Culture are an important part of the school curriculum.

### Training

A number of education or training issues were identified in the focus groups.

- Lack of accredited or formal training in the north.
- Specialized workshops not available due to numbers of participants.
- Continuing need for business skills training.

The College of New Caledonia region, which includes Prince George, Vanderhoof, Burns Lake, Mackenzie, and McBride, is the only one in the province which does not offer university transfer (UT) programs in fine arts. The only degree-granting post secondary educational opportunities devoted to the fine arts are located in the south of the province. This means artists desiring formal training must relocate. Many artists stressed the importance of acquiring the type of foundation skills taught in university level programs. The College of New Caledonia in Prince George completed a needs assessment<sup>86</sup> and based on its findings is planning the development of a two year university transfer program in Fine Arts. Two courses are currently being offered.

Some artists acquired formal training before moving to the north, while others left the region to receive training. Many emerging artists discussed barriers to accessing full time training. Travel, work and family commitments, and affordability

were common reasons why practicing artists would have difficulty accessing education in the south. However, the value of having formal training in the north was appreciated by all, particularly because the program would keep young artists in the north.

The value of having foundation skills available in shorter sessions was also discussed and the value to this type of program at Island Mountain Arts reaffirmed. Short sessions were also the preferred format for more specialized technical courses in all disciplines. There are existing models of master level courses that involve short stays on campus and longer distance learning and work placements that might appeal to rural artists.

In some disciplines, especially theatre, it was recognized that there were not enough potential participants in the north to warrant offering many courses. Interested parties would have to travel to other areas.

Administrators noted that budgets often did not allow them to attend relevant conferences or workshops, especially if they were held out of the province. Training and networking opportunities were often missed. This leads to skill gaps in the labour market over time.

The needs assessment conducted by the College of New Caledonia included a survey of more than 1,900 high school students within School District 57 (Prince George). This survey indicated tremendous support for a post-secondary fine art program.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Ewart, Peter. *Visual Fine Arts Needs Assessment*. College of New Caledonia, 2001.

<sup>87</sup> Ewart, Peter. *Visual Fine Arts Needs Assessment*. College of New Caledonia, 2001, pg. 20.

**Recommendations:**

21. Artists and arts organizations must continue to lobby for support for the development of the CNC fine arts program.
22. Other models of delivering foundation and technical skills are needed in order to be accessible to working artists and to artists in remote locations.

**Business Skills**

Another very common theme from the focus groups was the need for business skill training that was geared specifically to the cultural sector. Some artists commented that when they took their formal training, they were not prepared for the fact that their job would involve more than just doing their art. These skills include bookkeeping, preparing tax returns, marketing, developing portfolios, photo documentation of work, exhibit submissions and proposal writing.

- “I was asked to sit as part of the jury and at that time there were 200 submissions. That was a big job. A lot of them weren’t complete submissions. A lot of them didn’t have an artist’s statement. When you are looking at 200 proposals, anything that is difficult to read, poorly written, or not easy to grasp instantly we had to put aside.”<sup>88</sup>

Often artists do not recognize the need for these skills or do not realize that business skills are foundation skills as well. The old idea of ‘prostituting your art to business’ is still prevalent. Judi Piggott of the Alliance for Arts and Culture in Vancouver, which offers employment services to artists, indicates that one of the biggest barriers self-employed artists face is realizing that they must develop business skills.<sup>89</sup>

Some artists in the focus groups have attempted to develop some of these skills

through existing training or employment services programs but experienced difficulty because learning material was not geared to their needs. Even bookkeeping that would seem to be a universally needed skill has special applications for artists due to particularities of Canadian Tax Law regarding artists.

Participants often mentioned needing help with marketing and product pricing. Both visual artists and woodworkers had difficulty in determining what markets to sell to, how to price their work and how (or whether) to develop a product line with different price points.

- “The biggest thing that we’ve found is trying to figure out where one fits, how the market works, how to market things, what to make, what people buy, the price levels people buy at in our area. We get a lot of comments upon our pricing, a lot of comments upon how much things are worth, but unfortunately a lot of these things come from people who don’t buy, so while they are nice compliments and they are nice ideas they don’t reflect the reality of what we are doing to sell.”<sup>90</sup>

Island Mountain Arts has developed a relevant curriculum with assistance from the now defunct provincial Skills Now program. Three successful business training conferences were offered in the mid-1990s. Focus group participants, some of whom had attended these conferences, indicated that the need for this type of training is ongoing. Although artists continually

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<sup>88</sup> Professional Artist, July 19 focus group.

<sup>89</sup> Personal communication, March, 2002.

<sup>90</sup> Professional woodworker, January 15 focus group.

request the program, funding for delivery is no longer available. This sort of training needs to be available on an as-needed basis for emerging artists. Participants from remote communities felt that this type of information and training should be available to people in their communities.

Arts and cultural organizations need leadership, planning and advocacy skill training. These programs must be accessible and cost-effective for under-resourced organizations. The Arts Partners in Organization Development program begins to address this need and could be expanded to include a broader range of services.

Artists and artisans working in wood had similar training needs in terms of business skills. Several participants identified apprenticeships as a desirable form of training. However, it appears that shorter courses seem to be the norm.

- “The Wells Forest Society, when researching demand for training for its woodworking school, found that apprenticeship-style training just isn’t available any more. No one wants to take on an apprentice because that apprentice, once trained, is likely to become competition instead of a long-term employee of the craftsman who provided the training. So what you’re seeing is a lot more training happening through the schools and the Wells school will be offering a seven-month winter program in fine furniture and that is sort of typical of some of these larger schools around the continent. They’ve got a longer-term course, sometimes they are as long as three or four years and then there are also the shorter courses to brush up on the specific skills.”<sup>91</sup>

To create jobs we need to move artists from being partially employed to being fully employed at their work. The possibility of

being eligible for EI and tax relief could assist artists through this transition. Because of the high rate of self-employment in this sector, many people do not qualify for subsidized training programs or employment services. Programs that are limited to EI eligible or ‘reach-back’<sup>92</sup> clients exclude a large portion of the sector. Programs such as Self Employment Assistance (SEA), which provides an EI wage for one year to clients starting their own businesses, need to be expanded to include non EI eligible clients. An optional self-contribution system to EI could establish eligibility for self-employed people.

Employment services geared specifically to the cultural sector would also assist artists in moving from unemployment and under employment to a full time livelihood. The Alliance for Arts and Culture in Vancouver offers a four-week program for the cultural sector that is fully subscribed.<sup>93</sup> Such a program would be invaluable to northern artists.

### **Recommendations:**

23. Using SEA as a model, a program specific to the cultural sector needs to be developed.
24. Employment services similar to the HRDC sponsored SEARCH program offered by the Alliance for Arts and Culture in Vancouver need to be brought to the north to assist artists in identify skill gaps and conditions for success.
25. Artists and arts organization need to lobby for changes in the way employment services and training are delivered to allow people who have been previously self-employed to qualify.

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<sup>91</sup> Professional woodworker, January 15 focus group.

<sup>92</sup> Clients who have been eligible for EI within the last three years.

<sup>93</sup> Piggott, Judi, personal communication.

#### **4.2.6 Access to Funding**

Many northern artists indicate their needs are not met by existing funding programs.

Artists need subsidies, especially in the north, to attend professional development workshops and to make improvements to their studios (similar to programs in Ontario). In some cases, incubator-style studio space would assist emerging artists. As discussed above, many artists do not qualify for EI and therefore do not benefit from many training programs and employment services available to the work force in general.

As discussed in Section 4.1.4, proportionately, the north does not receive a 'fair share' of cultural funding from at least three main funding bodies – the BC Arts Council, the Vancouver Foundation and the Canada Council for the Arts. It is not surprising to find a strong level of dissatisfaction within focus group participants in regard to the level and type of funding received.

Arts administrators indicate that existing programs do not necessarily fit the needs of cultural organizations or artists in the north. Organizations spend time trying to fit their multi-faceted ideas into square program guidelines. The requirement of some funding programs to enter into partnership agreements also limits cultural organizations in outlying areas where the number of potential partners is limited. Managing partnership agreements also puts a heavy strain on small organizations with few staff or volunteers. More flexibility should be provided in program guidelines to allow cultural organizations to respond to local and regional needs. Programs are 'project oriented' and do not respond to ongoing or core needs of cultural organizations or the need to build capacity to deliver projects.

- “They decided to stop that and do a project grant because some arts councils weren’t doing nearly as much as we were so they turned the incentive grant into a project grant and in order to get this \$3000 or \$4000 now you have to go out and create a new project. We’re doing so much already we don’t have enough time to create another project.”<sup>94</sup>

Cultural organizations in smaller centres find the necessary paperwork for some provincial and federal funding out of proportion with the small allocations made and suggest it could be streamlined. Too much time is spent processing applications by both the organizations and the provincial and federal governments, given the small amount of money distributed.

A complete review of available programming (BC Arts Council, Canada Council, Vancouver Foundation, etc.) to determine its relevance to northern artists and arts organizations would be helpful. It may be necessary to develop a set of programs specifically geared to ensuring the needs of artists and arts organizations in the north are met.

#### **Recommendations:**

26. An appropriate arts organization needs to conduct an analysis of available funding programs to determine their effectiveness in meeting the needs of the cultural sector in the north, and to develop a set of recommendations for program additions and revisions.
27. Proven organizations should receive multi-year approvals from funders, with a streamlined application process.

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<sup>94</sup> Arts administrator, January 11 focus group.



### 4.2.7 Employee Recruitment and Retention

The arts administrators' focus group reported difficulties in recruiting suitable candidates for cultural jobs. These jobs included things such as conservators, costume designers, theatre technicians and art instructors. This was partially related to the part time nature of some of the jobs, but even full time jobs such as art gallery curators have been difficult to fill. Arts administrators were underpaid in relation to similar jobs in other sectors and lacked opportunities for professional development.

Arts administrators noted that the lack of operating funds and the 'project' nature of grants made it hard for arts organizations to achieve stability. Funding is often available for pilot projects or for employee training, however it is difficult to implement projects and retain employees.

- "... it is also the revolving door of staffing that we deal with ... This past year I was training, with seasonal and new full time staff, 5 or 6 people and that is exhausting right there. It is important to invest in staff even if they are only there for a short period of time. I sometimes wonder is it worth having somebody in for a 6 week Student Summer Works grant because that's all you've got, but you need the bodies to get the work done. You know it really does become a bit of a double-edged sword, that's a real dilemma as well."<sup>95</sup>
- "The sad part of it to is that we train these people and I've gone through 3 arts coordinators in the last 6 years. We train them, we get them up to speed and then they go some place else to a organization that can pay them double what we are able to pay with benefits. That's a big problem too. We can't pay what other [non cultural] organizations are paying."<sup>96</sup>
- "Say you had a lighting designer who was doing other things in between times, it's really important for them, for other artistic directors to see their work. Well there are no other artistic directors. So they don't tend to stick around here. It could be a junior production assistant, they will come, they will get that on their resume and then they will go back to Calgary, Vancouver or wherever they are from. That's a real problem, too. You can get actors here easier because it is 5 weeks that they are gone and it is just another thing on the resume and actors are hungry."
- "...that's an issue to get people here and even if it is for a job interview. They need to come, you need to fly them in, put them up somewhere, find them accommodation if nothing else, because you don't want someone coming to Prince George that has never been here before, they need to know what they are getting into. There is an expense just in terms of recruitment. And, even in the itinerary of the contracted person you need to address the transportation issue. Ok, what about housing if it is a short-term contract? Where do they stay? People are not going to come with the moving truck for three months. Many, many artists, many, many junior crafts people, theatre people don't even have vehicles. In Prince George, in the north, you need a vehicle."<sup>97</sup>
- "[The Symphony] hired their conductor instead of getting someone who was based here in Prince George like the last one. They have someone who will come in for a few days for each concert [or] a couple of weeks. And then be gone again. We were looking to do the same thing when we were looking for a curator. We would have different contract curators that would come out for different exhibitions and then someone part-

time to carry on with the rest of it. Or maybe even not someone part-time. So you lose that continuity and we fought against that tooth and nail to get someone here full-time and have that continuity in such an important job.”<sup>98</sup>

- “Even with these programs, the wages that we offer are ridiculous and a lot of the staff that we have left higher paying jobs to come to work with us, which is wonderful and totally horrible at the same time. That is something that you are always dealing with when you are hiring. You want to apologize for the wage you are offering even if you’re giving a raise. You know they are not making what they should be.”<sup>99</sup>

Administrators also commented on the high level of volunteerism associated with their jobs; they often had the work of a full-time job, but were only paid for a part-time job.

- “I would probably do it if I wasn’t paid or I work 20 hours more than I do get paid and certainly in logging and mining nobody would ever tolerate that. I mean we do it, but I don’t think that we should necessarily tell people we do it, and I think we should never communicate that it is ok.”<sup>100</sup>

Within the arts administration focus groups there was a split between people who had received formal education prior to taking their job and people who had trained on the job. Volunteerism was a common way to get ‘a foot in the door’ towards a full or part-time job, which may be why cultural administrators often found it hard to draw the line between paid work and volunteerism.

The focus groups confirmed many of the findings of Statistics Canada about the Canadian Labour Force. Much work in the

cultural sector is part time and is often contract work. Artists tended to have more than one job. Some had unrelated ‘day jobs’ to pay expenses; others combined teaching with selling their art.

- “... a number of different things, i.e. teaching, plus selling and perhaps even writing, but I don’t know, I have to explore that in the future to make enough to live on.”<sup>101</sup>

Arts organizations need stable, long term operational funding support in order to generate the type of jobs that will attract qualified personnel. They must be able to pay competitive wages and provide opportunities for professional development.

**Recommendation:**

28. In northern communities, the BC Arts Council and the Canada Council should provide more operation funding to promote stable organizations that can maximize job creation and retention.

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<sup>95</sup> Arts administrator, January 11 focus group.

<sup>96</sup> Arts administrator, January 11 focus group.

<sup>97</sup> Theatre Director, January 11 workshop.

<sup>98</sup> Arts Administrator, January 11 workshop.

<sup>99</sup> Arts Administrator, January 11 workshop.

<sup>100</sup> Arts Administrator, January 11 focus group.

<sup>101</sup> Woodworker, January 15 focus group.

### 4.3 Woodworking

The wood sector focus group identified many of the same issues as the other focus groups – the need for more networking and coordination within the sector, the need for training in business management, the difficulty in establishing markets and price points, difficulty in attracting skilled workers due to low pay scales. Some of the topics discussed by the Artists in Wood focus group were very specific to this sector. Hardwoods and certified woods were seen as an opportunity area, as were partnerships with First Nations.

It was recognized that there was a need to gain a ‘critical mass’ of small woodworkers which would grow into medium and large size companies which would, in turn, increase employment.

- “The Wells Forest Society did a survey of 29 of its members a couple of years ago. Wood supply was the biggest need. Training was the second biggest and then from there it went down, shop fees, machinery and that sort of thing.”<sup>102</sup>
- “You know that’s sort of the same thing for the Central Interior Wood Producers Association. They had a survey of their members and forest tenure and log supply was their biggest issue, the next point was training in the Prince George area and then marketing after that.”<sup>103</sup>

Access to a wood supply was a key issue. While some felt their location in the Cariboo gave them access to a raw wood supply, others noted that there were few mills that did custom cutting. Most producers do not want to buy a whole log. Processors are needed to process the raw logs to meet producer needs. Producers want to be able to purchase the type, amount and grade of wood they need.

- “To buy hardwood in the North is totally insane you know. And the quality of it is not that great.”<sup>104</sup>
- “The only problem there is that you have to buy in a bigger volume than I wish I

could buy, and that is kind of a drawback, but that’s business. They are big people and if you have to buy a log you don’t buy a quarter of a log.”<sup>105</sup>

- “If I were to set up my cabinet making shop anywhere else in this country, pretty much I’d go and purchase exactly the grade and type and size I want right at the store. It’s kind of ironic that if I lived in Toronto I’d have more access to trees than I do here.”<sup>106</sup>

One of the main disadvantages of being in the north was seen to be transportation costs. Many producers need to get their products to Vancouver for sale. One idea was to have a shared van to transport goods to outlets in Vancouver.

Some producers had the same difficulties accessing training as other artists – affordability and time. However, the value of videos, books, magazines was noted. Local libraries can be a resource for this material. Courses on marketing and pricing are needed.

- “I need to really upgrade my working with hand tools which is not really my strength you know and I took a couple of courses with IMA – the modeling course and the carving course. They were both totally wonderful for me.”<sup>107</sup>
- “BC Wood has been quite successful in the training in the North because up here there has been no ongoing access to training, whereas people in Vancouver area, even in the Okanagan area, it’s always been there at hand.”<sup>108</sup>

The difficulties in getting established were discussed at length. Creators of ‘one-of’ pieces need to establish a name for themselves in order to command the price that their work deserves. Other producers discussed developing a product line that could be produced in volume. Niche markets were also deemed important. Certified wood was identified as a potential niche market. Good

design was seen as a distinguishing feature between quality products and mass-produced products.

- “I’m trying to work on the name thing. Build a name and you don’t do it in two weeks, you don’t do it in a year, you don’t do it in three years, it takes a lifetime it seems. But nonetheless you have to make sure that you’re out there.”<sup>109</sup>
- “There seems to be a niche starting with aspen flooring – they are calling it Red Knot flooring. So it’s starting. It’s all a matter of character wood, so it’s going to be characterized, it’s not only going to be Denim Pine,<sup>110</sup> it’s going to be the aspen, it’s going to be all the species.”<sup>111</sup>
- “My message to most smaller manufacturers is don’t make what you want and go out there and try to create a market for it, perhaps consider making something that there is a market for.”<sup>112</sup>
- “The reason that you’re an artist and you’re producing something is that you feel it is of value. You put that out in public and if they feel it’s of value they buy it.”<sup>113</sup>
- “I don’t think that we’re born with an appreciation for good design and beautiful objects, I think that some of that is a product of the culture that we grow up in and I see so much homogenization out there with so many things.”<sup>114</sup>

Juried wood shows were seen as a good way to get a product introduced to a market. BC Wood sponsored a show in May 2002 in connection with Forest Expo in Prince George. Winning products will be showcased in tradeshow in United States and market information is collected for the producer.

BC Wood is a producers’ association that supplies a number of benefits for its members, including access to cheaper brochure and business card production prices through group buying. This is an idea that might have application to the cultural sector in general.

**Recommendation:**

29. Arts and value-added organizations need to lobby for training subsidies specific to artisans in the wood sector.

#### 4.4 Harp Therapy

The Harp Therapy focus group did not follow the set interview questions of the other groups. Participants were practicing music or harp therapists, or administrators that hired music therapists. The group discussed various accreditation programs. Although there is very little information about the opportunities in this field, early indications are that it is potentially a growing sub-sector. Seniors homes, hospitals, and hospices all use music therapists. The main job opportunities at present are in the Lower Mainland; however, there is potential for this field to be developed in the north, particularly if Island Mountain Arts offers accredited courses.

**Recommendation:**

30. Island Mountain Arts needs to pursue its investigation of accreditation for Harp Therapy and augment its existing harp programming with harp therapy courses.

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102 Professional woodworker, January 15 focus group.  
 103 Manufacturing plant owner, January 15 focus group.  
 104 Professional woodworker, January 15 focus group.  
 105 Professional woodworker, January 15 focus group.  
 106 Professional woodworker, January 15 focus group.  
 107 Professional woodworker, January 15 focus group.  
 108 BC Wood Specialties Group Coordinator, January 15 focus group.  
 109 Professional woodworker, January 15 focus group.  
 110 Denim Pine is a registered trademark referring to blue stained wood obtained from beetle-killed pine.  
 111 Manufacturing plant owner, January 15 focus group.  
 112 Manufacturing plant owner, January 15 focus group.  
 113 Professional woodworker, January 15 focus group.  
 114 Arts Administrator, January 15 focus group.

## 5.0 RESOURCES/MODELS/ SUCCESS STORIES

*“Art is very often about crossing boundaries, because creativity is about seeing things in new ways. Art opens people’s imaginations to a wider world. And creative thinking, risk-taking, and openness to the new are qualities that are valued in many fields besides the arts.”*

Dr. Shirley L. Thomson  
Director, Canada Council for the Arts

Participants in the focus groups and key informant interviews revealed a number of resources that can assist artists and arts organizations.

### **5.1 Canada-Wide Resources**

The Government of Canada’s Federal Status of the Artist Legislation helps improve the socio-economic conditions of artists in Canada. It provides tax shelters and negotiating rights to self employed artists. Information on the Act can be found on the web at [www.laws.justice.gc.ca](http://www.laws.justice.gc.ca).

Canada Council for the Arts programs provide funding for emerging, mid-career and professional artists in most disciplines including dance, media arts, visual arts, theatre, music and writing and publishing. More information can be found at [www.canadacouncil.ca](http://www.canadacouncil.ca).

CARFAC (Canadian Artists’ Representation/le Front des artistes canadiens) is the national voice for visual artists. Its objective is to promote a socio-economic climate that is conducive to the production of visual arts in Canada. CARFAC has been heavily involved in setting recommended artist fees for exhibiting artists and in developing copyright reform that benefits artists. More information can be found at [www.carfac.ca](http://www.carfac.ca).

Other professional associations for artists include actors unions, alliances and guilds for writers, publishers, broadcasters and many of the occupations in the film industry, for instance, SOCAN ([www.socan.ca](http://www.socan.ca)) and The Writers Union of Canada ([www.writersunion.ca](http://www.writersunion.ca)).

The Cultural Human Resources Council conducts in depth research on the cultural sector and makes recommendations to the federal government. Its website can be found at [www.culturalhrc.ca](http://www.culturalhrc.ca).

## 5.2 Resources at the Provincial Level

BC Arts Council provides funding programs for artists and arts organizations. Information can be found at [www.bcartscouncil.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bcartscouncil.gov.bc.ca).

The Assembly of BC Arts Councils ([www.assemblybcartscouncils.ca](http://www.assemblybcartscouncils.ca)) provides a provincial body to lobby on behalf of the interests of Community and Regional Arts Councils.

CARFAC BC, CARFAC's provincial arm represents the rights of visual artists in BC. Links to CARFAC BC can be found at [www.carfac.ca/](http://www.carfac.ca/)

The Alliance for Arts and Culture conducts research and lobbies on behalf of the cultural sector in BC, especially the Lower Mainland. The Alliance website can be found at [www.allianceforarts.com](http://www.allianceforarts.com).

The BC Museums Association ([www.museumsassn.bc.ca](http://www.museumsassn.bc.ca)) provides advocacy and other services for the museum community, including galleries. Other advocacy groups include Culture!Matters and Culture Acts Now.

## 5.3 Regional Resources

### Community Futures Programs

Community Futures Development Corporations offer small business a number of crucial services within their regions. They can offer assistance in developing business plans, help in product development and small business loans. They have resource libraries with a wealth of information on various issues related to small business development. One program, the Self Employment Program assists people starting a new business.

The cultural sector does not seem to be taking advantage of these programs. Many participants discussed having at least some contact with CF offices, but many reported that they:

- Were brushed off as their work was not taken seriously.
- Took workshops or seminars, but found their applicability to their situation limited.

The Self Employment Program supplies new entrepreneurs with a basic wage for one year while they start a new business. A program of this type could assist artists to develop a body of work and establish markets. However, most artists and many artisans do not qualify for this program as they do not qualify for EI.

The Community Futures Development Corporation of the North Cariboo in Quesnel has expressed an interest in working more closely with the cultural sector and providing support cultural sector initiatives. At this time they have no project fund, but are willing to assist in looking for funding. Their Internet site ([www.cf.quesnel.com](http://www.cf.quesnel.com)) has a number of 'Business Training Worksheets.' These could be used as templates to develop similar resources specific to the cultural sector.

Certain subsectors of the cultural sector will respond to sector development initiatives similar to those that have been initiated in the value-added wood sector. This is particularly true of the craft sector.

### The Northern Exposure Gift Company Model

This model could be used to address some of the marketing issues raised by participants.

The Northern Exposure Gift Company (NEGC) is a joint venture between

Community Futures and a variety of partners. A staggering 70% of manufacturing businesses fail after the first year, largely due to lack of suitable markets to sustain them. Having identified that many local producers of crafts and giftware had difficulty marketing their products, NEGC examined the feasibility of a number of ways to assist them. Most producers had limited cash flow and did not have the time to organize the distribution of their products. Using similar organizations in the Maritimes as a model, the NEGC began by buying products outright and wholesaling them to retailers around the region. They also provided assistance to producers in product development.

After the pilot project was completed they could no longer afford to buy products outright, but still act as wholesaler for more than 100 local products. The NEGC has also started an on-line store which will be operational by May 2002.

This type of 'cooperative' marketing whether done by an artists' group or a private company such as NEGC, has potential for many artisans. Producers of 'one-of' works have a harder time using this distribution system, however the NEGC's on-line store will also include 'one-of' works.

### **Value-Added Assessment Program**

Another model for assistance is the Value-Added Assessment in Action Program. Originally started for the value-added wood manufacturing sector in the Prince George region, a proposal has recently been submitted by several Community Futures groups to expand the model to include businesses in Agriculture, Fisheries and Tourism in several other regions. This program provides extension services to existing businesses to stimulate innovation. The

program matches businesses with expert consultants to tackle developmental problems and make recommendations. The first stage assessment was paid for in full by the program. Additional consultation could be accessed with the business paying 50% of the cost.

This model would have applicability to all disciplines within the cultural sector. Successful artists in all disciplines could be matched with emerging artists to assist them with business related problems. A pool of qualified expertise could be developed within the north.

Funding for this program could come through Western Diversification.

### **Employment Services**

An innovative program has been implemented by the Alliance for Arts and Culture in Vancouver which appears to address many of the needs raised by artists in the focus groups. The SEARCH program provides employment services for artists in all disciplines. The program develops hands on skills for finding employment both inside and outside of the arts. The program is not training per se, but a value based process that shifts attitudes towards employment. The program runs monthly and consists of 4 weeks, Monday to Friday and is fully subscribed with 30 to 40 people applying for the 16 seats that are available. Both emerging and well-established artists find the program very useful. Participation is open, clients do not have to be EI recipients or 'reach back' clients. The program is funded entirely by HRDC and there is no cost to participants.

The Alliance for Arts and Culture would be interested in assisting with the establishment of such a course in the north.

**Recommendation:**

31. Island Mountain Arts needs to pursue a partnership between the Alliance for Arts and Culture and Human Resources Development Canada to develop employment services modelled on the SEARCH program that could be delivered in the north.

Westminster to Prince George. It has developed a travel guide that highlights heritage, arts and culture along this route.

Arts organizations and artists with galleries and studios can take advantage of these promotional vehicles to market their businesses.

**Destination Marketing Organizations**

Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) represent member tourism operators and can be effective partners to promote cultural tourism. In 2001, the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association (Clinton to Hixon, Bella Coola to Horsefly, Likely to Wells-Barkerville-Bowron Lake) produced an "Arts and Cultural, Festivals and Heritage" brochure that highlighted the cultural products within the region. Although this was a specific recommendation of the Arts and Culture working groups at the Premier's Summit in May, 1999, many artists and galleries had difficulty in participating in the subsequent marketing initiative, as they tend to budget much less for marketing than do tourism operators.

The CCCTA is also committed to providing information on cultural tourism in its annual Travel Guide and on its web site.

Through the CCCTA, member festivals and events societies may qualify for 35% funding for advertising that occurs outside the region.

**Gold Rush Trail Development Corporation**

The Gold Rush Trail Development Corporation is an organization committed to developing cultural tourism along the original route of the gold rush from New



## 6.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

*"I would teach children music, physics, and philosophy; but most importantly music, for in the patterns of music and all the arts are the keys to learning."*

Plato

### **ISSUE: Culture/Artists Not Valued**

1. Artists and arts organizations need to lobby for provincial Status of the Artist legislation that would officially recognize artists and their professional associations and permit negotiations with producers.

#### **Agencies:**

- CARFAC and other professional associations
- Province of BC

2. Ways and means need to be found to ensure childhood education in the arts. Island Mountain Arts could investigate extension programs into regional schools or providing Pro-D training for teachers.

#### **Agencies:**

- IMA

3. With changes to the School Act, there is the opportunity for schools to operate as 'magnet' or 'choice' schools offering enhanced curricula in fine arts or other specialization. Certain northern schools, in particularly in areas where there is a 'critical mass' of artistic activity, could build upon existing resources to enhance childhood education in the arts.

#### **Agencies:**

- Individual communities and school boards assisted by Community Arts Councils

### **ISSUE: Declining Support for the Arts**

4. Artists and arts organizations should continue to lobby federal, provincial and municipal governments for increased funding for the arts and for the specific allocation of training dollars to meet the needs of the cultural sector.

#### **Agencies:**

- Individuals and arts organizations

### **ISSUE: Lack of Awareness of Economic Impact of the Arts**

5. Arts organizations and artists need to measure the economic and intangible contributions they make to their communities and be more vocal about these benefits to local decision makers.

**Agencies:**

- Individuals and arts organizations

**ISSUE: Regional Disparity in Funding**

6. Strategies need to be developed to increase the success of northern artists and arts organizations when competing for federal and provincial funds. This would include a complete review of BC Arts Council policies and procedures to pin point areas of bias. Affirmative action programs may be necessary for several years to bring northern areas to a more acceptable level of per capita funding.
7. The Regional Arts Councils along with community arts councils needs to open a dialogue with the Canada Council of the Arts to develop an understanding of why more awards are not made in the north and to develop strategies to rectify the situation.
8. Strategies need to be developed to return wealth to the north. Another way to look at funding is in relationship to the amount of wealth that is extracted from the area. Arguments need to be developed that will attract federal, provincial and corporate funding.

**Agencies (for 6, 7 & 8):**

- Economic Development Corporations and arts organizations

**ISSUE: Isolation/Lack of Peer Support**

9. Lobby for the reinstatement of funding for regional arts festivals and the BC Festival of the Arts and other opportunities that provide for face to face contact between artists.
10. Investigate opportunities for electronic communication between artists.
11. Conduct a comprehensive inventory of artists and cultural resources in the north.

**Agencies (for 9, 10 & 11):**

- Assembly of BC Arts Councils, Alliance for Arts and Culture and arts organizations

**ISSUE: Mentoring**

12. The BC Arts Council needs to provide

funding for the Wells Artists Project and other similar projects that provide mentoring opportunities for northern artists.

**Agencies:**

- BC Arts Council and IMA

13. This type of mentoring needs to be recognized as training specific to the cultural sector and funded by government agencies that fund sectoral training programs.

**Agencies:**

- HRDC

**ISSUE: Exhibiting and Presenting Work**

14. It is essential that public art galleries in the region be provided with stable, secure operational funding in order that they may pay the legally required artists' fees. This may mean that standards will have to be adjusted to be flexible to conditions in the north.
15. Lobby the BC Arts Council to make the payment of artists' fees a mandatory condition of receiving support.

**Agencies (for 14 & 15):**

- CARFAC and BC Arts Council

**ISSUE: Audience Development**

16. Tourism BC, the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association, the North by Northwest Tourism Association and other destination marketing organizations need to target the Partners in Tourism marketing partnerships for the cultural sector. These programs provide approximately 35% funding for marketing initiatives outside the tourism region.

**Agencies:**

- CCCTA

**ISSUE: Education and Training**

17. The BC Arts Council should continue to support Art Starts in Schools as a valuable way to bring practicing artists into the school system.

**Agencies:**

- BC Arts Council

18. Community Arts Councils and arts organizations need to be proactive in ensuring

school districts maximize their use of this program and to ensure programming fills identified gaps in the curricula.

**Agencies:**

- Community Arts Councils

19. Community Arts Councils and arts organizations can also assist in the creation of 'magnet' or 'choice' schools within school districts, which provide enhanced fine art programming.

**Agencies:**

- Community Arts Councils

20. The Provincial Government needs to be held accountable to ensure that Arts and Culture are an important part of the school curriculum.

21. Artists and art organizations must continue to lobby for support for the development of the CNC fine arts program.

**Agencies:**

- Central Interior Regional Arts Council

22. There needs to be other models of delivering foundation and technical skills in order to be accessible to working artists and to artists in remote locations.

**Agencies:**

- Island Mountain Arts, CNC and other post secondary institutions

23. Using SEA as a model, a program specific to the cultural sector needs to be developed.

**Agencies:**

- IMA or Community Futures organizations

24. Employment services similar to the HRDC sponsored SEARCH program offered by the Alliance for Arts and Culture in Vancouver need to be brought to the north to assist artists in identify skill gaps and conditions for success.

**Agencies:**

- IMA and HRDC

25. Artists and arts organization need to lobby for changes in the way employment services and training are delivered to

allow people who have been previously self-employed to qualify.

**Agencies:**

- Individual artists and arts organizations

**ISSUES: Access to Funding**

26. An appropriate arts organization needs to conduct an analysis of available funding programs to determine their effectiveness in meeting the needs of the cultural sector in the north, and to develop a set of recommendations for program additions and revisions.

27. Proven organizations should receive multi-year approvals from funders, with a streamlined application process.

**ISSUE: Employee Recruitment and Retention**

28. In northern communities, the BC Arts Council and Canada Council should provide more operation funding to promote stable organizations that can maximize job creation and retention.

**ISSUE: Woodworking**

29. Arts and value-added organizations need to lobby for training subsidies specific to artisans in the wood sector.

**Agencies:**

- Artists, artisans, arts organizations and value-added organizations

**ISSUE: Harp Therapy**

30. Island Mountain Arts needs to pursue its investigation of accreditation for Harp Therapy and augment its existing harp programming with harp therapy courses.

**Agencies:**

- IMA

31. Island Mountain Arts needs to pursue a partnership between the Alliance for Arts and Culture and Human Resources Development Canada to develop employment services modelled on the SEARCH program that could be delivered in the north.

**Agencies:**

- IMA, HRDC and other partners

## 7.0 CONCLUSIONS/ NEXT STEPS

*"...when the government invites other government officials from abroad or other countries, the very first thing they do is give a gift of art or performance – orchestras, theatres – that's the prize, and yet often, especially in BC, it's the last thing the government supports. The very thing that they want to show-off is the last thing they support."*

Norman Yates  
IMA Artist in Residence  
July 28, 2001 Focus Group

The findings of the focus groups indicate that workers in the cultural sector in the north are underpaid, that they are under employed, and that a high proportion of them are self-employed, confirming national and provincial statistics.

While the sector is expanding, this expansion is taking place in the Lower Mainland and employers in the north have difficulty filling positions with qualified workers. This can be attributed to comparatively low wages paid by the sector and gaps in skills and training within the local work force.

The need for accessible and affordable professional development opportunities and business skill training was reiterated constantly in the focus groups and has been confirmed through the key informant interviews.

The cultural sector in the North Central Interior has the potential to grow. With the decline in the forest industry, culture sector jobs can absorb some of the impacts of industrial adjustment. For this to occur support mechanisms similar to those that have been given to other industries must be introduced. Arts organizations must be able to achieve stable funding patterns in order to maximize job creation. Artists must be able to take advantage of tax incentives, training subsidies and employment programs which are targeted for their sector. The regional disparity in funding of the arts must be corrected.

Focus group participants expressed a vision of 'beyond Hope' where artists could sustain themselves through their work, where children received the foundations of art appreciation in elementary and secondary schools, and where locally produced products were valued by residents and brought wealth to the region through exports.

## APPENDIX I: Focus Group Participants

*(Focus Group Sessions were held between July 2001 and January 2002)*

### **JULY 12, 2001**

Anne Bogle  
Sandy Bunce  
Paul Crawford  
Doris Dittaro  
Carol Frank  
Annerose Georgeson  
Nena Hargraves  
Lisa Hebden  
Eri Ishii  
Claire Kujundzic  
Lyndal Osborne  
Norman Yates  
Beth Holden

### **JULY 18, 2001**

Joan Beck  
Bill Horne  
Ben Landry  
Marie Nagel  
Cheryl Peebles  
Shirley-Ann Royer  
(Norman Yates)

### **JULY 28, 2001**

Lynda Strutt  
Cyndi Cassidy  
Jim Davies  
Heather Spears  
Stephanie Kenzie  
Jesse Thompson  
Linda Walters  
Mas Bando  
Kathleen Cook Waldron  
Diane Noort  
(Norman Yates)

### **AUGUST 4, 2001**

Doug Jones  
Irene Khurana  
Anne Laing  
Meriel Barber  
(Norman Yates)

### **AUGUST 11, 2001**

Keith Bennett  
Sam Masich  
Glenys Rutledge  
Janet Simpson-Cooke  
George Sipos

Bridget Sipos  
Murray Visscher

### **AUGUST 19, 2001**

Roseanne Agnello  
Kelly Bennison  
Harper Tasche  
Kim Robertson  
Sharlene Wallace  
Lori Pappajohn  
Debra Pinchbeck  
Irene Swoboda  
Angelyn Toth  
Joanne Pearcy  
David Pearcy  
Rachel Peacock  
Talitha Peacock  
Lise Blais  
Louis-George Blais  
Pat Gorsuch  
Verna Pollack  
Marilyn Rummel  
Joseph Jordain  
Annamay Foster

### **OCTOBER 26, 2001**

1) Maureen Faulkner  
2) Judy Russell  
3) Monique Wyse  
4) Bas Rynsewyn  
5) Cheryl Parker  
6) Penny Stewart  
7) Vivien Lougheed

### **NOVEMBER 30, 2001**

Sybille Muschik  
Marty Duffy  
Sylvia Graham  
Paula Scott  
Bill Caughlan  
Frances McLean  
Ruth Scoullar  
Eddie de Souza  
Dan Hennessey

### **DECEMBER 6, 2001**

Denise Frank  
Susan Goglin  
Richard King  
Jason Benneray

Maureen LeBourdais  
Christina Mary

### **DECEMBER 7, 2001**

Lesley Lloyd  
Joanne Pearson  
Eva Hoelzler  
Greg Robart  
Kathy Faulkner  
Harold Rhenisch  
Karen Holtby  
Ann Walsh  
Randle Timmins  
Jan Greystone

### **JANUARY 9, 2001**

Paula Kully  
Maggie Ferguson-Dumais  
Pat Wahlstrom  
Dorothea Funk

### **JANUARY 11, 2002**

George Harris  
Carolyn Holmes

Claudia Reichs  
Virginia Spranger  
John Nolan  
Ann Laughlin  
Anna Pickett

### **JANUARY 15, 2002 WOOD SECTOR GROUP**

Joseph Jourdain  
Jason Griffin  
James Andal  
Darryl Redden  
Lynn Pont  
Linnie Derker  
Robert Stoldt

### **MARCH 22, 2002 HARP THERAPY GROUP**

Marilyn Rummel  
Dorothea Funk  
Bonnie Thorne  
LaRee Mohr  
Maureen Bodie

### **OTHER CONTRIBUTORS**

The following people participated in key informant interviews or submitted comments on the draft report:

- Victoria Bowman, Island Mountain Arts staff
- Dorothea Funk, Island Mountain Arts staff
- Peter Ewart, College of New Caledonia
- Jeremy Long, Cultural Services Branch, Province of BC
- Carol Frank, professional artist
- Terry Hannan, Northern Exposure Gift Company
- Bill Horne, CARFAC BC
- Greg Lawrence, Community Futures Development Corporation of the North Cariboo
- Lyndal Osborne, Fine Arts Department, University of Alberta
- Judi Piggott, Alliance for Arts and Culture
- Penny Stewart, Central Interior Regional Arts Council