



Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations Through Peer Networking

Jude Ortiz, Meghan Ableson, Dr. Gayle Broad

Final Report

April 30, 2013



Le Conseil
des Arts
de Hearst



4elements
Living Arts

arts • land/scape • community



Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their thanks to the following individuals and organizations for their assistance in the completion of this project:

The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and Sandra Houston, Executive Director for their participation and contribution as project lead;

Conseil des Arts de Hearst, and 4elements Living Arts for their participation and contributions to the project;

The Ontario Arts Council Compass grant, for its generous financial support;

The participants in the communities of Hearst, Sault Ste. Marie and M'Chigeeng First Nation and surrounding communities on Manitoulin Island; and,

NORDIK Institute research team and Algoma University for their ongoing support.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements..... 2

Executive Summary..... 4

Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations Through Peer Mentoring 5

1.0 Background and Context..... 5

2.0 Literature review..... 6

3.0 Methodology..... 8

4.0 Findings 10

 4.1 Organizational awareness of environment and context..... 10

 4.2 Community relations and social capital development 11

 4.3 Governance 12

 4.3. Financing 14

 4.4 Human Resources 15

5.0 Recommendations and Next Steps 16

6.0 Project Outcomes 17

7.0 Conclusions 19

References 20

Appendix I: Profile of the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District..... 21

Appendix II: Profile of Conseil des Arts de Hearst 46

Appendix III: Profile of 4elements Living Arts 72

Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations through Peer Networking

Executive Summary

Three arts organizations in Northeastern Ontario established a peer network to share, generate and mobilize knowledge to strengthen organizational capacity. The region is undergoing significant social and economic change including a substantial demographic shift, and these are having impacts on the organizations. The participating groups are: The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie; Conseil des Arts de Hearst; and 4elements Living Arts on Manitoulin Island. The project was funded by the Ontario Arts Council's Compass Grant for increasing organizational capacity, and was facilitated by NORDIK Institute, Algoma University's community based research centre.

A variety of data collection tools, including on-site consultations and technology-delivered peer dialogues, were utilized to create each organization's profile within a sustainability framework. The framework is comprised of five (5) components: i) Organizational awareness of environment and context; ii) Community Relations and Social Capital Development; iii) Governance; iv) Financing, and; v) Human Resources.

Overall, the project led to a strengthening of the organizations' management capacity that will advantage them in future operations. It provided the time and space necessary to initiate an internal dialogue within each organization, as well as a dialogue with community members and mentoring partners. This led to an improvement in a variety of organizational aspects: organizational capacity; engagement, community relations and social capital development; and knowledge mobilization in understanding sustainability within the Northeastern Ontario context. Specifically, the project strengthened these capacities within the cultural sector.

Partners expressed an interest in maintaining the network and intended to reconnect toward the end of 2012. The organizations suggested the peer mentoring process could be used as a model for building sustainability throughout the region as it established critical support through dialogue, share resources and knowledge mobilization in a region that is challenged by geographical distances and contextual differences to southern Ontario.

Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations Through Peer Mentoring

1.0 Background and Context

Northern Ontario communities are experiencing economic and social destabilization due, in part, to the restructuring of resource-extractive industries which have been the foundation of their economies.

NORDIK's research in culture development uncovered significant links between culture, the economy and the creation of healthy, sustainable communities. The arts play an important enabling role in increasing community resilience¹ through identity formation and sense of belonging, leading to the creation of place-based economies (Ortiz, 2013 forthcoming; Ortiz & Broad, 2007).

The culture sector, however, faces many challenges in developing sustainable livelihoods due, in part, to a lack of local and regional understanding of the sector's importance; limited entrepreneurial and organizational capacity; and a dearth of investment and development strategies relevant to Northern Ontario's context. During the Ontario Crafts Council's recent symposium (November 2011), Reflecting the North: *Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture*², Sophie Edwards, Executive Director of 4elements Living Arts, presented a case for a funding model for Northern arts organizations which would be entirely different from that of the more urban South.

Arts organizations are an important component of Ontario's nonprofit sector, building healthy communities by providing citizens access to services and opportunities that would otherwise not be available³. The non-profit sector as a whole is often overlooked in traditional economic development as an effective strategy but, in fact, makes significant contributions and plays an important role in leveraging new monies (Broad & Date, 2004).

Resilience literature identifies organizations as the driving force of the community (Community Resilience Sault Ste. Marie, 2006), and arts councils "have the potential to be an important voice for the arts and culture in their region or local community" (mDm Consulting, 2011:5). Strong arts organizations would mobilize knowledge and support micro-business development, thus advantaging the entire sector.

Organizational sustainability literature revealed key components for sustainable arts organizations included diverse partnerships; relevancy; vibrancy; the ability to capitalize upon products and/or services and manage its resources; and, constant adaptation in meeting changing needs (Torjman, 2007; Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006; WolfBrown, 2011)

¹ Community Resilience refers to the capacity to adapt, transition and prosper in times of significant change while maintaining core values (Colussi, 2000; Lewis and Lockhart, 2002)

² Reflecting the North: *Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture* (<http://reflectingthenorth.wordpress.com>)

³ The Ontario Nonprofit Network (<http://www.theonn.ca>)

In continuing to work with communities in meeting the needs of the culture sector, NORDIK investigated the creation of a peer learning community, a network of peer to peer mentors, to strengthen organizational capacity. Three arts organizations, the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District, Conseil des Arts de Hearst, and 4elements Living Arts on Manitoulin Island expressed a desire to collaborate and funding was acquired through the Ontario Arts Council's Compass Program in 2012. The research concluded in the fall of 2012.

2.0 Literature review

Literature regarding non-profit organizational sustainability, organizational change, resilience, and peer mentoring were reviewed with a particular focus on the culture sector and/or rural areas. Arts organizations illustrating sustainable practices were explored with representatives of the Ontario Arts Council (OAC).

Sustainability of arts organizations

Literature in the field of organizational change focused primarily on large scale, for profit operations proving to be of limited utility for small non-profits and/or rural settings. Resilience literature, however, being scalable and non-sector specific, provided insights into transitioning and sustainability for non-profit organizations regardless of size.

WolfBrown's (2011) research investigating organizational sustainability in the arts sector reveals ways in which sustainability (in general) has shifted over time, stating past concepts revolved around business strategies and included elements such as "strong leadership," "clarity of mission," and being "brand-driven" (5) that primarily focused on generating revenue and accumulating capital.

A platform of adaptability, rather than wealth accumulation, WolfBrown (2011) argues, facilitates meeting the more nuanced, multi-dimensional understanding of sustainability which now involves the ability to balance three interdependent aspects: community relevancy, artistic vibrancy and capitalization.

These three aforementioned elements are encompassed in concepts of resilience –i.e. success is dependent upon the capacity to engage diverse communities and foster dense networks of social relations (social capital development) in adapting to, and operating in, the current climate of constant flux. Strong and respectful relationships within and between sectors facilitate constant regeneration and renewal (Torjman, 2007; Westley, Zimmerman & Patton, 2007).

Relevancy in the arts sector is described by WolfBrown (2011) as the ability to remain in touch, meeting community needs through informed programming decisions while working within its core capacities and maintaining artistic vision. Community need, however, often exceeds organizational capacity. In addressing this issue, WolfBrown (2011) suggests relevancy can be achieved through a broad engagement strategy that includes "programming collaborations and partnerships that extend impact and position the organization as a player in the larger community dialogue" (3), thus contributing to a deeper understanding of community needs and ways of balancing the two value systems.

Resilient organizations are continuously able to demonstrate their relevancy, i.e., their individual value and collaborative impact of their partnerships. During difficult times organizations with strong networks of social capital are more likely to be seen as an asset as opposed to an isolated single organization with a financial problem (WolfBrown, 2011).

Artistic vibrancy, WolfBrown (2011) states, is what fuels organizations, motivating donors and engaging the community and can be achieved regardless of the size of the budget by adopting an inclusive approach to programming. However, organizations must be willing to experiment and have sound financial policies and management in place for dealing with artistic risk.

Utilizing technology in innovative ways extends the reach and diversity of voices necessary for generating a full pipeline of new ideas, constantly reimagining programs and refreshing support. Key is ensuring new pathways are established before the need for change is paramount.

The third element WolfBrown (2011) identifies is capitalization and sound financial policy stating the need for non-profit organizations to gain more financial security has been a recurring theme since the 1960s. All organizations, (both for- and non-profit) need infusions of capital over time, “however, the basic principle of capitalization – that return requires investment – has not yet taken root in the nonprofit arts sector” (4), leaving many vulnerable to shifting policy priorities.

Fundraising capacity is an identified concern across the entire non-profit sector. Bell & Cornelius (2013) argue a ‘culture of philanthropy’ described as “...a set of organizational values and practices that support and nurture development within a nonprofit organization” (2) must permeate the organization rather than it being relegated to one person or a subcommittee.

WolfBrown (2011) cautions focusing solely on financial health, however, as that will detrimentally impact vibrancy and sense of purpose. Therefore, organizations must establish practices that support the development of all three factors of sustainability in remaining resilient.

Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring literature predominantly referred to situations where knowledge was transferred from one person to another, rather than reciprocal relationships. A search revealed post-secondary institutions appear to be frequently utilizing this approach as a formal program component and/or a student success strategy. Rural peer mentoring literature also included formal educational programs, although distance delivery in most cases focused on preparing people to work in rural areas. There appears to be a gap in literature around peer to peer mentoring; mentoring across distance; and in the culture sector.

Cultural Careers of Ontario (CCO) (2011) identifies life-long career and business skills training for artists as necessary for ensuring a robust and resilient arts sector. Many artists face barriers to realizing their economic potential due to a lack of training in micro-business development or entrepreneurship. Traditional approaches to business development do not meet the sector’s needs for training in

development of products and services, marketing, financing and management due, in part, to the [often small] scale of artisans' operations and the educational delivery methods.

Cultural Careers Council Ontario's (CCCO) (2011) report indicates artists prefer experiential learning opportunities such as mentorships, internships or apprenticeships, and jurisdictions such as Quebec, England and Australia that have implemented strategies combining workplace learning and theory have been very successful.

Mentorship is based on principles of sharing and guidance, i.e. establishing supportive relationships with someone to increase the abilities of his/her partner in addressing real-life business issues, thus increasing individual and/or organizational resilience. Connecting one-on-one assists in reducing a sense of isolation by providing opportunities for a 'second opinion', constructive feedback and overall support for one's role and responsibilities in the organization from someone in the field.

CCCO's (2011) study argues mentoring, due to its individualized nature, is a cost-effective strategy and sustainable practice that increases the sector's capacity over the short and longer term. The strength of the model lies in the trusting relationships built over time as the duration of mentoring, compared to traditional approaches, is considerably longer and the personal approach significantly deepens knowledge and confidence. A strong indicator of the positive impact of the experience is the high number of mentees becoming mentors for the next generation.

Although CCCO's pilot project matched individual artists living in large urban centres with business experts it provides invaluable insights into the potential of a peer networking model that could be adapted to meet Northern needs.

Vibrant Communities, a Tamarack Institute ⁴ project is one example of a peer to peer network, or a learning community. The initiative is a community-driven effort to reduce poverty in Canada by creating partnerships in linking six communities across Canada. It focuses on sharing stories, but peer mentoring is not an identified component in its literature.

3.0 Methodology

Prior to the start of the project an Algoma University Ethics Review was obtained. A literature review was conducted around key topic areas of organizational sustainability, change and peer mentoring in the culture sector with a particular focus on rural areas and distance delivery.

A variety of data collection tools were developed and utilized including: i) a set of pre- and post-project questions for the organizations to complete to guide discussions during the community consultations

⁴ <http://tamarackcommunity.ca/g2.php>

and the final peer mentoring session; ii) a tracking and reflection sheet designed to capture organizations' learnings as the project progressed; iii) on-site community focus group consultations; and iv) technology delivered peer mentoring sessions. The community consultations and peer discussions were audio recorded (in their entirety or portions of the session) and notes were taken.

Each organization was responsible for recruiting participants and determining which staff, board members and/or local citizen(s) they wished to invite to the on-site data collection activities and the technology delivered mentoring sessions.

In launching the peer network, NORDIK brought the organizations together utilizing technology (Skype) to: i) provide a general overview of the project; ii) establish mentoring goals and timeline; and iii) discuss the data collection process and the activities to be conducted in each community.

The on-site community focus group consultations were conducted between July and August 2012, with NORDIK researchers facilitating the process. The consultations were comprised of three data collection activities:

- i) Presentation of the organization's strategic plan (by the organization)
- ii) Creation of the organization's historical timeline
- iii) Affiliations, connections and partnerships mapping

The consultations occurred between July 16 and August 10, 2013. Participants ranged from two in Hearst, five in Sault Ste. Marie and twenty in Manitoulin.

The data was compiled and analysed within a sustainability framework comprised of five key components impacting organizational resilience, i.e. its ability to adapt, transition and prosper when faced with change while retaining its core identity (Centre for Community Renewal, 2000).

The five key components are:

1. *Organizational awareness of environment and context*
 - Community context , changes and the larger picture
2. *Community Relations and Social Capital Development*
 - Partners
 - Community Support
 - Depth and length of relationship
 - Number of hosted events
3. *Governance*
 - Recruitment and participation of board members
 - Training
 - Problems and resolutions
4. *Financing*
 - Diversity of revenue sources
 - Forecasting accuracy
 - Number of budgets balanced in the last five years

5. *Human Resources*

- Number of staff
- Skills
- Depth
- Opportunities for training and education

Each organization received a draft organizational profile based on the community consultation that included preliminary recommendations. Additional comments and feedback were incorporated into the final report.

Subsequently, the three groups met for a series of four web-based mentoring sessions, with each organization presenting its profile. The sessions provided an opportunity to share, dialogue, learn from each other, and generate knowledge in discussing ways of becoming more sustainable. One final mentoring session was held on October 3rd to discuss project outcomes and recommendations.

Each group received a draft final report specific to its organization which included recommendations, overall project findings and learnings. Once finalized, each received both print and electronic copies. (See Appendices I, II, and III). The project learnings will be further mobilized through NORDIK's website where a dedicated project webpage provides an overview as well as this report, available as a download.

4.0 Findings

Although all three partners operate arts organizations in Northeastern Ontario, they differ in community and geographical context, mandate and goals, and financial and human resources. The Sault Ste. Marie Arts Council is located in a regional urban community; Conseil des Arts de Hearst (CAH) is in a small isolated francophone community, and 4elements works across Manitoulin Island, a large rural area that includes Aboriginal and settler communities.

Despite their diversities, however, participants from all three organizations identified similar issues, challenges and needs. Themes emerging from the research were organized around the aforementioned sustainability framework: i) Organizational awareness of environment and context; ii) Community relations and social capital development; iii) Governance, iv) Financing; and v) Human Resources.

4.1 Organizational awareness of environment and context

Each organization demonstrated an understanding of context: the forces and factors at play within their communities and regional and global impacts beyond their influence. Partners keep up to date with sector changes, trends, funding, and education and training opportunities through listserves, being on distribution lists, and routinely visiting pertinent websites. Staff and volunteers also share information gained from professional development activities, including both those they attend outside the region as well as numerous events they bring to the community through the organizations themselves.

At the local level, organizations maintain community connections in a variety of ways, including sitting on other non-profit Boards, and participating in community events within and/or outside the culture sector. Market research is recognized as an important tool for keeping in touch with changing

demographics and community needs; however, this strategy is currently underutilized in two of the organizations due, in part, to time demands, lack of expertise in conducting such research, and conflicting priorities at this time.

4.2 Community relations and social capital development

Building relations

The organizations' current partnerships assist in meeting a wide range of operational needs including advertising and promotions; financial and human resources; programming; and production and presentation. Each organization has a number of long-term and newer partnerships upon which to build more social capital; however, the majority of partnerships are within the culture sector. All organizations identified a need to strengthen community relations within the arts community and across sectors e.g., economic, social and environmental, in order to meet the changing community demographics, interests and needs. Diversifying and increasing the number of local relationships would assist in raising the profile of the arts and broader community support would result in much needed sponsorships, members and volunteers.

Also discussed was the expansion of regional networks as a means of increasing information and resource sharing, staying connected and creating efficiencies of scale across Northern Ontario. More geographical networks would also serve to raise each organizational and community profile, contributing to attracting new participants, members and/or tourists to the area.

Advocacy for Northern-specific programs and funding

Alliance-building – both local and regional - was also identified as a means of strengthening advocacy for increased and/or tailored investment in meeting the specific needs of Northern Ontario. The organizations perceived varying degrees of local understanding, interest and/or ability to invest in the arts sector. Further challenging the partners' sustainability and growth is the North's difficulty in accessing and/or the ineffectiveness of southern-based funding agencies' models. Criteria and/or context of funding opportunities often do not reflect Northern realities. All concurred that operating in Northern Ontario was significantly different from activities in the southern part of the province, particularly in terms of geographical isolation, economic climate, smaller communities and the purpose and intent of arts engagement. Conveying such contextual differences to funding agencies (North and south) is seen as an on-going challenge; however, the partners have limited time to dedicate to advocacy due to daily operational demands.

CAH, as a francophone cultural centre is in a slightly different position, being eligible for more provincial and federal grants, but expressed similar experiences regarding the North not being well understood beyond the region.

Each organization identified a few potential strategic partnerships during the consultations, with the priority areas being economic development, tourism and niche markets such as francophone culture and environmental awareness both locally and beyond.

Maintaining connections and relevancy

Each of the organizations demonstrate an impressive activity level providing a varying number of services and/or events within the following categories; i) Services, ii) Programming, and iii) Producing and Presenting. The diversity and volume of each organization's offerings is sometimes impacted by strategic priorities and limited finances, time, and/or expertise; however, activities are augmented through partnerships which also assist in mitigating some deficiencies. The scope and range of activities are under review in each organization, necessitated by changing organizational identity and community demographics, increased financial demands and limited human resources.

Value of Northern peers

The organizations identified the importance and value of staying in touch with one another over the short and long term, particularly during times of organizational and community transitioning. CAH's recent successful market research provided insight to all three organizations of the changing community cultural interests, and also identified new areas of potential growth. CAH offered to share its market research resources with the partners. Conducting market research on a regular basis would provide the organizations with an assessment framework for reviewing and prioritizing operations and determining areas of expansion including local and regional partnerships.

4.3 Governance

All three organizations are in the process of establishing a new identity or working towards defining and/or refining their identity, which impacts all areas of operation including board recruitment, strategic planning, community relations and partnership development.

Identity

The Arts Council is considering redefining its service area and reviewing its delivery priorities to align with financial and human resource limitations and is focusing on strengthening community connections. CAH has recently acquired a cultural centre thus shifting its identity from that of a relatively small organization promoting francophone culture to include that of building manager and landlord. Building ownership is bringing significant financial demands as well as new opportunities to meet community needs and generate revenues. CAH is also rebuilding and expanding its community relations. 4elements is deepening its focus on its recurring theme of land and art and has also identified the need to assist in developing the area's culture sector and organizational capacity. The organization is developing its refined identity through new strategic partnerships while maintaining former relations.

Each is at a different stage in determining and conveying its purpose and role internally to board members and staff, and externally to the arts sector and people less familiar with creative processes and arts terminology, i.e. economic, social, and environmental sectors and the broader community. Concise

messaging is identified as a foundational element of marketing and communications plans and the partners see this as a priority.

In promoting its new identity CAH has recently initiated a monthly newsletter and updated its website, both of which the organization stated were generating interest and 'creating a buzz'. CAH received a grant to develop a marketing plan for its new role which should be completed by early 2013. The Arts Council and 4elements have identified a need to develop marketing and communication strategies and resources targeted to promoting their respective foci and goals.

Strategic planning

Each organization is at a different stage in its strategic planning. The Arts Council is preparing to launch a new plan; CAH has met its milestone of acquiring the building and is in the process of securing funding for developing a new plan; and, 4elements is well along in the process of transforming past visioning sessions into the organization's first formal plan as an incorporated non-profit.

The partners recognized the need for continuous cycles of strategic planning; however, challenges related to engagement, capacity, processes and costs were noted. One of the greatest hurdles facing the engagement of community members is scheduling (sufficient) time. Many board and/or community members have limited time and/or their interests lie in other areas such as programming. It was mentioned that plan development is sometimes not considered a priority, resulting in participants approaching it as a rote process- 'let's just get it done'- rather than a capacity building opportunity for critical reflection and deepening understanding of governance. Costs associated with facilitation and/or development often requires some financial commitment which may be offset through a grant. Volunteer facilitators are sometimes recruited with varying degree of success.

Board recruitment, engagement and development

Each organization has new board members, with the Arts Council's being a mix of recent and long-term directors; therefore, creating a collegial working environment is a priority. All three organizations identified the development of a strategic plan as an opportunity for unifying the Board due, in part, to the change of Board demographics and size. Each has had an increase in youth and/or aboriginal directors reflecting an inclusive approach and more representative of the broader community.

Although Board recruitment is seen as on-going, the organizations did not have formal packages and/or processes in place which, in at least one case, is complicating strategic recruitment to address needed board competencies. Two organizations have board vacancies but one will recruit next year on an 'as needed' basis once the strategic plan is complete.

Board development and training is a priority for the partners. Each is able to offer limited, if any, formal training due to financial constraints; however, all understood that opportunities to engage in research, visioning and reflection contribute to capacity building.

Succession planning

Succession planning is a priority area for the Arts Council and 4elements with both needing to develop processes and plans for slightly different reasons. The Arts Council, as mentioned, has a few long-time members (board and staff) who are considering retiring in the next couple of years. 4elements is seeking to transition from being an organization with paid staff only when funding allows to having at least one full-time permanent employee. 4elements sees the board as assisting in this process by undertaking an increased developmental role until this goal is achieved.

4.3. Financing

Dialogue and concern around financial sustainability was a consistent theme throughout this research. There is consensus that a priority for the organizations is to diversify revenue streams as well as address some of the challenges facing achievement of this goal.

Funding models

There is consensus that organizations' success in securing funding has been reduced as a result of: fewer opportunities and/or greater restrictions in eligibility criteria; shorter application windows; fewer cycles of intake; and stiffer competition.

Arts organizations across the province have seen an overall reduction in operating funds in 2012. Organizations that received operational funding in the past were subject to reductions ranging from 5-100% based on more stringent assessment criteria. This assessment process examined arts organizations' artistic quality and contribution, as well as their organizational effectiveness. In Northern Ontario, arts organizations tend to play more of a community development role, as typically found in rural areas, and this often disadvantaged them in obtaining funding. It also placed arts organizations in the difficult position of having to consider stretching their mandate to secure funding.

The Arts Council and 4elements, as previously mentioned, stated with some vehemence that government funding models tend not to serve Northern Ontario well. For example, some funders require that for the previous fiscal year in which the application is submitted, an organization must have employed at least one full-time staff member and/or received a minimum of seventy thousand dollars (\$70,000) in total revenue.

Additionally, recent changes to one funder's operational grants limits intake to once every three years even though the amount of funding is determined annually. This means that organizations which are unsuccessful in the initial intake must wait three years before reapplying.

CAH, as a francophone cultural centre, was unique among the organizations in having secure funding for its immediate future. It is able to access both federal and provincial operational funding and is confident investment will continue at similar levels for a number of years.

In addition to core operating funding, the partners submit funding applications for projects and infrastructure, including office equipment. CAH submits considerably more applications than the other two partners due, in part, to having four permanent staff, but all note a decline in their success rates.

Partners concurred that project-based funding, rather than on-going operational funding, is highly challenging particularly for the planning and development of human resources (number of staff and volunteers; areas of expertise) and programming (delivery timelines and short and long range). Increasingly, the organizations face dwindling opportunities and/or percentages for covering administrative expenses within and beyond project delivery.

Diversifying revenue streams

The partners recognize an urgent need to diversify revenue streams through membership drives, private-sector sponsorship and fundraising to increase sustainability and minimize long term reliance on grants and project-based funding.

Membership drives is identified as a means of increasing annual revenues as well as garnering further community support. Strategic partnerships would enable organizations to hold larger fundraising events (e.g., CAH's presentation of the Festival de l'humour or stand-up comedy fest in partnership with Réseau Ontario) and facilitate accessing different funding envelopes. 4elements' partnership with Billings Township to conduct cultural planning is an example of the latter. Partners concur that staging one to three sizable fundraising events is more cost-effective; however, the challenge revolves around developing a unique event that captures the target audience, bringing in the required financial return.

As a building owner, CAH has opportunities for generating income through lease and rental space and by leveraging assets such as the permanent art collection and a newly established retail outlet.

4.4 Human Resources

CAH's core funding enables the organization to support four full-time permanent employees. The Arts Council receives limited operational support through the City of Sault Ste. Marie's Cultural Financial Assistance Grants and until this year from the Ontario Arts Council which has contributed to employing a full-time Executive Director. 4elements currently has an Executive Director and Program Director, both of whom work primarily on a volunteer basis, being paid only when funding allows.

Each organization has highly qualified staff covering most operations but there is consensus regarding the need for additional skilled people in meeting current deliverables, and in 4elements' case, the need for at least one full-time employee for continuous operation.

Additional limited-term staffing is secured through a number of alternative avenues such as summer job programs, high school volunteer hours, post-secondary student placements and youth internships through FedNor and/or the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOFHC). The majority of programs require organizations to provide supervision by a full-time employee thus making 4elements

ineligible to take advantage of such. However, during the consultation it was suggested that requirements could perhaps be met through partnerships with other eligible organizations.

Although the two organizations which were able to secure additional staff through project funding were very appreciative of the revenues, there are challenges. The Arts Council in particular, due to having only one staff person, noted significant management and time demands due to the cyclical nature of such positions. Time is required in preparing applications and hiring, training, and managing staff are constant as well as shortages during interim periods until the next grant begins. Partners agreed that more permanent staff is needed to maintain operations at current levels and to reduce the organizational memory loss that occurs when short-term employees leave.

In addition to paid employees, partners concur volunteers play a large role in sustaining the organizations and each organization draws from its pool and/or recruits on an 'as needed' basis. A volunteer recognition and appreciation program is established at one organization and one other is reviewing its approach to attracting and retaining new supporters, particularly in view of the upcoming retirement of some long-term volunteers.

Succession planning, as mentioned above, is a priority for the Arts Council due to the upcoming retirement of the Executive Director. 4elements' succession plan involves transforming the organization from primarily volunteer positions to having paid employee(s).

Professional development was seen as an on-going priority however partners agreed that financial and time restraints limited staff from participating. Some pertinent programs are offered locally but many are only available out of town and often over a period of time thus disadvantaging Northern residents. There is at least one organization offering on-line courses but costs, time and regional relevancy remain an issue.

5.0 Recommendations and Next Steps

Specific recommendations were developed for each organization and are included in the respective organizations' profile (See Appendices I, II and III). Although each partner has particular assets, needs and challenges, some overall themes became evident. Recommendations are organized around the project goal of establishing a peer network to improve sustainability of the organizations. The themes are: Increasing organizational capacity; community engagement and social capital development; and knowledge mobilization.

Increasing organizational capacity:

- 1.1 Develop regional communication strategies. For example, website links to arts organizations and other related groups such as tourism groups. A longer term strategy may be the establishment of a regional arts network.
- 1.2 Regional board development for sharing knowledge and resources utilizing a combination of delivery methods such as technological and face-to-face condensed formats and/or a

combination thereof. Each area could host an annual event that would support on-going capacity building as well as network development.

- 1.3 Establish regional strategic planning on an annual basis. The arts sector could partner with provincial organizations in hosting joint events that increase understanding of the Northern context and encourage relationship building within/outside the sector. The recent Ontario Crafts Council symposium is an example of such
- 1.4 Investigate opportunities for collaborative funding proposals and the establishment of a regional network
- 1.5 Develop an annual recognition program to celebrate volunteers and innovative initiatives.

Community engagement and social capital development

- i) Expand and diversify local and regional networks in further building cross-sectorial support and efficiencies through networks.
- ii) Explore opportunities for regional marketing.

Knowledge mobilization

Partners suggested the peer mentoring process could be used as a model for building sustainability throughout the region as it established critical support through dialoguing, sharing resources and knowledge mobilization in a region that is challenged by geographical distances and contextual differences to southern Ontario.

- 1.1 Establish a meeting schedule for maintaining the peer network and investigate ways of making it sustainable over the long term.
- 1.2 Investigate the possibility of expanding and/or connecting to other peer networks.
- 1.3 Utilize technology to connect and/or deliver capacity building events.
- 1.4 Develop strategic partnerships in furthering advocating locally, regionally and provincially for greater understanding of links between culture and the creation of healthy resilience place-based economies within Northern Ontario's context.

Each organization is working diligently at and/or beyond current capacity in delivering a significant number of cultural products that accrue individual and community benefits. However, time is a factor in sustainability; time must be found to undertake such recommendations. There is opportunity for enabling organizations to work collaboratively in assisting the partners specifically, and the arts sector generally, in generating more value and resilience in addressing Northeastern Ontario's changing demographics and need for creating place-based economies.

6.0 Project Outcomes

The project established a peer mentoring network to share, generate and mobilize knowledge between three very different arts organizations across Northeastern Ontario who had not previously worked together: i) The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District; ii) 4elements Living Arts on Manitoulin

Island; and, iii) Conseil des Arts de Hearst. Overall the project led to strengthening their organizations' management capacity that will advantage them in future operations.

The project allowed the time and space necessary to initiate an internal dialogue within the organizations, as well as amongst community members and mentoring partners. This led to increased organizational capacity, social capital development/community relations and engagement and knowledge mobilization in understanding sustainability within the Northeastern Ontario context. Specifically, the project increased organizational capacity; strengthened community engagement and built social capital and mobilized knowledge in the cultural sector.

Increased Organizational Capacity

The partners gained experience in using various types of technology for training and knowledge mobilization (e.g. Skype, Google Hangout) that assist in mitigating the vast geography of the North.

The project required participants to consolidate and present their past strategic planning documents at the consultation leading one organization to create a colour brochure highlighting their past, current and future activities within their three strategic themes that will now be used to recruit partners, members, sponsors and broader community support.

Creating the Timeline generated knowledge and understanding for staff and new and/or long-time Board and community members about the organizations' history and responses with a community, regional and global context.

The organizations received a profile investigating their sustainability in five key areas: community context and awareness; governance; human resources; financial; and, social capital development/community relations and engagement. The profile provided an external perspective of their current situation based on community consultations facilitated by the Consultant and peer mentoring dialogues. The report provides context for making informed decisions by clarifying their situation, ensuring them that they are on the right path, and/or heading in the proper direction and providing recommendations and action items for strengthening their sustainability.

Community Engagement and Social Capital Development

The partners found the peer network very valuable in analyzing each other's current status within Anglophone and Francophone cultures and small urban, rural and isolated communities that comprise Northern Ontario, further contributing to understanding their organization's sustainability challenges.

The peers discussed the continuing need in the North for working together to advocate and support other organizations, due to the substantial economic challenges facing the region, its low population density, and the vast distances between communities. The organizations committed to further dialoguing in three months' time to discuss their respective progress and ways of assisting funding agencies with a southern Ontario-centric focus to understand Northerners' differing needs.

One organization presented its strategic plan to many new Board members . Another consultation brought together Board and community members and economic developers which strengthened cross-sectoral relationships and expanded local networks leading to increased commitment to the organization’s sustainability by every participant. Additionally, one representative from a key Aboriginal organization expressed an interest in becoming a board member of one of the organizations.

Knowledge Mobilization

The peers shared resources, e.g., market research questionnaires, distribution channels and arts reports; information about current events (theirs and others); sources and feasibility of revenue streams; experience in dealing with funding agencies including challenges in meeting their criteria and potential means of addressing concerns. The exchanges will advantage them in operational relevancy and efficiency.

Participants expressed a desire to continue identifying resources and areas of expertise in assisting the arts community in becoming more sustainable.

Summary

The project assisted three arts organizations in mobilizing knowledge around becoming more sustainable within a Northern context and laid the foundation for continued collaboration. Participants thought this process could be used as a model in building sustainability throughout the region as it established critical peer mentoring support through dialoguing and sharing resources and expertise in a region that is challenged by geographical distances and contextual differences to southern Ontario.

7.0 Conclusions

Arts organizations in Northern Ontario often work in isolation under extremely challenging and taxing conditions. Frequently there is only one arts organizations (if any) serving the community and/or area with little opportunity for sharing. Further limiting development and sustainability is the North’s lack of networks that would facilitate dialogue and support between sectors, locally, in building understanding, strong community partnerships and investment; and, across distance in sharing expertise and generating knowledge relevant to the region. Networks and communication flows between Northern Ontario and the southern part of the province are also lacking thus limiting understanding of the significantly different operating contexts between the regions.

These three organizations demonstrated peer networking to be a cost effective and viable option in supporting organizational capacity development in Northern Ontario. Each organization had expertise in areas where others needed support and dialoging informally over a period of time provided opportunity to share knowledge regarding what did/not work (for them) and ways of meeting various operational requirements through partnership building. Technological connectivity between the communities facilitated linking peers across distance thus building a sense of community and support in weathering changing local and global contexts.

The flexible (more/less people) and dynamic nature (people who know other people) of peer networks enable linking people representative of the diversity of cultures and regions of the North, thus generating and mobilizing knowledge that is relevant and meaningful and providing access to informal learning and resources over the long term. Peer networks also assist in mitigating the challenges outside agencies face when attempting to work regionally without local community contacts. Peer networks not only act as access points but expedite gathering and disseminating knowledge. Thus, strategies that incorporate further development of peer mentoring networks would be beneficial in supporting local and regional capacity building in the culture sector.

References

- Bell, J, & Cornelius, M. (2013). *UnderDeveloped: A National Study of Challenges Facing Non-Profit Fundraising*. San Francisco, CA: CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund
- Broad, G. and Date. S. (2006). *Courageous Lives: A Profile of the Working Poor in Sault Ste. Marie*. Sault Ste. Marie: Algoma University
- Colussi, M. (1999). The community resilience manual: A new resource will link rural revitalization to CED best practices. *Making Waves, 10 (4)*. Port Alberni: Centre for Community Enterprise
- Community Resilience Sault Ste. Marie (2006). *Portrait of Community Resilience of Sault Ste. Marie*. Sault Ste. Marie: Algoma University
- Cultural Careers Council Ontario (2011). *The Mentoring Project: Supporting the Career Development of Artists*. Toronto: Cultural Careers Council Ontario
- Lewis, M. & Lockhart, R.A. (2002). *Performance Measurement, Development Indicators and Aboriginal Economic Development*. Port Alberni: Centre for Community Enterprise
- mDm Consulting (2011). *Fostering Arts at a Local Level: A review of Community Arts Councils in Ontario*. Toronto: Ontario Arts Council
- Ortiz, J (2013 forthcoming) Working title, Doctoral Thesis, University of the West of England, UK
- Ortiz, J. & Broad, G. (2007). *Culture, Creativity and the Arts: Achieving Community Resilience and Sustainability through the Arts in Sault Ste. Marie*. Sault Ste. Marie: Algoma University
- Torjman, S. (2007). *Shared space: The communities agenda*. Ottawa: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy.
- Westley, F., Zimmerman, B., & Patton, M.Quinn. (2006). *Getting to Maybe: How the world is changed*. Random House Canada.
- WolfBrown (2011). Perspectives on Non Profit Strategies from WolfBrown. *Sounding Board*. Vol. 30. Cambridge: USA

Appendix I: Profile of the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District



Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations Through Peer Networking

Profile of the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District

Jude Ortiz, Meghan Ableson, Dr. Gayle Broad

Final Report

April 30, 2013



Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations Through Peer Mentoring

1.0 Background and Context

Northern Ontario communities are experiencing economic and social destabilization due, in part, to the restructuring of resource-extractive industries which have been the foundation of their economies.

NORDIK's research in culture development uncovered significant links between culture, the economy and the creation of healthy, sustainable communities. The arts play an important enabling role in increasing community resilience⁵ through identity formation and sense of belonging, leading to the creation of place-based economies (Ortiz, 2013 forthcoming; Ortiz & Broad, 2007).

The culture sector, however, faces many challenges in developing sustainable livelihoods due, in part, to a lack of local and regional understanding of the sector's importance; limited entrepreneurial and organizational capacity; and a dearth of investment and development strategies relevant to Northern Ontario's context. During the Ontario Crafts Council's recent symposium (November 2011), Reflecting the North: *Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture*⁶, Sophie Edwards, Executive Director of 4elements Living Arts, presented a case for a funding model for Northern arts organizations which would be entirely different from that of the more urban South.

Arts organizations are an important component of Ontario's nonprofit sector, building healthy communities by providing citizens access to services and opportunities that would otherwise not be available⁷. The non-profit sector as a whole is often overlooked in traditional economic development as an effective strategy but, in fact, makes significant contributions and plays an important role in leveraging new monies (Broad & Date, 2004).

Resilience literature identifies organizations as the driving force of the community (Community Resilience Sault Ste. Marie, 2006), and arts councils "have the potential to be an important voice for the arts and culture in their region or local community" (mDm Consulting, 2011:5). Strong arts organizations would mobilize knowledge and support micro-business development, thus advantaging the entire sector.

Organizational sustainability literature revealed key components for sustainable arts organizations included diverse partnerships; relevancy; vibrancy; the ability to capitalize upon products and/or services and manage its resources; and, constant adaptation in meeting changing needs (Torjman, 2007; Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006; WolfBrown, 2011)

In continuing to work with communities in meeting the needs of the culture sector, NORDIK investigated the creation of a peer learning community, a network of peer to peer mentors, to strengthen

⁵ Community Resilience refers to the capacity to adapt, transition and prosper in times of significant change while maintaining core values (Colussi, 2000; Lewis and Lockhart, 2002)

⁶ Reflecting the North: *Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture* (<http://reflectingthenorth.wordpress.com>)

⁷ The Ontario Nonprofit Network (<http://www.theonn.ca>)

organizational capacity. Three arts organizations, the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District, Conseil des Arts de Hearst, and 4elements Living Arts on Manitoulin Island expressed a desire to collaborate and funding was acquired through the Ontario Arts Council's Compass Program in 2012. The research concluded in the fall of 2012.

2.0 Profile of the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District

2.1 Project Background and Context

In recognizing the benefits of networking in sharing resources and generating knowledge, three arts organizations in Northeastern Ontario have partnered to create a geographic peer support network to assist in strengthening the organizations' management capacity leading to more sustainable organizations.

A 'peer learning community' – a peer to peer networking strategy –was chosen based on the recognition that each organization has expertise in one or more areas that would be of value to the others. Given the particular nature of the challenges facing arts organization in the North, 'know how' gained from real life experiences is invaluable. Technology was utilized in connecting the peers across the region, making the network very cost-effective in terms time, resources and the quality of learning.

The three partnering organizations are: i) The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District (the lead); ii) 4elements Living Arts on Manitoulin Island; and, iii) Conseil des Arts de Hearst. This project could be used as a model in assisting other arts organizations in building sustainability throughout the region.

The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District is an umbrella organization, based in the Sault but promotes the arts across the District of Algoma. Its base is primarily Anglophone with strong organizational membership and partnerships. It operates with one full time staff.

4elements Living Arts serves Manitoulin Island and the La Cloche region. The organization primarily works with non-aboriginal people and groups but partners with First Nations and artists to deliver programs to children and adults of non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal heritage. It has no permanent staff but hires the Executive Director and Program Director as funding permits.

Conseil des Arts de Hearst owns and manages the Francophone culture centre in Hearst, a community of approximately 5,000 people with 90% being Francophone. The organization serves other nearby Francophone communities and is surrounded by First Nations. It has four full time staff.

The project was funded by the Ontario Arts Council's (OAC) Compass program dedicated to organizational development. NORDIK Institute, Algoma University's community-based research institute was contracted by the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District (Arts Council) to conduct the research. The research team is comprised of Jude Ortiz, Meghan Ableson and Dr. Gayle Broad.

The project involved working with each organization to undertake three qualitative research activities, leading to the creation of an organizational profile. The data of each organization was then compiled and analysed within a sustainability framework. The three research activities were: i) Review the strategic planning of each organization; ii) Create an organizational timeline; and, iii) Map affiliations,

connections and partnerships. Meetings (using Skype and teleconferencing technology) brought the three organizations together to share their profiles and dialogue about ways of becoming more sustainable.

While the three organizations had never worked together before, NORDIK had worked with each of them on different projects and/or occasions. In collaborating with the organizations NORDIK drew on past research and further mobilized project learnings throughout its local and regional networks and website.

2.2 Methodology

NORDIK launched the project with a Skype meeting between the partners providing a general overview of the project, reviewing the overall goals and the three activities.

A set of pre- and post-project questions were prepared for the organizations to complete as well as a tracking and reflection sheet to capture learnings that will be incorporated into the final report.

Each organization was responsible for recruiting project participants. Each determined which staff, board members and/or local citizens they wished to contribute to the on-site data collection activities and the technology delivered sharing and learning sessions.

The on-site consultations consisted of three activities:

- i) Presentation of the organization's strategic plan (by the organization)
- iii) Creation of the organization's historical timeline
- ii) Affiliations, connections and partnerships mapping

The sessions were audio recorded (in their entirety or portions of the session) and notes were taken.

The data was compiled, analysed and organized within a sustainability framework organized around five key components impacting organizational sustainability and resilience, i.e. its ability to adapt, transition and prosper when faced with change while retaining its core identity (Centre for Community Renewal, 2000).

The five key components are:

6. *Awareness of Environment and Context*
 - Community context , changes and the larger picture
7. *Community Relations and Social Capital Development*
 - Economic Development Partners
 - Educational Partners
 - Partnerships with other arts organizations and artists
 - Community Support
 - Depth and length of relationship

- Number of hosted events
- 8. *Governance*
 - Recruitment and participation of board members
 - Strategic Planning
 - Training
 - Problems and resolutions
- 9. *Financial*
 - Diversity of revenue sources
 - Forecasting accuracy
 - Number of budgets balanced in the last five years
- 10. *Human Resources*
 - Number of staff
 - Skills
 - Depth
 - Opportunities for training and education

Each organization received draft organizational profile report with recommendations to review and provide additional comments and feedback, for incorporation into the final report

The three organizations then gathered for a series of Skype sessions with each organization leading one meeting to present its profile, providing opportunity to share, dialogue, learn from each other, and generate knowledge in discussing ways of becoming more sustainable.

A draft final report reflecting the project findings and learnings will be prepared and provided to each organization for additional comments. Once finalized, each organization will receive a copy and the report will be available through NORDIK’s website.

2.3 Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District Consultation

The consultation with the Arts Council consisted of two separate meetings. At the first meeting, the Executive Director (ED) presented the organization’s strategic plan to Board members and Jude Ortiz.



The second meeting occurred a week later when Jude Ortiz and Meghan Ableson worked with the Executive Director and four Board members in creating the timeline and mapping affiliations, connection and partnerships.

2.4 Sault Ste. Marie Community Context

Sault Ste. Marie is one of five regional centres in Northern Ontario. It is located at the confluence of three Great Lakes and the approximate mid-point in the Trans-Canada highway, on Highway 17. It is situated 300 kilometers west of Sudbury and 700 kilometers south east of Thunder Bay. Sault Ste. Marie is also a border town, with a twin city of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan USA accessible by the International Bridge over the St. Mary's River.

The 2011 Census reports a population of 75,000, which is an increase from the 2006 Census, despite perceptions that Sault Ste. Marie is declining in population. As with many northern communities, its population is aging. Many rural communities in the outlying areas of the City rely on Sault Ste. Marie for employment, shopping and recreation. The First Nations communities of Garden River and Batchawana also border the City.

The largest employer in Sault Ste. Marie is Essar Steel Algoma, employing 2500-3000 people. Forestry, another major industry is suffering with the closure of St. Mary's Paper, another large employer in the city. In the last twenty years the City has seen some changes in new industries moving into Sault Ste. Marie. The Ontario Lottery and Gaming (OLG) moved to the city in 1991 and about 1500 people have become employed in call centres. More recently the City has self-identified itself as the Renewable Energy Capital of North America and a number of energy-related businesses and initiatives have been undertaken.

Culture and Arts Context:

Sault Ste. Marie offers many high quality cultural attractions such as the Canadian Bushplane Heritage Centre, Parks Canada Historic Canal, the Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Centre, Art Gallery of Algoma and the 49th Field Regiment Museum.

The City has the largest number of community theatre groups per capita in Canada and the Algoma Conservatory of Music is the second largest in Ontario and annually hosts a world class performance series. The community has a diversity of arts organizations, with the Sault Potters Guild being one of the longest standing pottery guilds in the province.

Sault Ste. Marie was one of the first in Ontario to establish an arts council, The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District in 1978, and a Cultural Policy in 1991. The policy is reviewed periodically during a forum to gather community input.

The City's recreational opportunities are high quality as well. Within its limits Hiawatha Park provides hiking, swimming and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing; and the recently constructed John Rowswell Hub trail is a non-motorized 22 km route, passing through suburban neighbourhoods, park areas and the St. Mary's River. The Sault is noted for easy access to eco-tourism, Lake Superior Provincial Park, Agawa Canyon Train Tour and Searchmont Resort offering year round activities, particularly downhill skiing.

2.5 Organizational awareness of environment and context

Sustainable organizations understand the local and global context of the community in which they are embedded and respond to changing community needs while keeping to their mandate (Torjman, 2007; Westley, Zimmerman & Patton, 2007; WolfBrown, 2011).

The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District perceives itself as lacking in community awareness. The community awareness that does exist, suggests that the public feels the Arts Council is performance arts heavy and needs to include more visual arts, whereas in the past, this perception was reversed.

The organization has identified the need for promotion and building initiatives particularly within the business sector (see Economic Development partners).

Now that the Arts Council has recently made its master calendar available online, community organizations can take the lead in posting their events and activities. This will reduce staffing demands while increasing operational efficiency.

In efforts to stay current and to keep the community informed of the work of the organization, the Arts Council has begun using Facebook and Twitter accounts. As well, there is now a target audience friendly website for Over the Rainbow, a children's entertainment series. With this new method of communication comes the need for regular maintenance of these accounts as well as the development of policies and procedures with regard to social media.

The Arts Council has been involved in advertising and coordinating the past two reviews of the City of Sault Ste. Marie's Cultural Policy on behalf of the Cultural Advisory Board. This has provided the organization with first-hand insights of the community's perspective of the Policy as well as other arts related issues that arose during the consultations.

In response to the needs of the Batchawana Bay Artist Guild (BBAG), the Arts Council mentored the Guild's members in forming their new non-profit organization. This has resulted in a strong relationship between the two organizations. BBAG is an Arts Council member and keeps it well informed of activities north of Sault Ste. Marie.

In 2009 the Arts Council began working with a group that later became the Community Arts Coalition (CAC) to determine the feasibility of creating a cultural arts centre with performance and storage space. The report for this project has recently been completed.

More recently the Circle of Creative Arts (COCA) partnership has proven to be mutually beneficial in raising both organizations' profiles with COCA providing a creation space and exhibition venue for arts events.

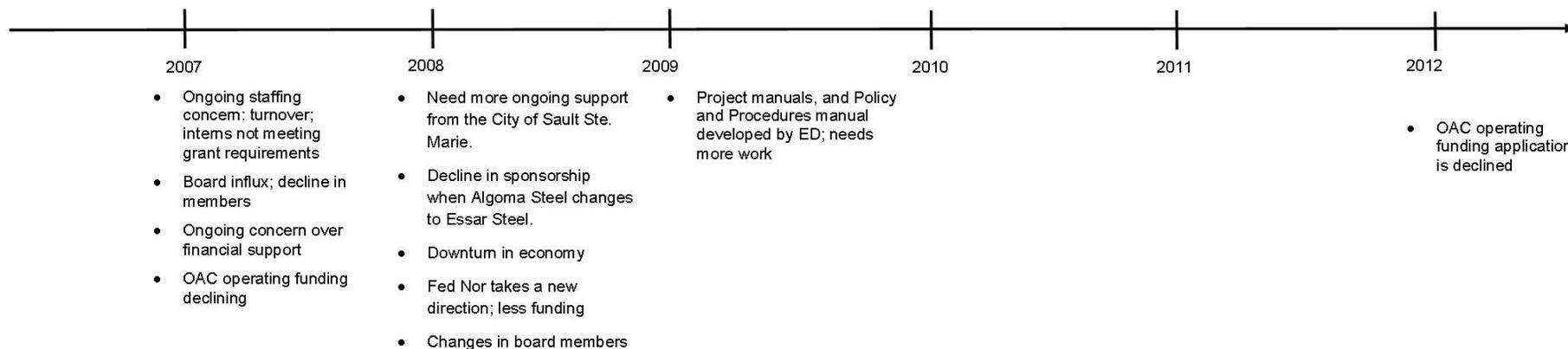
2.6 Timeline

Participants mapped events that have impacted the organization over the past five years, from 2007-2012. Positive events appear above the line, those that were negative below the line and neutral events



or those that were positive and negative appear on the line. Two key events in 2007 were the acquisition of a stable office space and the hiring of the current Executive Director.

Prior to 2007:	2007:	2008:	2009:	2010:	2011:	2012:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art in the Park: started by AAS; AC took over in 2003; 2005-2008 decline in vendors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandra Houston new Executive Director • ED begins bringing in grant funding • Trillium funding three year • Volunteers— ongoing. Both positive and negative. • Stable office space • Ongoing aboriginal connection and partnership with First Nations organizations • Culture, Creativity and the Arts report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the Rainbow project rebirth and audience development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sault College student placements begin • AITP increased vendors • Art in the Parking Lot starts • Interest in creating an arts centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOHFC youth interns begin; positive staffing • Circle of Creative Arts— partnership annual poetry night and AITP preview exhibition show • Wall of posters displayed on AC window • Creation of Coalition for Arts Centre • Zombie Walk begins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Nation representation on Board • Increase in membership • NORDIK Institute/OCC Art Symposium takes place. Serves as an opportunity for networking and showcasing artists. • ARTiculations circulation increased; layout improved; colour added; increased advertising revenues • Métis Nation Ontario staffing option starts • CESD/AU student placements begin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memberships now available online. • New Over the Rainbow Website



2.7 Community relations and social capital development

Sustainable organizations have developed strong networks of social relations (social capital) enabling them to respond to change; extend their operations through mutually beneficial partnerships that advance profiles and share risks; gather and disseminate information; and, collectively advocate for change (Torjman, 2007; Westley, Zimmerman & Patton, 2007).

Economic Development Partners

Economic development partners create important relationships in linking culture to the economy thus raising the importance of the arts in diversifying and building local economies. The arts inform development through understanding of place and economic development initiatives foster culture-based livelihoods (Hume, 2009; Ortiz & Broad, 2007).

The Arts Council has identified the need to strengthen relationships with the business sector in general and the following four organizations in particular: i) Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation; Chamber of Commerce; Essar Centre; and, Physician Recruitment Group.

Although the Arts Council has partnered with the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation to host professional development workshops for visual artists the ties between the two organizations are not well developed.

The Arts Council organizes the art component at the Chamber of Commerce's annual Outdoor Show, however reciprocal promotion is limited. As **a Chamber member** the organization would hope to be continually promoted, directing citizens and tourists alike to its office and/or website.

Arts Council would like to work more closely with the Essar Centre (the downtown sports and entertainment centre) for example, by posting its events on the Arts Council's two year calendar and keeping it up to date through more direct communications.

The Physician Recruitment Group aims to attract physicians to the community and the Arts Council has identified the need to further promote the City's cultural assets in the bid to secure much needed health care professionals.

Educational Partnerships

Educational partners link culture to human resource development. Artists in schools add significant value in increasing students' and teachers' creative capacity, and, arts organizations provide training and leadership opportunities for students to apply educational learnings in practical situations (ArtsSmarts, 2007, 2006).

Student placements with Sault College, Algoma University and various high schools have proven to be mutually beneficial and further raised the organization's profile and contribution to the community.

Partnerships with other arts organizations and artists

Culture partnerships strengthen sector development through supporting others' initiatives, thus building capacity and raising the collective profile of the arts. Collaboration assists in leveraging individual and organizational assets in identifying and meeting the sector, as well as the broader community's, needs (Duxbury & Campbell, 2009).

The Arts Council is part of a Northern presenters' network called Northern Ontario Circuit providing joint planning in bringing Over the Rainbow's children entertainers to the member communities.

The organization has a partnership with the relatively new Coalition for an Arts Centre, a non-profit organization seeking to develop a performing and creative arts centre in the city.

The organization has a long partnership with the Arts Network of Children and Youth (ANCY) that has been relatively low key. However, this year the Arts Council provided space and guidance to the youth coordinator hired by ANCY for the National Youth Arts Week, a series of arts events targeted to engage youth.

The Twin Sault International Committee that began in 2010, as a partnership intended to promote arts events in and between the two cities is now considered a 'dwindling partnership'. Sault Canada's representatives from the Arts Council and broader arts community found it difficult to dedicate the time to travel to the US to meet and plan in addition to their very busy schedules and various other commitments.

The organizations' multi-year partnership with Rotary Fest has changed this year from organizing artist displays to coordinating the Stage One Music, considerably raising their visibility through signage and acknowledgement throughout the three day event.

This year the organization will partner with the Art Gallery of Algoma and the Sault Ste. Marie Public Library in organizing an event for Ontario Arts Council's Culture Days to be held in September.

The Arts Council is hosting an increasing number of activities in partnership with the Circle of Creative Arts which have assisted in raising the visibility of both organizations.

There is reciprocity between the Arts Council and Alberta House, in Sault Ste. Marie Michigan through membership in each other's organization. Each organization posts the others' area events in their respective newsletters in promoting arts activities across borders.

ARTiculations, the Arts Council's newsletter, also includes members' activities that span the District of Algoma, from Wawa to the North Shore of Lake Huron to Elliot Lake.

The Arts Council has a number of designated seats on the Kiwanis Community Theatre Centre Board and for the past two consultations has organized the Cultural Advisory Board's public review of the City's Cultural Policy.

The majority of the Arts Council's social capital has been built through the function of being a long standing arts council with a stable office location. Over the years the organization has established many local relationships primarily, but not limited to the culture sector, through its operations. Thus the lines between providing services as an Arts Council and formal partnerships is somewhat blurred. For example, the organization coordinates art displays in a few downtown offices as a complimentary service to businesses; partners with the Downtown Business Association during Downtown Days; hosts events at the Circle for Creative Arts and the Grand Theatre; provides a ticket sales outlet for some theatre groups; hands out flyers for other members' arts events; sends out Public Service Announcements for members; and promotes the arts through articles and advertisements in ARTiculations.

Community Support

Community partnerships assist in embedding the arts into the broader community. Local support provides opportunities for fostering cross sectorial relations in building and celebrating local culture and community identity (Duxbury & Campbell, 2009).

The Arts Council has a number of community partners that support the organization through donations and sponsorships. Although support has declined over the years as a result of the downturn in the economy and changes in business ownership, they have long-time volunteers who are dedicated and able to solicit funds for particular programs on an annual basis, for such as, Over the Rainbow a children's entertainment series, and Big Ticket Bonanza draws for grouping of free theatre tickets, dinners, hotel accommodations and other services at local businesses.

A relatively new donor is a family-owned and operated Italian Restaurant, Cesira's that offers discounts to patrons who dine there prior to attending arts events and donate a \$1.00 from each dinner sold to the Arts Council that goes toward general operations.

The Arts Council's membership is increasing and includes individuals, organizations, business and institutions from across the Algoma District and a few in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, USA. They have noted that although they do have members of First Nation and Francophone descent, there is room for growth with the understanding that their services/profile may need to change to attract broader demographics.

Depth and length of relationships

As mentioned, the Arts Council has a number of long standing relationships within the culture sector. Partnerships with the Downtown Association, Rotary Fest and (more recently) New to the Sault extend their presence into the business sector and broader community.

The organization has participated in a number of committees within the culture sector and has represented the arts community on other boards, for example NORDIK Institute's Community Resilience Sault Ste. Marie, a committee comprised of representatives from across community sectors.

Number of hosted events

The below list is representative of the types of events undertaken by the organization in which the organization was the sole and/or lead organization.

Services:

- ARTiculations publication: circulation of 700 with an average of 24 pages as well as paid advertising inserts each month; distributed eleven times a year; newsletter; promoting member activities and events; mailed to members and distributed throughout the city to hotels and selected businesses. In the past it was available on the organization's website as a download. This will be included on the website again this year with the help of an Algoma University student placement who will be archiving ARTiculations and setting up links to member websites.
- Applause publication: circulation of 1500 to 3000; every September; listing the community's performance program schedule for the year; distributed through mailings and hand delivered in Sault Canada and Sault Michigan
- Public Service Announcements (PSAs) weekly; compiles and sends to media; has recently resumed sending an e-blast to members that highlights certain events. The Sault Star, (daily newspaper) carries an arts events column based on the organization's submission.
- Arts and Heritage Directory (2009); annual
- Rotary Fest: changes annually; most recently organized local musicians for three day event.
- Art in buildings: 5 years; on-going; arranges for artists to exhibit in specific office/restaurants.
- Ticket sales for other organizations: on-going; primarily theatre events.
- Advice, referrals, resource centre: on-going; assists member and non-member individuals, artists and groups; in-person, via telephone and/or email.

Producing and Presenting:

Producing:

- Art in the Park: 12 years; annual 1 day event; began with visual artists and now extends to music and has a more festival feel
- Art in the Parking Lot: 4 years; annual 1 day event; emerging visual artists held day prior to Art in the Park
- Art in the Park Preview exhibition: 3 years; annual; began with 1 night preview and now 2-3 day exhibition
- Author and Poetry Reading series: 3 years; annual; number of events varies each year but is generally increasing

Presenting:

- Over the Rainbow: 5 years; annual series of five-1 evening events; this year there will be 6-1 evening entertainers

Programming (funding dependent so varies each year)

- New Horizons: 2 years; seniors teaching arts and crafts to new learners; applied for another grant to work with seniors and youth again this year.
- Zombie Walk (2010); annual

2.8 Governance

Effective boards provide strong leadership demonstrating collective capacity and efficacy in addressing the organization's governance needs within the range of its current activities and future directions (WolfBrown, 2011).

Recruitment and participation of board members

The Arts Council does not have a formalized recruitment process occasionally resulting in Board members' extending invitations prior to assessing governance competency needs and/or the candidate's capacity to commit time and energy to the organization given their other duties and responsibilities.

Succession planning for Board and staff is of high priority for the Arts Council particularly since the Board is currently rebuilding and the Executive Director and longtime Board President are both considering retirement within the next few years.

New Board members receive a binder of materials as part of their orientation, but time to review and discuss its contents is limited.

Strategic Planning

The Arts Council undertakes regular strategic planning sessions. However, finding preparatory time and engaging Board members has proved challenging. Scheduling is a concern for a large Board and the organization has mentioned that members join for various reasons and some may not consider governance in general and strategic planning, specifically, to be a priority.

Training

Training opportunities are limited and dependent upon funding.

Problems and resolutions

Prior to 2007, the Arts Council underwent a period of mismanagement resulting in the loss of Board members, staff and its small surplus.

In 2010 the Board was increased to fifteen members in an effort to gain more support but it has not ameliorated the difficulties around recruitment, participation and engagement.

The Board currently faces a number of on-going challenges around recruitment processes, roles and responsibilities, commitment and engagement, evaluation and allotting time for strategic planning.

The term “District” in the organization’s legal name is hindering funding and causing confusion both within the organization, arts community and the community at large regarding its boundaries and responsibilities in serving the area.

The need to develop consistent messaging that succinctly captures the organization’s role and activities has been acknowledged as a need. The organization is currently functioning in all three categories of art service organizations: i) Service; ii) Producing and Presenting; and, iii) Programming.

In the last five years the Executive Director has successfully worked to develop operational manuals for projects, such Art in the Park, Art in the Parking Lot and Public Service Announcements. There is an acknowledged need to develop more resources as well as update the Policy and Procedure Manual to assist Board members and staff in understanding operations and improving accountability and efficiency.

2.9 Financing

Sustainable organizations have diversified revenue sources, accurate forecasting and the capacity to balance budgets (WolfBrown, 2011).

Diversity of revenue sources

The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District received operational funding from two main sources to which they apply annually: i) the Ontario Arts Council; and ii) the Cultural Advisory Board of Sault Ste. Marie.

Recently the Ontario Arts Council funding has been declining and this year marks the first that the organization will not receive any financial support. Given that the OAC grants operate on a three year funding cycle the Arts Council will not be able to reapply until 2015.

The OAC raised the follow concerns:

- Programming is not unique and/or meeting the needs and diversity of the ‘District’, particularly the First Nation communities;
- Programming focuses on the community rather than professional artists
- Fragmented organization; trying to do too much without sufficient resources
- Lack of paid training for staff

The Arts Council suggests that in Sault Ste. Marie, and generally speaking, across Northern Ontario the arts play more of a community development role. There are very few professional artists and the organization sees the best way to support and encourage them is through community activities.

In the past the Board has expressed a desire to continue with similar programming. The Arts Council states that all its programs are open to everyone regardless of heritage and sometimes aboriginal people choose to participate in some activities and not others. The same applies to developing partnerships with First Nation organizations. Partnership invitations have been extended but aboriginal organizations often have their own programs and/or staffing limitations and launching new ones may not be a priority.

With regard to paid training for staff, which would likely be offered out of town, the organization finds it challenging to provide opportunities due to financial limitations and the reality that the Arts Council has one full time staff with the remaining positions filled through youth internships and/or students.

Other funding sources are on a project to project basis and include Canada Heritage (Over the Rainbow and New Horizons); Ontario Trillium Foundation (equipment and projects), Sault Ste. Marie's Community Development Corporation and the Ontario Arts Council.

Sponsorships are another source of revenue for the organization. However, this income fluctuates as the economy and/or businesses change. For example, the recent change of ownership in Algoma Steel has seen the company supporting different initiatives and, to date, the Arts Council has not received funding from them.

Sponsorship and donations solicited for Over the Rainbow, the children's entertainment series, have been consistently very successful. Art in the Park and Art in the Parking Lot sponsorships have also held their own with the City of Sault Ste. Marie contributing twice as much this year to Art in the Parking Lot.

Membership sales bring in revenue and the Arts Council has seen an increase in sales since 2011. New in 2012, memberships are now available online which streamlines the process and may raise membership sales further. Membership categories are individual, artist, and group which includes institutions.

The main fundraising event is the Big Ticket Bonanza, (draws for grouping of free theatre tickets, dinners, hotel accommodations and other services at local businesses) which covers the cost of printing and postage for two publications: Articulations, the monthly newsletter and Applause Magazine listing the city's theatre and musical productions for the current season.

FedNor and Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) have funded youth internships over the past three years. Recently, FedNor has taken a new direction which has limited the type of internships available; however, NOHFC remains a strong supporter.

Securing affordable office space in 2007 was a great milestone for the organization providing a constant, accessible location in a busy downtown professional office building. The owner receives a cash payment and a tax receipt, making a larger space affordable and creating a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Securing ongoing grant-based financial support is difficult hence the organization is looking for ways to survive without relying as heavily on this revenue stream. There are discussions around placing the organization's name on bequest lists as another source of income.

Forecasting accuracy

The Arts Council has been very careful in budgeting in the past five years and has always come in under budget. As the ED applies for grants sometimes six months in advance, it is hard to forecast which grants will be received. In the past five years the organization has been fortunate to receive most of the grants that have been applied for.

Number of balanced budgets in the last five years

In the past five years the Arts Council has ended with a small surplus in four years and incurred a minor deficit in one year. The organization's accountant has explained to the Board that Arts Council is operating as a not-for-profit organization should – i.e. not make a profit but spend what is brought in. However, non-profits must find ways to generate and retain surpluses to weather unforeseen circumstances and uncertain times. Establishing a Foundation is one avenue other non-profit organizations have pursued in this effort.

2.10 Human Resources

Sustainable organizations have skilled human resources (staff and volunteers) to meet organizational needs and training opportunities to continuously keep pace with technological and social changes and educational advancements in addressing opportunities and challenges (WolfBrown, 2011).

Number of staff

The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District employs one full time staff, the Executive Director. The current ED has been with the organization for five years and is looking to retire in the near future, making succession planning a priority.

As the ED's position currently stands, it is very demanding due, in part, to the sheer volume and diversity of work and variety of skills needed in delivering in all three areas of art service organization's operations that the Arts Council is currently engaged: i) Services; ii) Producing and Presenting; and, iii) Programming. The ED routinely works more than 40 hours per week volunteering additional hours in keeping the organization afloat. Little time is available for reflection.

Staffing includes youth internship positions (12 month duration) and summer positions funded primarily through NOHFC and Summer Jobs programs, respectively. Recently, the organization has utilized a number of other staffing options including the Métis Nation of Ontario, Sault College student work placements, Algoma University's Community Economic and Social Development program's student work placements, and high school volunteer hours.

Although interns bring significant skill and value to the organization, they are transient, typically funded for one year at a time. This results in high staff turnover and loss of organizational memory. The continual recruitment and training of these temporary workers diverts the ED's time away from her core duties.

Volunteer recruitment continues to be a priority as more active volunteers are needed and longtime volunteers may be looking at retirement soon. Currently there is no volunteer recruitment processes or policies in place, few training opportunities and no recognition. There are ongoing issues with volunteers around inconsistencies in their level of commitment to events, capacity to contribute in targeted areas, organizational knowledge and liability issues. There was discussion around the benefits/limitations of instituting a volunteer policy formally outlining each volunteer's commitment.

Skills

The ED has a strong financial background which has greatly contributed to getting the organization into a financially sound position.

Over the course of her term, the ED's grant writing and managerial capacity has increased, specifically around matching staffing applications to specific organizational needs, resulting in hiring employees with targeted outcomes. However, due to general staffing shortages interns who, for example, are hired to focus on marketing opportunities, are recruited to take up daily operational duties.

Depth

Since there is only one full time position, depth is dependent on the capacities of causal staff and/or volunteers who may/not have the skills to handle opportunities or challenges as they arise.

Opportunities for training and education

The ED has few, if any, opportunities for training and education primarily due to finances and the reality that should the ED take time off there is no other staff to take over.

Since the ED's time is at a premium there is limited time for interns and students to receive training as part of their educational experience.

2.11 Summary

In the organization's life-cycle the Arts Council is currently on an upswing but is impeded by a number of on-going challenges. Central is understanding the organization; its geographical boundaries, mandate and ways the mandate is operationalized and communicated both internally and within the broader community. Clarity in these areas would greatly increase the Arts Council's ability to attract and recruit Board members, staff and volunteers, set strategic priorities and raise its profile by projecting a consistent image thereby increasing its potential for financial stability through targeted funding applications, fundraising events, sponsors and members.

The Arts Council has a number of new relationships upon which to build and longer term ones to revisit in developing its strategic plan to raise its profile as the voice of the arts and culture community. Many of the organization's existing partners are within the culture sector and there is opportunity to link

across sectors in developing greater community awareness, understanding and support, both locally and beyond Sault Ste. Marie.

The loss of the organization's financial buffer places it in a very precarious position. Organizations, non-profit or otherwise, need contingency funds in meeting unexpected expenses and/or periods of low revenue. Although non-profit organizations cannot distribute surplus revenues as profit or dividends it is able to build a surplus over time in meeting its goals.

Establishing manageable workloads and efficient operating procedures is important in maintaining current staff and volunteers and attracting new recruits. More volunteers are needed in general and long-standing volunteers may be considering retiring. The ED has also stated her intent to retire in the near future. Should many people leave in quick succession the organization may suffer organizational memory loss and capacity.

The creation of operating guides and the ongoing updating of the Policy and Procedure Manual have improved operational efficiency for staff, volunteers and Board members in carrying out duties.

2.12 Recommendations

Community Relations and Social Capital Development

1. Strengthen relationships within the culture sector and expand cross-sectoral local and regional partnerships and networks:
 - a. Identify partnerships opportunities with businesses and organizations that align with the Arts Council's mandate, role and key messaging.
 - b. Create a plan for fostering closer relations and understanding in promoting the organization, specifically, and the arts community generally with the: i) Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation; ii) Chamber of Commerce; iii) Essar Centre; and, iv) Physician Recruitment Group.

Governance

1. Review legal obligations regarding the term "District" and define operational and service boundaries:
 - a. Identify strategies in meeting obligations in ways that generate revenue streams
2. Support upcoming strategic planning session:
 - a. Identify feasibility and priorities of current operations within Services, Producing and Presenting and Programming deliverables and create a strategic plan that prioritizes core aspects

3. Strengthen the Board's understanding and unity:
 - a. Create branding, key messaging and a communications strategy articulating the organization's profile within and beyond the culture sector in ways that are meaningful to other sectors (e.g. economic, social, environmental)
4. Build Board capacity:
 - a. Create a Board recruitment process and package that includes an invitation to meet with the organization in assessing benefits of joining, for both the candidate and the Arts Council; targeted promotional material to familiarize the candidate with the organization; options for participation; expectations and anticipated time commitment; board responsibilities, duties and evaluation criteria
 - b. Establish Board orientation sessions for new members joining mid-term as well as after the AGM
 - c. Implement a Board evaluation process to support and review members' engagement and progress in meeting strategic objectives
5. Ensure the Board is working to its maximum competency and as a unified board:
 - a. Conduct a needs assessment and support members in accessing training through local and/or distance opportunities. For example other organizations' workshop speakers; the Social Economy Series (<http://socialeconomyhub.ca/>); NORDIK Institute workshops and training (onsite/ on distance).
6. Create a succession plan for replacing long standing Board Chair, Executive Director and volunteers

Financial

1. Increase the number and diversity of revenue sources:
 - a. Launch a sponsorship campaign within and beyond the culture sector by identifying current and potential relationships that align key messaging with local and regional business profiles
 - b. Create a promotional campaign attract individual and business donations and bequests
2. Capitalize upon the growing membership trend:
 - a. Identify member benefits and launch a membership campaign across sectors and within and beyond Sault Ste. Marie
3. Maximize limited resources:
 - a. Prioritize fundraising activities in relation to return on investment (e.g. financial and organizational profile)
 - b. Identify potentially more profitable fundraising activities with and/or without community partners within/outside of culture sector

4. Reduce operational costs, primarily associated with publications:
 - a. Re-cavass members regarding their preference of receiving electronic or print copies of publications ensuring e-copies include paid advertising inserts
5. Establish a plan that will, over time, rebuild the organization's contingency fund

Human Resources

1. Reduce workload, stress and potential burn out:
 - a. Increase efficiency and streamline operations by aligning human resources (functions, job descriptions, workloads) and explore utilizing technology to maximize personnel; and/or reduce functions to meet capacity levels
2. Create a succession plan for the ED
3. Create a volunteer recruitment and orientation process and a recognition program.
4. Prioritize the development of operational guides
5. Continue updating the Policy and Procedure Manual

3.0 Project Outcomes

The project established a peer mentoring network to share, generate and mobilize knowledge between three very different arts organizations across Northeastern Ontario who had not previously worked together: i) The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District; ii) 4elements Living Arts on Manitoulin Island; and, iii) Conseil des Arts de Hearst. Overall the project led to strengthening their organizations' management capacity that will advantage them in future operations.

The project allowed the time and space necessary to initiate an internal dialogue within the organizations, as well as amongst community members and mentoring partners. This led to increased organizational capacity, social capital development/community relations and engagement and knowledge mobilization in understanding sustainability within the Northeastern Ontario context. Specifically, the project increased organizational capacity; strengthened community engagement and built social capital and mobilized knowledge in the cultural sector.

Increased Organizational Capacity

The partners gained experience in using various types of technology for training and knowledge mobilization (e.g. Skype, Google Hangout) that assist in mitigating the vast geography of the North.

The project required participants to consolidate and present their past strategic planning documents at the consultation leading one organization to create a colour brochure highlighting their past, current and future activities within their three strategic themes that will now be used to recruit partners, members, sponsors and broader community support.

Creating the Timeline generated knowledge and understanding for staff and new and/or long-time Board and community members about the organizations' history and responses with a community, regional and global context.

The organizations received a profile investigating their sustainability in five key areas: community context and awareness; governance; human resources; financial; and, social capital development/community relations and engagement. The profile provided an external perspective of their current situation based on community consultations facilitated by the Consultant and peer mentoring dialogues. The report provides context for making informed decisions by clarifying their situation, ensuring them that they are on the right path, and/or heading in the proper direction and providing recommendations and action items for strengthening their sustainability.

Community Engagement and Social Capital Development

The partners found the peer network very valuable in analyzing each other's current status within Anglophone and Francophone cultures and small urban, rural and isolated communities that comprise Northern Ontario, further contributing to understanding their organization's sustainability challenges.

The peers discussed the continuing need in the North for working together to advocate and support other organizations, due to the substantial economic challenges facing the region, its low population density, and the vast distances between communities. The organizations committed to further dialoguing in three months' time to discuss their respective progress and ways of assisting funding agencies with a southern Ontario-centric focus to understand Northerners' differing needs.

One organization presented its strategic plan to many new Board members . Another consultation brought together Board and community members and economic developers which strengthened cross-sectoral relationships and expanded local networks leading to increased commitment to the organization's sustainability by every participant. Additionally, one representative from a key Aboriginal organization expressed an interest in becoming a board member of one of the organizations.

Knowledge Mobilization

The peers shared resources, e.g., market research questionnaires, distribution channels and arts reports; information about current events (theirs and others); sources and feasibility of revenue streams; experience in dealing with funding agencies including challenges in meeting their criteria and potential means of addressing concerns. The exchanges will advantage them in operational relevancy and efficiency.

Participants expressed a desire to continue identifying resources and areas of expertise in assisting the arts community in becoming more sustainable.

Summary

The project assisted three arts organizations in mobilizing knowledge around becoming more sustainable within a Northern context and laid the foundation for continued collaboration. Participants

thought this process could be used as a model in building sustainability throughout the region as it established critical peer mentoring support through dialoguing and sharing resources and expertise in a region that is challenged by geographical distances and contextual differences to southern Ontario.

References

- ArtsSmarts (2006). *Engaged in Learning: The Arts Smarts Model*. Ottawa: ArtsSmarts
- ArtsSmarts (2007) *Building Arts Smarts' Research Capacity: Interim Report*. Ottawa: ArtsSmarts
- Bell, J, & Cornelius, M. (2013). *UnderDeveloped: A National Study of Challenges Facing Non-Profit Fundraising*. San Francisco, CA: CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund
- Broad, G. and Date. S. (2006). *Courageous Lives: A Profile of the Working Poor in Sault Ste. Marie*. Sault Ste. Marie: Algoma University
- Colussi, M. (1999). The community resilience manual: A new resource will link rural revitalization to CED best practices. *Making Waves, 10 (4)*. Port Alberni: Centre for Community Enterprise
- Community Resilience Sault Ste. Marie (2006). *Portrait of Community Resilience of Sault Ste. Marie*. Sault Ste. Marie: Algoma University
- Cultural Careers Council Ontario (2011). *The Mentoring Project: Supporting the Career Development of Artists*. Toronto: Cultural Careers Council Ontario
- Duxbury, N. and Campbell, H. (2009). Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities through Arts and Culture. *Small Cities Imprint*. Vol. 3 (2011) No. 1, pp. 111-132
- Hume, G. (2009) The Arts: And Creative Communities in Canada. *Municipal World*. Vol. 116. No 9: 9-12
- Lewis, M. & Lockhart, R.A. (2002). *Performance Measurement, Development Indicators and Aboriginal Economic Development*. Port Alberni: Centre for Community Enterprise
- mDm Consulting (2011). *Fostering Arts at a Local Level: A review of Community Arts Councils in Ontario*. Toronto: Ontario Arts Council
- Ortiz, J (2013 forthcoming) Working title, Doctoral Thesis, University of the West of England, UK
- Ortiz, J. & Broad, G. (2007). *Culture, Creativity and the Arts: Achieving Community Resilience and Sustainability through the Arts in Sault Ste. Marie*. Algoma University: Sault Ste. Marie
- Torjman, S. (2007). *Shared space: The communities agenda*. Ottawa: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy.
- Westley, F., Zimmerman, B., & Patton, M.Quinn. (2006). *Getting to Maybe: How the world is changed*. Random House Canada.

Appendix I

Current		
Funders	Partners	Community Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Canada: summer students • Canadian Heritage (Over the Rainbow) • City of Sault Ste. Marie: CAB funding • Ontario Arts Council: operational, project, publishing • Ontario Trillium: past operational; project; equipment • Métis Association of Ontario: staffing • NOHFC: staffing • CDC (LIF) project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts Network of Children and Youth (ANCY): National Youth Arts Week • Alberta House (USA): info sharing • LSSU: Twin Sault International Committee • Northern Ontario Circuit for Over the Rainbow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local fundraising donations/ sponsorships; large and small businesses; cash and in-kind • Cesira's: offers discounts for guests who dine there before attending an AC event and AC receives donation) • Memberships: individual organizational and institutional • Cultural Advisory Board: assists with review of cultural policy • Kiwanis Community Theater Centre: # of designated AC reps on KCTC board • Coalition for Arts Centre • Sault College: staffing and Zombie Walk-related Continuing Education classes • CESD program, Algoma University: staffing • Art Gallery of Algoma-various • SSM Public Library-various • Circle of Creative Arts: joint hosting • Rotary Fest: AC arranges Stage One music • NORDIK Institute-various • Downtown Association:

		<p>chalk walk during Downtown Days</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bryan Hayes' office: AC arranged office art • Station Mall (provided space in the past) • Donations; bequests • Batchawana Arts Guild • Algoma District School Board • Huron Superior District Catholic School Board • Grand Theatre-hosting venue • Sault Theater Workshop: AC sells tickets for STW • Algoma Arts Society • Parks Canada • Wabi Sabi: AC promotes; WS purchases ads • Sylvan Circle: AC promotes • Fall festival: AC promotes • Algoma Conservatory: AC promotes • Musical Comedy Guild: AC promotes • New to the Sault: info sharing
--	--	---

Appendix II: Profile of Conseil des Arts de Hearst



Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations Through Peer Networking

Profile of Conseil des Arts de Hearst

Jude Ortiz, Meghan Ableson, Dr. Gayle Broad

Final Report

April 30, 2013



Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations Through Peer Mentoring

1.0 Background and Context

Northern Ontario communities are experiencing economic and social destabilization due, in part, to the restructuring of resource-extractive industries which have been the foundation of their economies.

NORDIK's research in culture development uncovered significant links between culture, the economy and the creation of healthy, sustainable communities. The arts play an important enabling role in increasing community resilience⁸ through identity formation and sense of belonging, leading to the creation of place-based economies (Ortiz, 2013 forthcoming; Ortiz & Broad, 2007).

The culture sector, however, faces many challenges in developing sustainable livelihoods due, in part, to a lack of local and regional understanding of the sector's importance; limited entrepreneurial and organizational capacity; and a dearth of investment and development strategies relevant to Northern Ontario's context. During the Ontario Crafts Council's recent symposium (November 2011), Reflecting the North: *Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture*⁹, Sophie Edwards, Executive Director of 4elements Living Arts, presented a case for a funding model for Northern arts organizations which would be entirely different from that of the more urban South.

Arts organizations are an important component of Ontario's nonprofit sector, building healthy communities by providing citizens access to services and opportunities that would otherwise not be available¹⁰. The non-profit sector as a whole is often overlooked in traditional economic development as an effective strategy but, in fact, makes significant contributions and plays an important role in leveraging new monies (Broad & Date, 2004).

Resilience literature identifies organizations as the driving force of the community (Community Resilience Sault Ste. Marie, 2006), and arts councils "have the potential to be an important voice for the arts and culture in their region or local community" (mDm Consulting, 2011:5). Strong arts organizations would mobilize knowledge and support micro-business development, thus advantaging the entire sector.

Organizational sustainability literature revealed key components for sustainable arts organizations included diverse partnerships; relevancy; vibrancy; the ability to capitalize upon products and/or services and manage its resources; and, constant adaptation in meeting changing needs (Torjman, 2007; Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006; WolfBrown, 2011)

In continuing to work with communities in meeting the needs of the culture sector, NORDIK investigated the creation of a peer learning community, a network of peer to peer mentors, to strengthen

⁸ Community Resilience refers to the capacity to adapt, transition and prosper in times of significant change while maintaining core values (Colussi, 2000; Lewis and Lockhart, 2002)

⁹ Reflecting the North: *Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture* (<http://reflectingthenorth.wordpress.com>)

¹⁰ The Ontario Nonprofit Network (<http://www.theonn.ca>)

organizational capacity. Three arts organizations, the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District, Conseil des Arts de Hearst, and 4elements Living Arts on Manitoulin Island expressed a desire to collaborate and funding was acquired through the Ontario Arts Council's Compass Program in 2012. The research concluded in the fall of 2012.

2.0 Profile of Conseil des Arts de Hearst

2.1 Project Background and Context

In recognizing the benefits of networking in sharing resources and generating knowledge, three arts organizations in Northeastern Ontario have partnered to create a geographic peer support network to assist in strengthening the organizations' management capacity leading to more sustainable organizations.

A 'peer learning community' – a peer to peer networking strategy –was chosen based on the recognition that each organization has expertise in one or more areas that would be of value to the others. Given the particular nature of the challenges facing arts organization in the North, 'know how' gained from real life experiences is invaluable. Technology was utilized in connecting the peers across the region, making the network very cost-effective in terms time, resources and the quality of learning.

The three partnering organizations are: i) The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District (the lead); ii) 4elements Living Arts on Manitoulin Island; and, iii) Conseil des Arts de Hearst. This project could be used as a model in assisting other arts organizations in building sustainability throughout the region.

The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District is an umbrella organization, based in the Sault but promotes the arts across the District of Algoma. Its base is primarily Anglophone with strong organizational membership and partnerships. It operates with one full time staff.

4elements Living Arts serves Manitoulin Island and the La Cloche region. The organization primarily works with non-aboriginal people and groups but partners with First Nations and artists to deliver programs to children and adults of non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal heritage. It has no permanent staff but hires the Executive Director and Program Director as funding permits.

Conseil des Arts de Hearst owns and manages the Francophone culture centre in Hearst, a community of approximately 5,000 people with 90% being Francophone. The organization serves other nearby Francophone communities and is surrounded by First Nations. It has four full time staff.

The project was funded by the Ontario Arts Council's (OAC) Compass program dedicated to organizational development. NORDIK Institute, Algoma University's community-based research institute was contracted by the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District (Arts Council) to conduct the research. The research team is comprised of Jude Ortiz, Meghan Ableson and Dr. Gayle Broad.

The project involved working with each organization to undertake three qualitative research activities, leading to the creation of an organizational profile. The data of each organization was then compiled and analysed within a sustainability framework. The three research activities were: i) Review the strategic planning of each organization; ii) Create an organizational timeline; and, iii) Map affiliations,

connections and partnerships. Meetings (using Skype and teleconferencing technology) brought the three organizations together to share their profiles and dialogue about ways of becoming more sustainable.

While the three organizations had never worked together before, NORDIK had worked with each of them on different projects and/or occasions. In collaborating with the organizations NORDIK drew on past research and further mobilized project learnings throughout its local and regional networks and website.

2.2 Methodology

NORDIK launched the project with a Skype meeting between the partners providing a general overview of the project, reviewing the overall goals and the three activities.

A set of pre- and post-project questions were prepared for the organizations to complete as well as a tracking and reflection sheet to capture learnings that will be incorporated into the final report.

Each organization was responsible for recruiting project participants. Each determined which staff, board members and/or local citizens they wished to contribute to the on-site data collection activities and the technology delivered sharing and learning sessions.

The on-site consultations consisted of three activities:

- i) Presentation of the organization's strategic plan (by the organization)
- iii) Creation of the organization's historical timeline
- ii) Affiliations, connections and partnerships mapping

The sessions were audio recorded (in their entirety or portions of the session) and notes were taken.

The data was compiled, analysed and organized within a sustainability framework organized around five key components impacting organizational sustainability and resilience, i.e. its ability to adapt, transition and prosper when faced with change while retaining its core identity (Centre for Community Renewal, 2000).

The five key components are:

11. *Awareness of Environment and Context*
 - Community context , changes and the larger picture
12. *Community Relations and Social Capital Development*
 - Economic Development Partners
 - Educational Partners
 - Partnerships with other arts organizations and artists
 - Community Support
 - Depth and length of relationship
 - Number of hosted events

13. Governance

- Recruitment and participation of board members
- Strategic Planning
- Training
- Problems and resolutions

14. Financial

- Diversity of revenue sources
- Forecasting accuracy
- Number of budgets balanced in the last five years

15. Human Resources

- Number of staff
- Skills
- Depth
- Opportunities for training and education

Each organization received draft organizational profile report with recommendations to review and provide additional comments and feedback, for incorporation into the final report

The three organizations then gathered for a series of Skype sessions with each organization leading one meeting to present its profile, providing opportunity to share, dialogue, learn from each other, and generate knowledge in discussing ways of becoming more sustainable.

A draft final report reflecting the project findings and learnings will be prepared and provided to each organization for additional comments. Once finalized, each organization will receive a copy and the report will be available through NORDIK's website.

2.3 Conseil des Arts de Hearst Consultation

The NORDIK team met with the Executive Director and Development and Communications Officer of CAH for the consultation. Board members were on vacation during July so were unable to participate in the sessions.



The session spanned two days, with an evening session where Valérie Picard presented the strategic plan and a morning in which both CAH representatives created the organization's timeline and mapped the organization's relationships.

2.4 Hearst Community Context

The Town of Hearst is located on Highway 11 approximately 935 kilometers north of Toronto and 550 kilometres north of Sault Ste. Marie. The town is situated 520 kilometres east of Thunder Bay and 260 km west of Timmins. Hearst is unique in Ontario in that nearly 90 percent of the population self-identifies as francophone. By comparison, the closest community to Hearst with a significant francophone population is Kapuskasing (96 kilometres from Hearst), with 67 percent of their population self-identifying as Francophone. Chapleau (460 kilometres from Hearst) is home to 765 people, with 60 percent of them self-identifying as francophone and Sault Ste. Marie with a population of approximately 75,000 people has only 4 percent self-identifying as francophone.

Although the town itself has a population of just over 5000, it services people in several smaller outlying communities, including the First Nations community of Constance Lake which lies 40 kilometers west of Hearst.

Traditionally, Hearst's economy was based on the three nearby forestry mills, Tembec Industries, Columbia Forest Products and Lecours Lumber Company. However, recent restructuring of the industry has resulted in the mills closing, leaving Hearst to find alternative means of sustaining itself. The loss of skilled labour and increased youth out migration, due in part, to baby boomers not retiring, has negatively impacted the community as a whole but plans are underway to diversify the economy and revitalize the community. The population has declined from 5,825 in 2001 to 5090 in 2011. The community perceives the population as aging however, Census Canada reports an average age of 45, making Hearst's population younger than many other Northern Ontario communities.

Fishing, hunting and sports (mainly hockey) continue to be the main entertainment interests and tourism focus for the region. In 2011 the Town created the Heritage Sawmill Marketplace, a museum based on the region's forestry heritage. This new facility also includes a rental hall available for community events.

Until recently the Catholic school board was the only option for elementary and secondary students. The addition of a K-12 public school (in 2011) remains controversial within the broader community, and impacts CAH in that the organization has rented space for the school in their newly-acquired building. Two post-secondary education options are available: Université de Hearst is a federated college of Laurentian University in Sudbury offering several liberal arts degree options, while Collège Boréal is a college of arts and technology and offers diploma and certificate in several programs.

Culture and Arts Context:

Currently the Town has a full-time employee responsible for Parks and Recreation but no dedicated culture or tourism staff member. However, in 2012 the Town introduced a cultural policy that it plans to implement over time and has contracted a marketing specialist to more fully expand the plan, identify required resources and draft an Ontario Trillium funding application to move the plan forward.

Currently there is not yet a formal relationship between the Town, its cultural policy and the Conseil des Arts de Hearst (CAH), the community organization that owns and operates the Francophone cultural

centre. However, CAH does look forward to working with the Town in the future, in general, and in implementing the cultural policy, specifically.

2.5 Organizational awareness of environment and context

Sustainable organizations understand the local and global context of the community in which they are embedded and respond to changing community needs while keeping to their mandate (Torjman, 2007; Westley, Zimmerman & Patton, 2007; WolfBrown, 2011).

As the community's only cultural organization CAH has many areas to cover in meeting community needs. CAH owns and manages a cultural center, a 30,000 sq. ft. building, formally the Knights of Columbus Hall, where it produces, presents and delivers year round programming. CAH is defining its place within the community as an arts and culture organization and is becoming more comfortable with its new identity as building owner and landlord.

CAH is aware of ways the changing community demographics, and its decision to house the public school board within its recently acquired building, has impacted its relationships. In addressing this issue, CAH has taken a pro-active approach in rebuilding relations and maintaining relevancy.

A Ministry of Tourism and Culture grant enabled the organization to contract a marketing specialist in 2012 to conduct community research and develop a marketing plan. The community was surveyed regarding interests, preferences and priorities and what residents wanted from the organization. An excellent response rate of 30% illustrates community support for, and interest in, the organization. CAH is considering another piece of market research in two to three years' time to address economic changes and trends, and to help it stay abreast of community needs. The marketing plan for CAH should be completed by the end of 2012.

CAH makes a considerable effort to stay connected, including: taking advantage of community events to promote the organization; sending staff to attend culture sector policy meetings in Toronto and Ottawa; meeting with funding program officers; and regularly reviewing websites and social media connections to ensure it stays current on new developments and opportunities.

CAH's newly established practice of sending out monthly newsletters to keep the community informed of upcoming events works very well as an organizational tool and has been well received in the community. People have commented they were previously unaware of the extent of activities and the monthly format provides sufficient lead time to plan for attending.

CAH has begun offering shorter programming to address a declining population and a weakened economy where people are unable to attend as many events and are therefore picking and choosing only a few. For example, the Festival de l'humour or stand-up comedy fest has been scaled down from one week of events to three days. As well, CAH has initiated new partnerships with groups previously not approached resulting in the development of successful new programming, for example, the Country Festival comprised of a partridge hunting tournament and a country music event is offered in partnership with Club Chasse et Pêche. This has resulted in CAH gaining a broader audience and responding to a strong community culture of land-based activities.

CAH considers other community events and residents' interests when developing their programming schedule, for example no activities are offered in the month October which marks the beginning of hunting season.

2.6 Timeline

CAH participants mapped events that have impacted the organization over the past five years, from 2007-2012. Positive events appear above the line, those that were negative below the line and neutral events or those that were deemed to have

both positive and negative implications appear on the line. Key events mentioned were purchase of the building, ongoing staff changes and restructuring and the effects of the struggling economy.



- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>2007:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After school program begins; dance, music, paint • Coup De Coeur Francophone partnership places Hearst on the map • Tombola des Arts dinner and gala; annual fundraising event begins. | <p>2008 (on the line)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff restructured | <p>2009:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start of building project • Purchase building. Observe the reaction of the community • Committees are reinstated • Cinèpole 1st edition (film festival/workshops) • HOREM (Hearst Ontario and Regions Experience Music) becomes a music festival. • Artistic Director begins 2009-2010 | <p>2009 cont'd:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HSP Festival. Three plays, twice a night for three days, along with a dinner. • Music and theatrical summer camps begin. • Receive operational funding 1st time (OAC and Heritage) • Country show; new partnership; approached by country singer • Commandites de Saison | <p>2010:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic plan ended, new strategic plan needed. • Gala de la Francophone—start of annual event that honours one community member for their contribution to the francophone community. • Collège Boréal partnership begins • School board tenancy begins • Market research project successful • New website launched | <p>2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOHFC final building payment received • New art gallery launched | <p>2012</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valérie Picard becomes ED • Staff restructuring • Survey/market research conducted |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|



- Sponsorship and attendance for Festival De l'humour (comedy festival) declines
- EDC builds Inovo Centre (also offers hall rentals, putting them in competition with CAH)
- Declining economy translates into a decline in sponsorships, attendance, volunteers

- Project "Racine"- Heritage Canada— Artistic Director applied for this funding but did not follow through with project

- Fêtons l'Ontario (Celebrate Ontario) funding was declined; 20k grant for the *Festival de L'humour* declined
- Some building project expenses were not reimbursed

- 2011 (on the line)**
- Executive Director departs
 - Board reduced to 7 members

2.7 Community Relations and Social Capital Development

Sustainable organizations have developed strong networks of social relations (social capital) enabling them to respond to change; extend their operations through mutually beneficial partnerships that advance profiles and share risks; gather and disseminate information; and, collectively advocate for change (Torjman, 2007; Westley, Zimmerman & Patton, 2007).

Economic Development Partners

Economic development partners create important relationships in linking culture to the economy thus raising the importance of the arts in diversifying and building local economies. The arts inform development through understanding of place and economic development initiatives foster culture-based livelihoods (Hume, 2009; Ortiz & Broad, 2007).

As a standard practice, CAH receives a tax rebate from the town for their cultural building. The organization does not have a formal relationship with the Town's tourism division, however, it is anticipated that partnerships will evolve as the Town's new cultural policy is implemented over time.

A staff member of Hearst's Economic Development Corporation holds a seat on the CAH Board of Directors. The two organizations are further exploring potential partnerships, particularly around increasing tourism.

Educational Partnerships

Educational partners link culture to human resource development. Artists in schools add significant value in increasing students' and teachers' creative capacity, and, arts organizations provide training and leadership opportunities for students to apply educational learnings in practical situations (ArtsSmarts, 2007, 2006).

CAH has a strong partnership with École Secondaire de Hearst/Hearst High school in presenting the talent show and connecting students with artists for their radio and newsletters. One student is a

member of CAH Board of Directors.



The organization also partners with Université du Hearst and Collège Boréal assisting them during recruiting events and a variety of community events such as poetry readings and the very popular Salon des Livres. The two organizations also partner in grant applications and exchange services. CAH takes advantage

of Collège Boréal's occasional offering of governance and other organizational training.

The relationship with the public school (K-12), a tenant in CAH's building, is a relevantly new relationship and the organizations are further exploring potential partnerships. CAH recognized that it took a risk in 2010 when accepting the public school board as a tenant, and this did in fact cause some community members to view CAH with some distrust. This has been changing however, as the town's residents become more comfortable with the presence of two school boards.

Partnerships with other arts organizations and artists

Culture partnerships strengthen sector development through supporting others' initiatives, thus building capacity and raising the collective profile of the arts. Collaboration assists in leveraging individual and organizational assets in identifying and meeting the sector, as well as the broader community's, needs (Duxbury & Campbell, 2009).

CAH works with Centre Cultural La Ronde of Timmins in bringing in Franco-Ontario performers and has connections with Timmins's CBON radio station. Since one of CBON's announcers is from Hearst, CAH's events are well covered by the station and reach a large audience.

The organization has recently begun restoring relations with Centre de Loisirs Kapuskasing, a cultural organization based in nearby Kapuskasing, and a former connection that had deteriorated over time due to competition between the two communities.

CAH does have more limited relationships with Centre Cultural Louis Hémon in Chapleau, Les Campagnons in North Bay and in Sturgeon Falls, due to the great geographic distances. They are, however, sometimes able to effect cost-savings on performers' travel through these contacts.

CAH expressed a strong desire that its current relationship with Rouyn Noranda be developed more profoundly, as it has access to Québécois performers, and its close proximity could increase the pool of talent that CAH could access.

CAH's connections with Sudbury are with Théâtre du Nouvel Ontario and la Galerie du Nouvelle Ontario. CAH is working toward building a stronger relationship with La Slague Carrefour Franco Sudbury that was initiated by CAH's previous Artistic Director and who is now with the Sudbury organization.

At the provincial level Réseau Ontario plays a key role in providing programming and when needed the Association des Professionnels de Chanson et de la Musique (APCM) is able to assist.

CAH is a member of Coup de Coeur Francophone, a national festival that presents francophone artists across Canada. Hearst is one of the only two Ontario locations where the festival is held, with Toronto being the second.

Community Support

Community partnerships assist in embedding the arts into the broader community. Local support provides opportunities for fostering cross sectorial relations in building and celebrating local culture and community identity (Duxbury & Campbell, 2009).

Community partnerships support CAH's promotional and fundraising activities. The 2011-12 annual programming sponsorship is well underway with a range of business such as the CIBC, Canadian Tire, Hearst Air and smaller businesses each contributing from \$250-\$1,500.

The partnership with the local radio station, CINN FM, provides an excellent means of staying front and centre in the community. The station receives ten tickets for each event and CAH receives fifteen, one-minute weekly radio spots. As well, Canadian Tire gives away one CAH membership monthly in conjunction with their store promotions. The Town provides CAH free television on cable 6 enabling it to keep citizens informed of upcoming activities.

Some fundraising activities generate funds solely for CAH, while others also raise monies for multiple organizations and sometimes CAH participates in other organizations' fundraising events, whereby it is among the benefactors. For example Club Phoenix keeps revenue from operating the coat check at some CAH events and CAH occasionally participates in Operation Red Nose and receives revenues of up to \$3,000 that it dedicates to supporting youth summer camps.

In building community relations across sectors CAH launched Tombola des Arts dinner and gala, an annual fundraising event recognizing one person's service to the community. Service could be in any area of the community; is not limited to the culture sector. The event assists in integrating CAH into the broader community by staging an event that brings the entire community together in celebration of one of its own members. In encouraging youth engagement in the arts, CAH extends Réseau Ontario's subsidy, of \$5.00 of the ticket price, to all CAH annual programming.

CAH has a range of programming year round, but particularly during the summer, offering music and summer theatre festival camps. Music programming is offered in both official languages whereas theatre is available only in French. Both are taught by university students specializing in these disciplines. Due to the popularity of music programming CAH is exploring the opportunity for developing a music school which would include artists in residence and/or visiting artists.

Depth and length of relationships

Conseil des Arts de Hearst has a breadth of relationships spanning a variety of local, regional and provincial organizations that have developed over a number of years. While the majority of regional partnerships are within the culture sector, local relationships cross into the business and social sectors. Partnerships provide programming, joint planning, information sharing, promotions, funding and fundraising opportunities.

Further increasing and/or strengthening existing local, area and regional networks in utilizing limited resources, primarily around presenting touring acts, is an identified priority for the organization.

See Appendix I: Chart of Funders, Partners and Community Partners

Number of hosted events

The list below is representative of the types of events undertaken by Conseil des Arts de Hearst in which the organization was the sole and/or lead organization.

Services:

- Few, if any, services are provided as CAH is not considered a service organization; when offered it is on a one-time, as-needed basis, for example, providing assistance in writing a grant application and/or preparing a portfolio.
- **Producing:**
- Two theater troupes offer approximately 6 productions each year; one group is very active, the other less so
- Tombola des Arts Dinner and Gala; annual event since 2007; significant fundraising event

Presenting:

- Approximately 20 shows per year (15 planned for 2012)
- Cinèpole Film Festival; 2009, annual - not presented in 2012 due to lack of participation
- Hearst Ontario and Region's Experience Music; since 1993; annual classical piano competition
- Hearst sur les planches festival (HSP) a multidisciplinary arts festival (since 2009, annual)
- Festival de l'humour; annually since 1990 but scaled down from one week to 3 days in 2011

Programming:

- Summer camps (music and theater); since 2009, annually
- Music courses (piano and guitar); year round, weekly
- After school program (dance, music, art); since 2007, weekly

2.8 Governance

Effective boards provide strong leadership demonstrating collective capacity and efficacy in addressing the organization's governance needs within the range of its current activities and future directions (WolfBrown, 2011).

Recruitment and participation of board members

The Board's size has recently been reduced from eleven to seven members plus one non-voting high school representative, reflecting CAH's commitment to youth engagement and the understanding that

arts participation contributes to health and well-being and a lifelong interest in the arts. The Board has recently recruited a tourism focused representative from Hearst's Economic Development Corporation.

The size reduction has improved board efficiency thereby reducing the frequency and duration of board meetings from ten to six times a year and from four to two hours.

The president is new, (2011), as are half of the Board members, due in part, to the conclusion of the strategic planning cycle, leading to a feeling of 'new blood' all around. The initiation of a new planning process will assist in solidifying the Board as a team in developing shared goals and may highlight areas to consider for further Board development and/or recruitment.

Strategic Planning

Conseil des Arts de Hearst has identified the creation of a new strategic plan as a priority. The organization has been operating without a plan since 2010 when the primary objective of its past plan was realized with the purchase of the building in 2011. CAH has applied for a grant to prepare a plan to reflect the current ownership and management of the building and develop new objectives for the future.

Traditionally, the strategic planning process has begun with the Board determining its goals, then a local consultant completing the plan. There was an expressed interest in investigating other methods of developing the strategic plan that depart from this process and it is now considering a process that begins with each committee brainstorming and bringing forward ideas for discussion and resolution. This will enable broader community input and direction as residents sit on the various committees.

Training

CAH takes advantage of Collège Boréal's courses in governance that build board competency, and participates in other training opportunities offered through the Town of Hearst.

Problems and resolutions

The purchase of the former Knights of Columbus building in 2009 has seen the identity of the organization change from being a small arts organization, organizing events in a small community to being building owners with an overall increase in organizational and programming expectations. However, the core mission of the organization remains the same, i.e. support and development of the Franco-Ontario culture. To reflect and promote CAH's new identity and raised profile, a new website will be launched in September 2012.

In 2008 the entire organizational structure was thoroughly reviewed and clear and open lines of communication were established for dealing with Board/staff relations as well as internal staffing, alleviating previous challenges around Board involvement in day to day activities and/or limited information sharing between ED and staff. Participants expressed that the Board's new governance structure, with democratically-charged and strategically-diverse subcommittees (e.g. building, programming, fundraising, etc.,) is an effective means of governing and managing the organization. CAH

mentioned that the programming committee, for example, covers many of the tasks performed by the former artistic director.

2.9 Financing

Sustainable organizations have diversified revenue sources, accurate forecasting and the capacity to balance budgets (WolfBrown, 2011).

Diversity of revenue sources

Conseil des Arts de Hearst's operations are secured by operational funding provided by Heritage Canada and the Ontario Arts Council, with each organization contributing approximately fifty percent. CAH is currently in year two of the three year funding cycle. (This type of funding is unique to francophone cultural groups due to Canada's commitment to supporting francophone culture and heritage, including French language, and the dominance of Anglophone culture).

The Executive Director is confident funding levels will remain the same or similar over the coming years. Although aware of the significant reduction in culture funding in other areas, she has seen continued support for francophone and minority groups citing them as priority areas for both federal and provincial governments.

The organization also receives an annual Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) infrastructure grant for building updates (shelving, modular stage, etc.) that has been assisting in bridging the gap between the original building plans and funding shortfalls.

The Town of Hearst provides a land tax rebate of \$16,000 due to CAH's status as an educational institute. The organization does, however, pay other taxes such as school levies.

Fundraising and various funding applications (an average of 20 each year) address specific items such as animating the rather institutional looking building to reflect its artistic essence and improvements to the storage area in preparation for renting. Summer programs and staffing also comprise a number of applications.

In an effort to remain financially viable, CAH leased part of the building to the newly established public school board. The two year agreement is nearing the end of its first year and may be extended for at least two more years and perhaps longer, providing a stable revenue source. The local radio station has expressed a strong interest in renting the space once the school board relocates.

The building is also rented for a variety of community events including weddings providing additional revenues. However, the impact of the recently completed Heritage Sawmill Marketplace which includes a hall available for public rental is not yet known. There are different rental agreements with some organizations being charged no rental fees but CAH reaps the entire bar revenue. This arrangement has proved very profitable.

CAH is opening a retail gallery space for local artists beginning in September which will promote local artists and generate revenue through sales commissions. Artists will be accepted from all over and not necessarily francophone. They will receive either a flat rate artist fee or 80% of the sales price of any sold work.

CAH is attempting to source funding for the recording studio to support the organization's productions and expand their building's rental opportunities, (e.g. rental to the local radio station).

As well, the organization is investigating ways to make its permanent visual arts collection, of approximately 30 pieces, more accessible to the community by presenting it in different ways. For example, creating a digital online gallery or displaying the work at the library, coffee shops and/or the high school.

Each program outside of CAH's annual offerings is managed through a separate budget and operates on a cost recovery basis.

CAH has implemented a point-of-sale system to streamline ease of ticket sales and seat tracking. It has proved to be quite efficient in on-site sales and an immediate need to have it on-line is not foreseen, primarily due to the relatively small size of the community.

CAH has a range of both large and small fundraising activities that create revenue for the organization and in some cases generate revenue for others. For example, the building's coat check is operated by Club Phoenix (a swim team) which retains the monies.

The organization boasts a membership of approximately three hundred (individual, families, businesses and organizations categories) providing another annual revenue stream. The membership fee schedule is in line with other Northern Ontario arts organizations. Membership benefits include a \$5 discount on event tickets, advance seating; one bar drink and a 10% discount on hall rental. In the past there were shared memberships with a nearby arts organization in Kapuskasing but it became difficult to track and contributed, in part, to the eventual breakdown of relations between the two groups. Now that CAH is rebuilding the lines of communication it may revisit this possibility within a different structure.

CAH is investigating the possibility of creating a separate non-profit foundation as a contingency fund and in the future (5-10 years) would like to be in the position of offering grants to artists.

Forecasting accuracy and number of balanced budgets in the last five years

The organization works with a chartered accountant who has amortized the building deficit over a number of years enabling CAH to balance its books on an annual basis. Now that the deficit related to the funding shortfall for the building is a known amount CAH anticipates being able to forecast accurately. Additionally, the 2012 year will be the first complete fiscal cycle for building operations, which will enable CAH to determine the real costs associated with running the centre

2.10 Human Resources

Sustainable organizations have skilled human resources (staff and volunteers) to meet organizational needs and training opportunities to continuously keep pace with technological and social changes and educational advancements in addressing opportunities and challenges (WolfBrown, 2011).

Number of staff

CAH employs four full time people (ED, Communications and Development Officer, Technician and Programming Director) plus typically three (usually university) summer students hired through various summer job programs. It also hires temporary employees on an as-needed basis. The majority of staff is new within the last five years, however the Communications and Development Officer has been with the organization for six years, although the job description has recently changed.

The organization relies upon approximately one hundred volunteers to assist with different programs and events and notes that the number of volunteers has declined over the past couple of years. CAH hosts an annual summer BBQ in recognition of their significant contribution to the organization.

Skills

The Executive Director (ED) has a degree in Arts Management from the University of Toronto, obtained in 2010. Originally from Hearst she returned to her home community after graduation and began working for CAH in accounting before moving up to her current position. She has been with the organization for approximately two years and benefited from a six month overlap prior to the departure of the former ED.

Depth

The current ED utilizes a horizontal management style which has been effective in building staff relations and creating a sense being part of a team. She is defining job titles, job descriptions and positions through a process of skills identification from an employee, supervisory and collegial perspective. This has contributed to team and confidence building among the predominately youth employees, as well as increased staffing depth though sharing knowledge and understanding of one another's functions and tasks.

Opportunities for training and education

Staff training is considered on an as-needed basis and when finances permit. For example one employee recently received Photoshop training to meet the immediate need for more in-house professional and current advertising (posters, visual branding, etc.). Currently, staff members have the skills necessary to complete their tasks.

2.11 Summary

Conseil des Arts de Hearst has achieved the organization's milestone goal of owning a cultural centre and there is much to celebrate in this accomplishment. Although there is outstanding capital work remaining, renovations and upgrades can be prioritized and parceled into targeted funding applications and fundraising activities.

A new challenge revolves around defining the organization's evolving place in the changing community, i.e., shifting organizational and community perception from a small organization to its new identity of building owner, manager and operator of a culture centre. CAH's revised website set to launch in September 2012 will assist in generating this new image and the recent addition of monthly newsletters will reinforce it. Further community outreach and relationship building will, over time, assist in mitigating the negative impact the organization has felt as a result of the public school board's tenancy.

The downturn in the economy resulting in a declining population is an ongoing issue that CAH has been addressing pro-actively through conducting community research around people's interests, preferences and priorities and what residents wanted from the organization. A marketing plan evolving from the research is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.

The organization has responded to changing community demographics and interests by reviewing and revising programming, in some cases shortening the duration, postponing until next year and partnering with new organizations from other sectors to develop events not offered previously.

The organization is in its second year of its three year core funding cycle and anticipates renewed support at current levels for the next few years. CAH has a number of local community supporters that assist in diversifying revenue streams.

CAH's chartered accountant's plan has enabled the organization to manage the transition to building ownership with limited financial concerns. The 2012 year represents the first full cycle of building operations, thus providing them with evidence of real costs associated with running the cultural centre. This new information will be taken into account when considering future operations.

CAH's networks traverse the region and it has expressed a desire to continue increasing partnerships in promoting Franco-Ontario culture, seeking programming contacts, sharing travel expenses in bringing performers and artists to Northeastern Ontario as well as raising their profile.

There is great potential for capitalizing upon the community's unique characteristics—a remote Francophone community—perhaps the only such place in Ontario. CAH (and the broader community) recognize this growth area for developing specialized programming to raise awareness, promote and retain culture as well as spur tourism.

3.0 Recommendations

Community Relations and Social Capital Development

1. Strengthen community relationships. Respond to changing needs:
 - a. Implement market research in 2013-14 to gain community input into programming, which can respond to changing demographics through additional new initiatives (e.g. country and western shows)
 - b. Establish cyclical market research every three to five years.
 - c. Implement a membership campaign that outlines benefits and consider restructuring the membership drive to extend beyond the community in further developing organizational profile and regional networks
2. Strengthen regional networks:
 - a. Review existing and potential networks and partnerships and prioritize relationship development
3. Build on francophone culture's niche market, explore ways to increase regional and international awareness:
 - a. Work with Hearst tourism committee in building on and/or developing programming and tourist packages:
 - b. Work in conjunction with CAPT (Coalition for Algoma Passenger Trains) in utilizing the train corridor to connect with Sault Ste. Marie and Wawa and other communities along the route
 - c. Explore development opportunities with Sudbury and other larger francophone communities.
 - d. Investigate the benefits and feasibility of participating in Quonta Drama Region, a non-profit organization designed to promote, encourage and broaden non-professional theatrical activity and experience in Northeastern Ontario.
 - e. Investigate opportunities through Parents for French (Ontario), a non-profit charitable organization with numerous local chapters across the province that carry out activities that support French as a second language learning both inside and outside of the classroom (<http://www.cpfont.on.ca/>), and with the French department at Algoma University for similar opportunities with adults.
4. In meeting CAH's longer term goal of developing a music school:
 - a. Conduct a feasibility study that would assess its overall potential for the development of a music school.

Governance

1. Re-establish a cyclical planning process and engage the broader community in re-visioning the organization's expanded identity that includes ownership of an arts venue, retail outlet, etc.:

- a. Increase contextual analyses of changing demographics in the strategic planning process through utilizing engagement resources. E.g. NORDIK's Community Engagement Toolkit and/or Community Strategic Planning Toolkit.
 - b. Explore new roles in the community that the building now affords. e.g. artist in residence programs
2. Solidify the organization's expanded identity of building owner and manager within and beyond the community:
 - a. Develop key messaging and marketing products confirming the recent change
3. Ensure the Board is working to its maximum competency and as a unified board:
 - a. Conduct a needs assessment and support members in accessing training through local and/or distance opportunities. For example other organizations' workshop speakers; the Social Economy Series (<http://socialeconomyhub.ca/>); NORDIK Institute workshops and training (onsite/ on distance).
4. Knowledge mobilization:
 - a. Identify organizational expertise that would contribute to supporting the surrounding area and/or other Francophone communities.

Financial

1. Maximize the use of the building in developing various revenue streams:
 - a. Identify funding priorities in completing outstanding capital building items and further improvements
 - b. Establish financial plans for capital building maintenance and investment
2. Secure organizational sustainability:
 - a. Explore the feasibility of establishing a Foundation to support both long and short term goals of the strategic plan.
3. Further support the development of local francophone artists:
 - a. Develop a long range plan (5-10 years) to generate funding for grants

Human Resources

1. Increase level of volunteer involvement and continue expansion of new recruits:
 - a. Develop a recruitment plan that facilitates meaningful engagement and provides training opportunities and feedback channels.

2. Capitalize on the energy and momentum of (primarily youth) staff as well as keep abreast of technological advancements:
 - a. Make available training and education through local and/or regional partnerships and or distance learning.
 - b. Support innovative and creative ideas of staff through a staff recognition/reward system.

4.0 Project Outcomes

The project established a peer mentoring network to share, generate and mobilize knowledge between three very different arts organizations across Northeastern Ontario who had not previously worked together: i) The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District; ii) 4elements Living Arts on Manitoulin Island; and, iii) Conseil des Arts de Hearst. Overall the project led to strengthening their organizations' management capacity that will advantage them in future operations.

The project allowed the time and space necessary to initiate an internal dialogue within the organizations, as well as amongst community members and mentoring partners. This led to increased organizational capacity, social capital development/community relations and engagement and knowledge mobilization in understanding sustainability within the Northeastern Ontario context. Specifically, the project increased organizational capacity; strengthened community engagement and built social capital and mobilized knowledge in the cultural sector.

Increased Organizational Capacity

The partners gained experience in using various types of technology for training and knowledge mobilization (e.g. Skype, Google Hangout) that assist in mitigating the vast geography of the North.

The project required participants to consolidate and present their past strategic planning documents at the consultation leading one organization to create a colour brochure highlighting their past, current and future activities within their three strategic themes that will now be used to recruit partners, members, sponsors and broader community support.

Creating the Timeline generated knowledge and understanding for staff and new and/or long-time Board and community members about the organizations' history and responses with a community, regional and global context.

The organizations received a profile investigating their sustainability in five key areas: community context and awareness; governance; human resources; financial; and, social capital development/community relations and engagement. The profile provided an external perspective of their current situation based on community consultations facilitated by the Consultant and peer mentoring dialogues. The report provides context for making informed decisions by clarifying their situation, ensuring them that they are on the right path, and/or heading in the proper direction and providing recommendations and action items for strengthening their sustainability.

Community Engagement and Social Capital Development

The partners found the peer network very valuable in analyzing each other's current status within Anglophone and Francophone cultures and small urban, rural and isolated communities that comprise Northern Ontario, further contributing to understanding their organization's sustainability challenges.

The peers discussed the continuing need in the North for working together to advocate and support other organizations, due to the substantial economic challenges facing the region, its low population density, and the vast distances between communities. The organizations committed to further dialoguing in three months' time to discuss their respective progress and ways of assisting funding agencies with a southern Ontario-centric focus to understand Northerners' differing needs.

One organization presented its strategic plan to many new Board members. Another consultation brought together Board and community members and economic developers which strengthened cross-sectoral relationships and expanded local networks leading to increased commitment to the organization's sustainability by every participant. Additionally, one representative from a key Aboriginal organization expressed an interest in becoming a board member of one of the organizations.

Knowledge Mobilization

The peers shared resources, e.g., market research questionnaires, distribution channels and arts reports; information about current events (theirs and others); sources and feasibility of revenue streams; experience in dealing with funding agencies including challenges in meeting their criteria and potential means of addressing concerns. The exchanges will advantage them in operational relevancy and efficiency.

Participants expressed a desire to continue identifying resources and areas of expertise in assisting the arts community in becoming more sustainable.

Summary

The project assisted three arts organizations in mobilizing knowledge around becoming more sustainable within a Northern context and laid the foundation for continued collaboration. Participants thought this process could be used as a model in building sustainability throughout the region as it established critical peer mentoring support through dialoguing and sharing resources and expertise in a region that is challenged by geographical distances and contextual differences to southern Ontario.

References

ArtsSmarts (2006). *Engaged in Learning: The Arts Smarts Model*. Ottawa: ArtsSmarts

ArtsSmarts (2007) *Building Arts Smarts' Research Capacity: Interim Report*. Ottawa: ArtsSmarts

Bell, J, & Cornelius, M. (2013). *UnderDeveloped: A National Study of Challenges Facing Non-Profit Fundraising*. San Francisco, CA: CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund

Broad, G. and Date. S. (2006). *Courageous Lives: A Profile of the Working Poor in Sault Ste. Marie*. Sault Ste. Marie: Algoma University

Colussi, M. (1999). The community resilience manual: A new resource will link rural revitalization to CED best practices. *Making Waves, 10 (4)*. Port Alberni: Centre for Community Enterprise

Community Resilience Sault Ste. Marie (2006). *Portrait of Community Resilience of Sault Ste. Marie*. Sault Ste. Marie: Algoma University

Cultural Careers Council Ontario (2011). *The Mentoring Project: Supporting the Career Development of Artists*. Toronto: Cultural Careers Council Ontario

Duxbury, N. and Campbell, H. (2009). Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities through Arts and Culture. *Small Cities Imprint*. Vol. 3 (2011) No. 1, pp. 111-132

Hume, G. (2009) The Arts: And Creative Communities in Canada. *Municipal World*. Vol. 116. No 9: 9-12

Lewis, M. & Lockhart, R.A. (2002). *Performance Measurement, Development Indicators and Aboriginal Economic Development*. Port Alberni: Centre for Community Enterprise

mDm Consulting (2011). *Fostering Arts at a Local Level: A review of Community Arts Councils in Ontario*. Toronto: Ontario Arts Council

Ortiz, J. (2013 forthcoming) Working title, Doctoral Thesis, University of the West of England, UK

Ortiz, J. & Broad, G. (2007). Culture, Creative and the Arts: *Achieving Community Resilience and Sustainability through the Arts in Sault Ste. Marie*. Algoma University: Sault Ste. Marie

Torjman, S. (2007). *Shared space: The communities agenda*. Ottawa: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Westley, F., Zimmerman, B., & Patton, M.Quinn. (2006). *Getting to Maybe: How the world is changed*. Random House Canada.

WolfBrown (2011). Perspectives on Non Profit Strategies from WolfBrown. *Sounding Board*. Vol. 30. Cambridge: USA

Appendix I

Current		
Funders	Partners	Community Partners
<i>Trans Canada Pipeline</i> - project funding of \$4000-\$5000 for youth development and education	<i>CBC Radio Canada</i> - Sudbury. Also has a rep in Hearst.	<i>Hôpital Notre-Dame de Hearst</i> -CAH helps organize their annual

<p><i>Foundation Franco-Ontarienne</i>- wine and cheese, promotion on Facebook</p> <p><i>Sponsors Season 2011-2012</i> Many local businesses: CIBC; Canadian Tire; Hearst Air; Auto mechanic business;. Largest sponsor was \$1500, smallest is \$250 -\$15000 to date for this year's sponsorship -Sponsorship for the season and each notch gets more visibility -started a flap system, after \$1000 you get a season ticket, reserved seating etc.</p> <p><i>Ontario Arts Council</i></p> <p><i>Heritage Canada</i></p> <p><i>Ontario Trillium Foundation</i></p> <p><i>Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Sports</i></p>	<p><i>CBON Le Loup</i>- radio station in Timmins; one broadcaster is from Hearst so gives CAH good coverage</p> <p><i>Centre Cultural La Ronde a Timmins</i> -try for 50% of Franco-Ontarian; Artists do come from across Canada</p> <p><i>Centre de Loisirs Kapuskasing</i> "rival" community; ED has just begun communicating with them on a person to person basis; no formal arrangement</p> <p><i>Centre Cultural Louis Hémon</i> in Chapleau</p> <p><i>La Slogue Carrefour Franco Sudbury</i>- working on building relationship, with artistic director</p> <p><i>Théâtre du Nouvel-Ontario</i>- Sudbury</p> <p><i>Galerie du Nouvelle Ontario</i>-Sudbury</p> <p><i>Rouyn Noranda, Quebec</i> – great relationship</p> <p><i>Les Campagnons</i>, North Bay</p> <p><i>Sturgeon Falls</i></p> <p><i>Reséau Ontario</i> Meet 3 times a year in Ottawa to shop for tours. They need 5 dates in the North for tour</p> <p><i>APCM</i> -Assocaition de Artists Musique Canadien -Good contact if CAH needs a performer at the last minute</p>	<p>talent show fundraising event; helps with lighting, gives preferential pricing, sells tickets for them, rents the hall to them.</p> <p><i>Operation Rednose</i>- CAH fundraiser around Christmas time every 2-3 years; can raise up to \$3000; used for summer camps</p> <p><i>Canadian Tire</i>- Official Membership sponsor: gives away gift cards for a draw every month</p> <p><i>Salon du livre de Hearst</i> Promotional booth at book festival held at Université</p> <p><i>École Secondaire de Hearst/Hearst Highschool</i>- talent show, music, improv team, student radio at lunch, CAH will lend them artists. Students can interview artists for newsletters. One student on Board of directors. Strong link- cultural organizer</p> <p><i>Universite du Hearst-Collège Boréal</i> - during recruiting events CAH gets the performers -partnership in grant application and exchange of services -poetry reading -Board Governance training courses -wine and cheese tasting, hockey team and CAH -Salon du Livres</p> <p><i>Ville de Hearst</i> -Town administrator helps planning specific events and is a Board member -CAH reimbursed \$16,000 in taxes -Provides free advertising for CAH on channel 6</p> <p><i>CINN FM Radio Communication</i> CAH gives community radio 10</p>
---	--	---

	<p><i>Coup de Coeur Francophone</i> National Festival</p> <p><i>OCC</i>- Craftcurrents exhibit and workshop; regularly check website</p> <p><i>Bravo</i>- little to no relationship with CAH because CAH is not a service organization</p>	<p>tickets per show for free ads</p> <p><i>Club Pheonix</i> Swim team runs CAH's coat check as their fundraiser</p> <p><i>Club Chasse et Pêche</i> -Country Festival -partner- partridge tournament -country band -this is recent venture</p> <p><i>Intégration Communautaire</i> (Community Living) -hosts another country show</p> <p><i>Club Action</i>- (Golden Age) theater performance</p> <p><i>Le Carnaval de Hearst</i> Winter Carnival for 2 weeks -package deal; CAH organizes show in exchange of services</p> <p><i>Corporation du développement économique de Hearst</i> -youth member now on board -advertising posters etc. in CHA's building; -now tourism committee and CAH member</p> <p><i>Public School Board</i> -building tenant</p> <p><i>Library</i> Good relationship just nothing official. Opportunities are slim; may loan books if they need them for centre pieces etc.</p>
--	--	--

Appendix III: Profile of 4elements Living Arts



Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations Through Peer Networking

Profile of 4elements Living Arts

Jude Ortiz, Meghan Ableson, Dr. Gayle Broad

Final Report

April 30, 2013



Le Conseil
des Arts
de Hearst



4elements
Living Arts

arts • land/scape • community



Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations Through Peer Mentoring

1.0 Background and Context

Northern Ontario communities are experiencing economic and social destabilization due, in part, to the restructuring of resource-extractive industries which have been the foundation of their economies.

NORDIK's research in culture development uncovered significant links between culture, the economy and the creation of healthy, sustainable communities. The arts play an important enabling role in increasing community resilience¹¹ through identity formation and sense of belonging, leading to the creation of place-based economies (Ortiz, 2013 forthcoming; Ortiz & Broad, 2007).

The culture sector, however, faces many challenges in developing sustainable livelihoods due, in part, to a lack of local and regional understanding of the sector's importance; limited entrepreneurial and organizational capacity; and a dearth of investment and development strategies relevant to Northern Ontario's context. During the Ontario Crafts Council's recent symposium (November 2011), Reflecting the North: *Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture*¹², Sophie Edwards, Executive Director of 4elements Living Arts, presented a case for a funding model for Northern arts organizations which would be entirely different from that of the more urban South.

Arts organizations are an important component of Ontario's nonprofit sector, building healthy communities by providing citizens access to services and opportunities that would otherwise not be available¹³. The non-profit sector as a whole is often overlooked in traditional economic development as an effective strategy but, in fact, makes significant contributions and plays an important role in leveraging new monies (Broad & Date, 2004).

Resilience literature identifies organizations as the driving force of the community (Community Resilience Sault Ste. Marie, 2006), and arts councils "have the potential to be an important voice for the arts and culture in their region or local community" (mDm Consulting, 2011:5). Strong arts organizations would mobilize knowledge and support micro-business development, thus advantaging the entire sector.

Organizational sustainability literature revealed key components for sustainable arts organizations included diverse partnerships; relevancy; vibrancy; the ability to capitalize upon products and/or services and manage its resources; and, constant adaptation in meeting changing needs (Torjman, 2007; Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006; WolfBrown, 2011)

In continuing to work with communities in meeting the needs of the culture sector, NORDIK investigated the creation of a peer learning community, a network of peer to peer mentors, to strengthen

¹¹ Community Resilience refers to the capacity to adapt, transition and prosper in times of significant change while maintaining core values (Colussi, 2000; Lewis and Lockhart, 2002)

¹² Reflecting the North: *Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture* (<http://reflectingthenorth.wordpress.com>)

¹³ The Ontario Nonprofit Network (<http://www.theonn.ca>)

organizational capacity. Three arts organizations, the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District, Conseil des Arts de Hearst, and 4elements Living Arts on Manitoulin Island expressed a desire to collaborate and funding was acquired through the Ontario Arts Council's Compass Program in 2012. The research concluded in the fall of 2012.

2.0 Profile of 4elements Living Arts

2.1 Project Background and Context

In recognizing the benefits of networking in sharing resources and generating knowledge, three arts organizations in Northeastern Ontario have partnered to create a geographic peer support network to assist in strengthening the organizations' management capacity leading to more sustainable organizations.

A 'peer learning community' – a peer to peer networking strategy –was chosen based on the recognition that each organization has expertise in one or more areas that would be of value to the others. Given the particular nature of the challenges facing arts organization in the North, 'know how' gained from real life experiences is invaluable. Technology was utilized in connecting the peers across the region, making the network very cost-effective in terms time, resources and the quality of learning.

The three partnering organizations are: i) The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District (the lead); ii) 4elements Living Arts on Manitoulin Island; and, iii) Conseil des Arts de Hearst. This project could be used as a model in assisting other arts organizations in building sustainability throughout the region.

The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District is an umbrella organization, based in the Sault but promotes the arts across the District of Algoma. Its base is primarily Anglophone with strong organizational membership and partnerships. It operates with one full time staff.

4elements Living Arts serves Manitoulin Island and the La Cloche region. The organization primarily works with non-aboriginal people and groups but partners with First Nations and artists to deliver programs to children and adults of non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal heritage. It has no permanent staff but hires the Executive Director and Program Director as funding permits.

Conseil des Arts de Hearst owns and manages the Francophone culture centre in Hearst, a community of approximately 5,000 people with 90% being Francophone. The organization serves other nearby Francophone communities and is surrounded by First Nations. It has four full time staff.

The project was funded by the Ontario Arts Council's (OAC) Compass program dedicated to organizational development. NORDIK Institute, Algoma University's community-based research institute was contracted by the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District (Arts Council) to conduct the research. The research team is comprised of Jude Ortiz, Meghan Ableson and Dr. Gayle Broad.

The project involved working with each organization to undertake three qualitative research activities, leading to the creation of an organizational profile. The data of each organization was then compiled and analysed within a sustainability framework. The three research activities were: i) Review the strategic planning of each organization; ii) Create an organizational timeline; and, iii) Map affiliations,

connections and partnerships. Meetings (using Skype and teleconferencing technology) brought the three organizations together to share their profiles and dialogue about ways of becoming more sustainable.

While the three organizations had never worked together before, NORDIK had worked with each of them on different projects and/or occasions. In collaborating with the organizations NORDIK drew on past research and further mobilized project learnings throughout its local and regional networks and website.

2.2 Methodology

NORDIK launched the project with a Skype meeting between the partners providing a general overview of the project, reviewing the overall goals and the three activities.

A set of pre- and post-project questions were prepared for the organizations to complete as well as a tracking and reflection sheet to capture learnings that will be incorporated into the final report.

Each organization was responsible for recruiting project participants. Each determined which staff, board members and/or local citizens they wished to contribute to the on-site data collection activities and the technology delivered sharing and learning sessions.

The on-site consultations consisted of three activities:

- i) Presentation of the organization's strategic plan (by the organization)
- iii) Creation of the organization's historical timeline
- ii) Affiliations, connections and partnerships mapping

The sessions were audio recorded (in their entirety or portions of the session) and notes were taken.

The data was compiled, analysed and organized within a sustainability framework organized around five key components impacting organizational sustainability and resilience, i.e. its ability to adapt, transition and prosper when faced with change while retaining its core identity (Centre for Community Renewal, 2000).

The five key components are:

- 16. *Awareness of Environment and Context*
 - Community context , changes and the larger picture
- 17. *Community Relations and Social Capital Development*
 - Economic Development Partners
 - Educational Partners
 - Partnerships with other arts organizations and artists
 - Community Support
 - Depth and length of relationship
 - Number of hosted events

18. Governance

- Recruitment and participation of board members
- Strategic Planning
- Training
- Problems and resolutions

19. Financial

- Diversity of revenue sources
- Forecasting accuracy
- Number of budgets balanced in the last five years

20. Human Resources

- Number of staff
- Skills
- Depth
- Opportunities for training and education

Each organization received draft organizational profile report with recommendations to review and provide additional comments and feedback, for incorporation into the final report

The three organizations then gathered for a series of Skype sessions with each organization leading one meeting to present its profile, providing opportunity to share, dialogue, learn from each other, and generate knowledge in discussing ways of becoming more sustainable.

A draft final report reflecting the project findings and learnings will be prepared and provided to each organization for additional comments. Once finalized, each organization will receive a copy and the report will be available through NORDIK's website.

2.3 4elements Living Arts Consultation

The consultation with 4elements consisted of two separate meetings. At the first meeting, on August 9, 2012, the Executive Director (ED) of 4elements presented the organization's strategic plan to NORDIK researchers Jude Ortiz and Meghan Ableson, several Board members, volunteers and community partners.



The second meeting took place the following morning when the NORDIK team worked with the ED, the Program Director, Board members, volunteers and community partners to create the timeline and map affiliations, connections and partnerships.

2.4 Manitoulin Island Community Context

Located within Lake Huron, Manitoulin Island is the world's largest freshwater island. The Island is situated approximately 50 kilometers off the TransCanada Highway (Hwy 17) and is accessed through Espanola at the junction of Highway 6. A swing bridge connects the Island to the mainland, through the community of Little Current. On the south side of the Island, a seasonal passenger ferry offers daily trips into Tobermory, Ontario. This ferry is used by many travelling the TransCanada Highway as a short cut to southern/southwestern Ontario. For those travelers wanting to visit the Island via ferry, the port in Tobermory is located 296 kilometers north of Toronto.

The closest city-centre is Sudbury which is located 121 kilometers east of the swing bridge. To the west lies the city of Sault Ste. Marie, 291 kilometers away. Once travelers reach the swing bridge, they often have many more kilometers to travel, depending on their destination on the Island.

Stretching over 2700 square kilometers, the Island is large and communities are widespread. The distance from one side of the island to another is comparable to driving from Toronto to London, Ontario, or similarly, driving from Toronto to Gravenhurst in the Muskokas. Manitoulin Island is home to over 12, 000 permanent residents, however the population increases greatly in the summer months with the influx of tourists and summer residents. The Island has become a popular retirement destination for people seeking a quiet and scenic setting.

The Island's population is spread out across many small communities, with the majority of communities being less than 400 people. Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands (NEMI) and Gore Bay are the two incorporated municipalities as well as 8 townships and 6 First Nations. Little Current is the largest community within the municipality of NEMI, home to 1500 people. Each of the eight townships contains numerous small communities, with the population of each ranging from 160 to 1950 people.

Fully one-half of the Island's total population is Aboriginal. Many Aboriginal people reside within the First Nations communities of which they are band members but many of the townships and municipalities also have a sizeable urban Aboriginal population. The First Nations frequently work together under the auspices of the United Chiefs and Councils of Manitoulin (UCCM) to deliver services such as health care and provide economic development to the Island's Aboriginal people.

There are two community development corporations on the Island, LaCloche Manitoulin Business Assistance Corporation (LAMBAC), and Waubetek, an organization that serves the Aboriginal population. In 2010 LAMBAC completed its new strategic plan and identified culture development as an important component.

Culture and Arts Context:

Farming and lumbering comprise a portion of the economy, however tourism is the dominant economic driver on the Island. The traditional tourism base of hunting and fishing has declined in Northern Ontario over the years with the sector trending toward more experienced based tourism with culture-based tourism and eco-tourism being the greatest beneficiaries. LAMBAC has begun offering training in experiential tourism in an effort to educate and create interest in meeting tourists' changing focus.

Some townships and First Nation communities have also been investigating development opportunities in green energy. In recent years, the controversy over building wind farms on the Island has polarized the Island's communities and families/individuals.

Hill Strategies Research Inc. (2006) state many small and rural areas across Canada have significant concentrations of artists in small and rural municipalities and Manitoulin Island has its share. There are dozens of art galleries and museums scattered across Manitoulin, most seasonal. One exception is the Ojibway Cultural Foundation in M'Chigeeng First Nation which operates year round.

There are many arts organizations on the Island covering specific disciplines but no one organization that serves to unite, coordinate and/or promote them. There are many and various types of working relationships between certain organizations that are developed and maintained on an as-needed basis.

There are several established theaters including the Debajehmujig Theater, the Burns Wharf Theater and the Gore Bay Theater. The Weengushk Film Institute has recently been established and the town of Gore Bay is opening a new arts centre in 2013 that will house artist studios and a gallery. The Manitoulin Fine Arts Association organizes a large studio tour and there are many independent artist studios and workshops that participate and/or are open during and outside of designated tours.

2.5 Awareness of Environment and Context

Sustainable organizations understand the local and global context of the community in which they are embedded and respond to changing community needs while keeping to their mandate (Torjman, 2007; Westley, Zimmerman & Patton, 2007; WolfBrown, 2011).

4elements Living Arts was launched by the current Executive Director in 2002. Recently the organization has been refining its profile and defining its place within the community. It describes itself as a "multi-disciplinary, cross-cultural non-profit arts organization" and is focused on examining the intersections between land, art and community. In the past, its focus was broader and included more presentation of arts programming, in areas such as dance or theater, but this more defined focus sets 4elements apart from other arts and culture organizations on the Island.

As well, 4elements works in areas most others don't. They are one of the few organizations whose activities link communities with one another including First Nations and non-aboriginal communities, artists and organizations. 4elements' working relationships with the Aboriginal community has been positive, with the drive to partner and/or participate originating within the First Nations.

The organization takes a holistic, process-based approach to development, taking time to build healthy relationships with its partners. 4elements' is holistic in its approach to generating knowledge and understanding about the links between community, resilience, peak oil and sustainability and using creative processes to generate community solutions to these issues.

4elements assists in community cultural and economic development, for example, by working closely with LAMBAC in a consultative manner regarding the creation of an arts investment fund for fostering

local development, and, providing services such as grant writing and small business development to individuals and other organizations.

Additionally 4elements continually advocates for appropriate and meaningful culture sector development through partnerships, dialoguing with other northern organizations and research. The Art of Being Billings (Sept. 2012) is an example of a research and development project funded by the Ontario Arts Council, Billings Township and LAMBAC, that brings together residents of all ages to share their stories of Billings through mapping, art creation, and other activities, as part of the township's Sustainability Plan. The organization's involvement in the cultural mapping project assists development by identifying key resources on which to build a culture-based economy.

When the opportunity arises 4elements advocates with Toronto based decision-makers regarding funding models which are designed to serve primarily large urban organizations in southern Ontario.

An example of the way the organization has responded to community needs utilizing the creative process is the 2003 "Vision Project" designed to address a division between the aboriginal and non-aboriginal residents at the public school in Little Current. A \$10,000 grant from the Ontario Arts Council was secured to facilitate the creation of murals to determine the values of the students at Little Current Public School.

Other 4elements workshops and events explore and build relationships between people and the land. Some programs have worked with local artists and taken place on the Island while others have brought artists to Manitoulin and/or other locations (e.g. Italy).

There is a community perception that 4elements is a Little Current based organization rather than serving Manitoulin. This incorrect view may be due, in part, to the studio space the organization occupied in Little Current (2002-2008) and/or limited marketing or messaging indicating otherwise.

During the consultation it was mentioned that the writings of Richard Florida from 2002 onward have positively impacted people's perceptions around the concept of "quality of place" and have led to increased government funding for certain cultural activities such as cultural mapping. However, the current economic downturn coupled with government policy has resulted in a drastic reduction of funding opportunities and made it extremely difficult for many organizations, such as 4elements to maintain their foothold.

Justin Tilson, a young activist and entrepreneur on Manitoulin Island was referenced as positively impacting the social climate. He is attributed with introducing permaculture to the Island as well as bringing the international movement of Transition Towns to the area, raising awareness of peak oil and concepts around building community resilience. The local group calling itself Resilient Manitoulin initially offered a series of workshops but has since become less active.

The work of both of these influential individuals drew attention to the importance of arts and culture as part of healthy communities. Some of 4elements' Board and staff participated in the Transition

Town/Resilient Manitoulin sessions gaining insight into the looming post carbon era and ways community building can begin to address the issues.

Despite this positive change in people’s attitudes, 4elements still sees a need for improved relations with municipalities, particularly with NEMI. Throughout the organization’s existence, there has been an overall lack of support from this municipality in both project proposals and funding requests.

The economic downturn has negatively affected the entire Island making people more selective and/or unable to participate in arts activities. There are, however, a number of new ventures that align with 4elements’ goals that could be capitalized upon, such as LAMBAC’s experiential tourism initiative defined as travel that engages visitors in a series of memorable travel activities, revealed over time, that are inherently personal, engage the senses and make connections on an emotional, physical, spiritual and/or intellectual level.

2.6 Timeline

Participants mapped events that have impacted the organization over the past five years, from 2007-2012. Events prior to 2007 have also been included to give a broader context of 4elements’s current situation.



Positive events appear above the line, those that were negative below the line and neutral events or those that were deemed to have both positive and negative implications appear on the line. Highlights for the organization include the establishment of the Board and the incorporation of the organization as a non-profit in 2009.

Prior to 2007

- 1997; Manitoulin Art Tour Begins
- 2002; relationship with Jude Ortiz/NORDIK begins
- 2003; Heather Thoma moves to Manitoulin Island
- 2003-2004; Crisis at Little Current Public School resulting in Vision project: OAC grant to create murals and determine the 7 core values of students
- 2004; New Art Gallery at Gore Bay Museum opens
- 2004/2005; Opening of Debajehmujig Centre in Manitowaning

2007

- Sophie teaching numerous childrens classes and afterschool activities
- Artastic Fusion Arts Festival at highschool

2008

- Local food movement begins
- Cross Pollination Project (Gore Bay)
- Peak energy awareness
- Opening of Weengushk Film School
- Start of Burns Wharf Theater annual productions

2009

- Writings of Richard Florida positively impacted government funding of cultural pursuits"
- Creative Cities" movement sparks government importance of Quality of Place
- 4 Elements Board established
- Board strategic planning retreat
- 4 Elements receives non-profit status
- Partnership with Queens University develops
- Birth of Land Art Days; positive press coverage of workshops
- "Thrive" theater project; Elisha Sidlar integration of food, health and wellness, community
- Rue Studio opens in Sheguindah; created community space that supports arts and hosts events
- Relationship with Diana Parrill begins- owner of Bonnie Blink house in Sheguindah
- BCF/ISF Infrastructure Funding begins- Trails Billings

2010

- Community Garden started at CMPS; land/art connection more visible in community; on going
- LAMBAC develops strategic plan that highlights importance of cultural planning
- Rue Studio relationship with 4E begins
- Justin Tilson introduces permaculture to Manitoulin Island and Transition Town Movement; community meetings/focus groups on what resilience means
- Heather shifts from full to part time farming
- 6 Foot Festival- Elisha Seidler
- Heather begins training in Expressive Arts at Haliburton
- Teachers learn about different mediums and use in classroom to foster creativity; ongoing
- Artists provide art classes for students in Central Manitoulin Public School; ongoing

2011

- LAMBAC begins cultural planning; relationship with Mary Nelder strengthens
- Pam and Gary join 4 elements Board
- Kenjgewin-Teg Educational Institute new building opens
- Taste of Manitoulin Festival begins; highlights the Island's culinary talents and cultural and historical background

2012

- Opening of Wharf Arts Centre in Gore Bay 2013
- Exhibition space at library in Little Current made available
- Billings Creative Vision Project funded by OAC
- Bonnie Blink project. Academic streams funded by Queens University, artistic stream funded by OAC (still waiting for final approval)

2007 (on line)

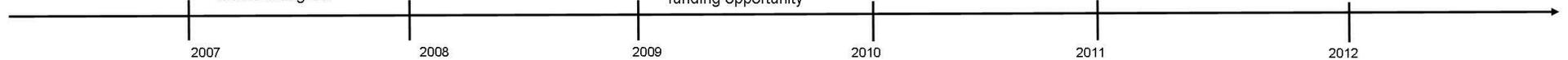
- Sophie begins to focus on Masters degree

2009 (on line)

- 4 E turns down major funding opportunity

2010 (on line)

- Sophie begins to focus on PhD



Prior to 2007

- McLeans Mountain Wind Farms; polarizing people on the Island; ongoing
- Need for Northern, rural funding model and research; ongoing

- Island-wide downturn in art sales

- North East Manitoulin Island (NEMI) Council unresponsive of 4 Elements
- Economic downturn; funding opportunities decrease

- Conservative Government cuts to cultural funding
- Sophie and Heather fatigue 2009-2011

- Post Office studio space in Little Current closes due to finance

- Further Conservative Government funding cuts to culture

- Island-wide drought
- Ontario Minister more sports than culture focused

2.7 Community Relations and Social Capital Development

Sustainable organizations have developed strong networks of social relations (social capital) enabling them to respond to change; extend their operations through mutually beneficial partnerships that advance profiles and share risks; gather and disseminate information; and, collectively advocate for change (Torjman, 2007; Westley, Zimmerman & Patton, 2007).

Over the past ten years 4elements Living Arts has established a number of partnerships with some remaining active over long periods of time and others being renewed as projects arise. The partnerships are with local, regional, provincial and some national organizations.

Economic Development Partners

Economic development partners create important relationships in linking culture to the economy thus raising the importance of the arts in diversifying and building local economies. The arts inform development through understanding of place and economic development initiatives foster culture-based livelihoods (Hume, 2009; Ortiz & Broad, 2007).

A key local partnership has been with LAMBAC, one of the Island's two Community Development Corporations. The organization also has a good relationship with Waubetek, Manitoulin Island's Community Development Corporation that serves the Aboriginal population.

In 2010 LAMBAC completed its own strategic plan and through this process, the importance of cultural planning was highlighted, leading to a stronger relationship with 4elements. LAMBAC has supported the growth of 4elements through grant writing guidance and networking opportunities, and 4elements has served in a consultancy role to LAMBAC in its work with the cultural sector. This partnership has also led to a new relationship with the Township of Billings, opening up prospects for additional projects as well as funding options.

Educational Partnerships

Educational partners link culture to human resource development. Artists in schools add significant value in increasing students' and teachers' creative capacity, and, arts organizations provide training and leadership opportunities for students to apply educational learnings in practical situations (ArtsSmarts, 2007, 2006).

The partnership with local public schools was extremely active in the years 2002 to 2009 and remains strong now, although extensive projects have not taken place in the schools recently. One artist (with the exception of fall 2012) has continued to offer art classes in some schools through 4elements. The organization recognizes the relationship as established with the potential to grow.

Since 2010 a teacher (and a participant in the consultation) at Central Public School has begun to introduce 'real' art materials into the classroom (e.g., paint other than tempera) and increased the number of artists visiting the school. The teacher is committed to being the school's liaison to 4elements.

In addition, local artists have been offering classes in all the schools across the Island over the last 2 years, under the umbrella of 4elements. All of these things will assist in raising 4elements' profile within schools and broader community as well as the importance of creative processes.

The organization is also investigating opportunities to expand its relationship with Kenjgewin-Teg Education Institute (KTEI), which may open the door to working more closely with the many First Nation schools in the region as well as research and/or training opportunities.

A partnership with Queen's University has been leveraged through the executive director's enrolment in a PhD program, and this partnership has led to a new project within the town of Sheguiandah. The "Bonnie Blink" project began in the fall of 2012 with a group of physical and human geography students from Queen's traveling to Sheguiandah to collaborate with local and visiting artists, to research the human ecosystems impact, community stories and historic and current land-use of the area. This project will include a Community Arts Weekend that will be hosted at the Centennial Museum, another emerging partner of 4elements.

There are ongoing discussions with Algoma University's Community Economic and Social Development (CESD) program regarding the possibility of 4elements delivering credit courses on the Island. Currently the ED teaches in the program but not on the Island and not Landscape/Art related courses.

4element's long term goal of creating the Northern Ontario Institute for Land and Landscape Studies is in the very initial stage of seeking assistance from NORDIK Institute in its development. One NORDIK researcher has been working with the organization informally over a long period of time regarding ways of increasing the sustainability of Northern Ontario's culture sector in general, and 4elements in particular.

Partnerships with other arts organizations and artists

Culture partnerships strengthen sector development through supporting others' initiatives, thus building capacity and raising the collective profile of the arts. Collaboration assists in leveraging individual and organizational assets in identifying and meeting the sector, as well as the broader community's, needs (Duxbury & Campbell, 2009).

4elements partners with the Manitoulin Fine Arts Association (MFAA), the Island's leading visual arts organization by promoting and participating in each other's events and sharing information.

The opening of Rue Studio in Sheguiandah in 2010 birthed a new partnership between this art studio and 4elements. The two groups work together to host events to support local artists.

Rue Studio has been hired to design 4element's website, transitioning the organization from being blog-based to having a full-fledged web presence which will increase its visibility and sense of establishment.

During the consultation process participants identified many past and potential partnerships within and across sectors (e.g. culture, business, agriculture) that could be renewed and/or developed in meeting their goals. Please see Appendix I for a list of partners, funders and affiliations.

Community Support

Community partnerships assist in embedding the arts into the broader community. Local support provides opportunities for fostering cross sectorial relations in building and celebrating local culture and community identity (Duxbury & Campbell, 2009).

A variety of sponsors support 4element's work through in-kind and cash donations for specific projects.

Memberships are few but the organization is considering growing this opportunity to raise its profile, gain more community support and increase operational funding opportunities.

Over the years, the organization has received positive press coverage in the Manitoulin Expositor. For example 4elements hosted their first "Land Art Days" workshop in 2009 and gained favorable media coverage, raising the profile of the organization in the community. They also received good coverage for the Ontario Crafts Council's CraftSmarts Workshop held in 2011.

Depth and length of relationships

Over the past ten years 4elements Living Arts has established a number of partnerships with a diversity of organizations prominent in their respective sectors with some remaining active over long periods of time and others being renewed as projects arise. Relationships are with local, regional, provincial and national level within the culture sector, educational institutions (elementary and post-secondary, First Nations) and community development corporations. A new relationship with the Town of Billings has assisted in repositioning the organization's profile, with other communities on the Island expressing interest in conducting similar research.

Number of hosted events

The list below is representative of the types of events undertaken by 4elelemts in which the organization was the sole and/or lead organization

Services:

- Consultancy work (e.g. LAMBAC) and small business development advising
- grant writing support for artists and organizations
- advocacy work

Producing:

- Bonnie Blink Project: (Research production); Undergraduate students collaborating with local artists to investigate the theme of Land Use History; project beginning fall of 2012
- Billings Project: (Research production); A community-based process examining human ecosystem relations and sustainability through story sharing and art creation; project beginning fall of 2012
- Little Current Public School Story Telling Project; Interviewing all students to develop the core values of student body, creating a mural ; 2004

Programming:

- Manitoulin Movement Institute: Workshops in the schools and culminated with a performance; 2007
- Land Art Workshops: 2009 to present year, Several times a year
- Children's After School and Summer Programs: 2002 to present year, several times a year
- Curating art exhibits several times a year from 2002 to 2008 during the time that the 4elements gallery space existed in downtown Little Current

2.8 Governance

Effective boards provide strong leadership demonstrating collective capacity and efficacy in addressing the organization's governance needs within the range of its current activities and future directions (WolfBrown, 2011).

Recruitment and participation of board members

Since 4elements' inception in 2002 it has been managed by the current Executive Director, with the Program Director joining in 2004 as Program Assistant and moving into her role as Program Director in 2008. The two women are the lifeblood of the organization and remain fully committed to working toward shared goals and evolving as needed.

4elements became incorporated as a non-profit in 2009 and established its Board of Directors the same year. The Board is very active and currently there are four individuals who each bring specific skills and knowledge to their roles, including professional bookkeeping and conflict resolution, which are significant assets. Additional Board members will be sought over time with targeted recruitment to ensure its organizational needs are met.

There are very respectful relationships between Board members, Executive Director and Program Director and strong ties between the ED and Program Director contributing to the organization's continued existence.

Over the years the organization has been well supported by a number of community advisors and it is anticipated that strong community input will continue. During the consultation session, commitments were made from each Board member and community volunteer/partner who was present. These commitments included sourcing alternative funding opportunities; assisting with applications to hire interns for marketing; translating the organization's creative work into business language; and, liaising with community schools.

The organization assists Board members in participating in meetings by rotating the location to each member's home. This assists in balancing the distance across the Island travelled by each member. As well, teleconferencing utilizing a speaker phone allows members to call into the session. At least one member per meeting connects via the phone. Additionally email proxy voting enables the organization to move forward when members are not able to gather in one spot.

Strategic Planning

In 2010 the Board began a strategic planning process, leading to a Projected Two Year Plan (see Appendix II). The development of a more formal strategic plan has become a priority. The projected planning process brought forth the recognition of one recurring and deepening theme, i.e., the work around land and art, as well as the need to assist in developing the culture sector and organizational capacity. Thus, 4elements has identified three strategic priorities:

- i) *Land, art and story programming:* examining the intersection of land, stories, art and community through research and art creation.
- ii) *Community cultural and economic development:* development of the local and regional cultural sector.
- iii) *4elements organizational development:* growth and sustainability of the organization itself. Included in this priority is the long term goal of establishing the Northern Ontario Institute for Land and Landscape Studies, offering accredited courses through established University partnerships. There would be opportunities for various education structures, both short and long term. The Institute would also create faculty research opportunities.

Although each stream has its own priorities, the three are interconnected. Programming and services relate through all three streams.

An overarching goal revolves around discovering how to serve the needs of the community through creative processes and how to infuse creative processes more broadly into the community.

An identified challenge is the organization's capacity to convey its purpose and role to people less familiar with creative processes. The need to develop key messaging or 'translate' the organization's vision, mandate, research and programs into messaging that is meaningful to others in, for example, business, social, and environmental and to funding agencies is critical. It is acknowledged that developing such promotional material would enable a broader spectrum of people to understand, support and/or engage in the experiences.

Training

Due to the recent formation of the Board and successful recruitment of skilled members, there has not yet been a need for Board training. There is acknowledgement that there may be a future need and 4 elements could play a role in organizing training that would benefit other non-profits as well, building broader community capacity.

To date, the aforementioned strategic planning sessions led by the Executive Director and Program Director, and NORDIK's consultation have served as training sessions, providing participants, (Board, community members and staff), a foundational knowledge about the organization's history and community context.

Problems and resolutions

No issues specific to Board governance were noted during the consultation. Concerns regarding the challenges facing the ED and Program Director are mentioned in the Human Resources section.

2.9 Financial

Sustainable organizations have diversified revenue sources, accurate forecasting and the capacity to balance budgets (WolfBrown, 2011).

Diversity of revenue sources

4 elements Living Arts' funding has always been on a project by project basis with many projects in the earlier years breaking even. Children and adult classes generated a small surplus to cover administration costs such as insurance. Increasing membership is beginning to provide an annual revenue stream as well as increase the organization's social capital.

In the past, project funding has been secured from the Ontario Arts Council and Heritage Canada. These agencies now have less funding available and more stringent selection criteria, creating a highly competitive field. Throughout the first few years of the organization's existence, funding and grant opportunities were plentiful, with an almost 100% success rate in obtaining funding for proposals. Since the economic downturn in 2008, these opportunities have decreased with only about one in six grant

applications being successful in receiving funding, negatively impacting the organization's ability to maintain programming and pay staff.

Over the years when there has been a shortfall, the Executive Director and/or Program Director have personally underwritten the deficit including basic expenses such as rent, phone, internet, insurance, as well as the studio space in Little Current from 2002-2008. This option is no longer available and the organization must find ways to become financially viable even if only on a project to project basis.

Securing operational funding would assist the organization in moving beyond occasional and/or volunteer staffing providing more stability and visibility. However, many northern organizations face challenges in meeting funders' eligibility criteria particularly around size. 4elements' staff has had on-going discussions with funding agencies and other northern organizations and institutions regarding the limitations of various funding models.

For example, the Ontario Arts Council is one of the few agencies offering core funding. They have three streams of funding that relate to the mission and mandate of 4elements: i) Community Arts Council, ii) Multidisciplinary Arts Organization; and, iii) Art Service Organization. All three grants require that the organizations applying must do so during the 1st year of a multiyear cycle. In this case, year one is 2012 so the application must be completed during this calendar year, otherwise the next intake is in 2015.

Furthermore, both the Community Arts Council grant and the Multi-Disciplinary Arts Organization grant require proof of at least \$70,000 in total revenues for the last fiscal year. The Community Arts Council grant requires the organization to have at least one full or half time paid staff member.

In order to apply to the Arts Service Organization grant, the primary mandate of the organization must be to provide services to artists and/or Art Service Organization. The organization must also demonstrate two years of sustained, regular, ongoing programming. In addition, this grant requires proof of \$100,000 in total revenues over the last year.

Additionally, arts organizations across the province have seen an overall reduction in operating funds being given out in 2012. Organizations that have received operational funding in the past were subject to reductions ranging from 5 to 100 percent, based on more stringent assessment criteria. This assessment process examined arts organizations' artistic quality and contribution; as well as their organizational effectiveness.

4elements Living Arts reports revenues of \$70, 000 that have flowed through the organization in the last ten years. Although this amount may not seem grand in organizational terms, 4elements states it is important to view this amount in terms of output. Within this perspective 4elements has been highly successful in delivering programming and maintaining the organization for a decade.

One of the main challenges 4elemetns faces is the ratio of paid/unpaid work. Relationship building necessary to creating appropriate, meaningful and sustainable development requires dedicated time,

and often over a long period. This type of essential ground work is rarely funded through project budgets. In view of this, 4elements has begun to decline opportunities, becoming more cautious in assessing which projects would support short/longer term goals in meeting artists', sector and the community at large development needs.

The organization's positive relationship with the economic development corporation on the Island—LAMBAC—has begun to open the doors for funding opportunities and the positive relationship with Waubetek helps link the organization with others on the Island.

As well, the Ontario Arts Council funding for the Township of Billings' partnership with 4elements, accessed through LAMBEC, has enabled the organization to conduct cultural work within municipalities, thereby raising their visibility and expanding the possibilities of developing relationships with other municipalities and gaining increased community support.

Forecasting accuracy

Forecasting has been relatively accurate over the years

Number of balanced budgets in the last five years

Most project budgets have balanced over the life of the organization. Deficits that have occurred have been projected and, in most cases, known in advance of the start program with the organization deciding to implement them regardless. This practice will not be carried forward in 2012.

2.10 Human Resources

Sustainable organizations have skilled human resources (staff and volunteers) to meet organizational needs and training opportunities to continuously keep pace with technological and social changes and educational advancements in addressing opportunities and challenges (WolfBrown, 2011).

Number of staff

4elements Living Arts currently has an Executive Director and a Program Director. Both women in these positions work primarily on a volunteer basis, being paid only when funding allows. Additional paid staff and volunteers are recruited on an 'as needed basis' to meet programming demands.

The Executive Director has an MA in Interdisciplinary Humanities and is currently a PhD candidate in the Geography Department at Queen's University. The Program Director has an MSc in Holistic Science from Schumacher College in the UK and is currently working towards a certificate in Expressive Arts from Fleming College, Halliburton Campus.

They hold the vision for the organization and are the foundational rock upon which the organization is built. Over the life of the organization there have been cycles of burn out and a sense of being overwhelmed forcing the women to draw back, regroup and revision ways of carrying the organization's vision and work forward.

Formalizing the organization's non-profit status and the formation of an active Board of Directors has alleviated the staff's workload in some respects but the current economic climate and funding cuts challenge the organization's capacity in becoming sustainable.

Operational support is necessary to obtain secure funding. 4elements is seeking partnerships and additional volunteers whose duties would be specific and limited to, for example: searching for funding opportunities; drafting, preparing and submitting grant applications; employing economic analysis tools to describe the value of art; designing organizational messaging and marketing materials; event promotions; and, updating website and social media. LAMBAC and some Board members have generously offered support for grant writing which may provide some relief.

The organization is investigating the possibility of hiring interns (e.g. NOHFC) or co-op students however this is contingent on securing stable office space and oversight, and in the case of NOHFC, the ability to finance ten percent of the interns' wages. LAMBAC and/or other organizations are being approached to assist in meeting the guidelines and it seems as though a solution is near.

Skills

Combined, the ED and Program Director have over forty years of experience in community organization and development and non-profit leadership. Each has a diversity of skills upon which to draw and both are methodical and pragmatic in decision making and implementing plans. Both bring significant value to the organization through their depth of understanding of the organization's context and sustainability and proven ability in building respectful relationships when navigating cultural, sectorial and geographic boundaries. Both are also highly skilled visual artists with a strong vested interest in ensuring meaningful artistic and development work is undertaken.

Depth

The organization is severely constrained by the lack of any full-time permanent staff. Despite the tremendous commitment of current staff – and the outstanding results – the organization's ongoing sustainability is compromised by this lack. Having a third staff person, even on a part time basis, and/or reliable volunteers to alleviate the work load, particularly the ongoing need for grant writing and proposal development, and the constant demands inherent in the 'carrying' of the organization would provide immense support and a bit of a "safety net" in increasing continuity and reducing burnout of the two main leaders.

Opportunities for training and education

Both the ED and Program Director are well educated and continually implement their learnings. Training and education, however, are primarily undertaken at personal expense due to the organization's limited financial position.

2.11 Summary

4elements Living Arts has a 10-year history and a new defined focus upon which to build a more sustainable organization. It does face challenges around generating revenue through traditional sources of core support such as the Ontario Arts Council due to current funding models. However, skillful messaging, targeted marketing and strategic cross sector partnering would better position the organization in diversifying income streams particularly around its identified priority of community culture and economic development.

4element's past visioning sessions which have identified the organization's core aspects has laid a solid foundation for the next step of formalizing its first strategic plan as a non-profit organization. Key to its success is developing a manageable timeline to minimize workload stress and burnout of staff, Board and community supporters. Also essential is the development of messaging and marketing materials that 'translate' the organization's culture -based profile to be meaningful to the economic, social and environmental sectors.

Increasing and diversifying revenue streams are necessary to make the leap to paid employment for the (primarily volunteer) Executive Director and Program Director and potentially one additional part-time staff. The need for additional administrative staffing is critical to lighten the load for current staff and a few possible avenues have been identified.

The organization has a number of well established relationships with key organizations, within and beyond the culture sector, thus enabling them to partner with and/or draw from a variety of resources, on an as-needed basis. Additionally a few potential partners have been identified that could be leveraged to build a broader base of support leading to increased sustainability.

Past projects such as the school-based Vision Project has demonstrated leadership in developing programs that build/restore relationships across cultural boundaries and the upcoming research with the Township of Billings raises 4elements' profile as the land/art/research 'institute' with a role to play in the Island's culture development.

4elements' 'next steps' are the formalization of its two year strategic plan, creation of key messaging and marketing materials and partnership strengthening and/or development priorities emerging from the planning process.

3.0 Recommendations

Community Relations and Social Capital Development

1. Tourism is a large part of Manitoulin's economy and the recent trend away from traditional hunting and fishing to experience-based opportunities, particularly culture tourism, is to 4elements' advantage:
 - a. Target tourists who are currently on the Island by exploring the potential of artist in residence workshops at tourist resorts. e.g., test the market by arranging for the artist to travel to different tourist locations over the course of one week.
 - b. Investigate local, regional and international environmental and/or experiential tourism in promoting and attracting participants to 4element's opportunities through partnerships and/or informational support.
2. Foster community culture and economic development and local understanding of creative land/art processes across community strata:
 - a. Explore ways of linking to other sectors' (e.g., food movement, conservation) local initiatives in ways that add value to the experience while remaining within the organization's priority areas and human resource limitations.
3. Capitalize on expertise in *Land, art and story programming* and export to other local, regional and/or international communities.
4. Develop *Land, art and story programming*, examining the intersection of land, stories, art and community through research and art creation:
 - a. Formalize discussions with Algoma University's CESD program around course development and delivery.
 - b. Formalize discussions with NORDIK Institute regarding the development of an Institute for Land and Landscape Studies
 - c. Apply to Ontario Arts Council for partnership development support

Governance

1. Formalize the two year strategic planning document (presented during consultation) by identifying targets, actions, priorities, timelines and performance measures keeping in mind implementation costs, including financial, people, skills sets and work demands within and outside the organization.

2. Create promotional materials conveying or ‘translating’ the organization’s profile to terminology pertinent to other sectors, e.g. economic, environmental and social.
3. Identify gaps in board capacity and community advisors and recruit targeted members.
4. Ensure the Board is working to its maximum competency and as a unified board:
 - a. Conduct a needs assessment and support members in accessing training through local and/or distance opportunities. For example other organizations’ workshop speakers; the Social Economy Series (<http://socialeconomyhub.ca/>); NORDIK Institute workshops and training (onsite/ on distance).
 - b. Work with other local organizations in delivering targeted training on-site and distance.
5. Continue working with peers and networks in advocating for changes in funding models to meet Northern Ontario’s needs

Financial

1. Diversify revenue sources and increase overall budget:
 - a. Identity membership benefits and launch a drive to increase networks and support as well as meet OAC’s eligibility criteria for operational funding
 - b. Launch a sponsorship campaign once key messaging and promotional materials have been prepared

Human Resources

1. Meet organizational needs e.g. searching for funding opportunities; drafting grant applications; translating art messages into economic terminology; design organizational messaging and marketing materials; event promotions; and, update website and social media:
 - a. Review administrative tasks and explore hiring a part-time staff person and/or recruit additional people in meeting targeted short term goals. e.g. through ad hoc committees; individuals and/or student or intern placements; volunteer bureaus and non-profit resource organizations such as Charity Village.
2. Build organizational capacity and social capital:
 - a. Identify opportunities for funding to participate in relevant local, regional and/or provincial conferences and seminars related to community arts, research and cultural planning work.

4.0 Project Outcomes

The project established a peer mentoring network to share, generate and mobilize knowledge between three very different arts organizations across Northeastern Ontario who had not previously worked together: i) The Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District; ii) 4elements Living Arts on Manitoulin Island; and, iii) Conseil des Arts de Hearst. Overall the project led to strengthening their organizations' management capacity that will advantage them in future operations.

The project allowed the time and space necessary to initiate an internal dialogue within the organizations, as well as amongst community members and mentoring partners. This led to increased organizational capacity, social capital development/community relations and engagement and knowledge mobilization in understanding sustainability within the Northeastern Ontario context. Specifically, the project increased organizational capacity; strengthened community engagement and built social capital and mobilized knowledge in the cultural sector.

Increased Organizational Capacity

The partners gained experience in using various types of technology for training and knowledge mobilization (e.g. Skype, Google Hangout) that assist in mitigating the vast geography of the North.

The project required participants to consolidate and present their past strategic planning documents at the consultation leading one organization to create a colour brochure highlighting their past, current and future activities within their three strategic themes that will now be used to recruit partners, members, sponsors and broader community support.

Creating the Timeline generated knowledge and understanding for staff and new and/or long-time Board and community members about the organizations' history and responses with a community, regional and global context.

The organizations received a profile investigating their sustainability in five key areas: community context and awareness; governance; human resources; financial; and, social capital development/community relations and engagement. The profile provided an external perspective of their current situation based on community consultations facilitated by the Consultant and peer mentoring dialogues. The report provides context for making informed decisions by clarifying their situation, ensuring them that they are on the right path, and/or heading in the proper direction and providing recommendations and action items for strengthening their sustainability.

Community Engagement and Social Capital Development

The partners found the peer network very valuable in analyzing each other's current status within Anglophone and Francophone cultures and small urban, rural and isolated communities that comprise Northern Ontario, further contributing to understanding their organization's sustainability challenges.

The peers discussed the continuing need in the North for working together to advocate and support other organizations, due to the substantial economic challenges facing the region, its low population density, and the vast distances between communities. The organizations committed to further dialoguing in three months' time to discuss their respective progress and ways of assisting funding agencies with a southern Ontario-centric focus to understand Northerners' differing needs.

One organization presented its strategic plan to many new Board members . Another consultation brought together Board and community members and economic developers which strengthened cross-sectoral relationships and expanded local networks leading to increased commitment to the organization's sustainability by every participant. Additionally, one representative from a key Aboriginal organization expressed an interest in becoming a board member of one of the organizations.

Knowledge Mobilization

The peers shared resources, e.g., market research questionnaires, distribution channels and arts reports; information about current events (theirs and others); sources and feasibility of revenue streams; experience in dealing with funding agencies including challenges in meeting their criteria and potential means of addressing concerns. The exchanges will advantage them in operational relevancy and efficiency.

Participants expressed a desire to continue identifying resources and areas of expertise in assisting the arts community in becoming more sustainable.

Summary

The project assisted three arts organizations in mobilizing knowledge around becoming more sustainable within a Northern context and laid the foundation for continued collaboration. Participants thought this process could be used as a model in building sustainability throughout the region as it established critical peer mentoring support through dialoguing and sharing resources and expertise in a region that is challenged by geographical distances and contextual differences to southern Ontario.

References

ArtsSmarts (2006). *Engaged in Learning: The Arts Smarts Model*. Ottawa: ArtsSmarts

ArtsSmarts (2007) *Building Arts Smarts' Research Capacity: Interim Report*. Ottawa: ArtsSmarts

Bell, J, & Cornelius, M. (2013). *UnderDeveloped: A National Study of Challenges Facing Non-Profit Fundraising*. San Francisco, CA: CompassPoint Nonprofit Services and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund

- Broad, G. and Date. S. (2006). *Courageous Lives: A Profile of the Working Poor in Sault Ste. Marie*. Sault Ste. Marie: Algoma University
- Colussi, M. (1999). The community resilience manual: A new resource will link rural revitalization to CED best practices. *Making Waves, 10 (4)*. Port Alberni: Centre for Community Enterprise
- Community Resilience Sault Ste. Marie (2006). *Portrait of Community Resilience of Sault Ste. Marie*. Sault Ste. Marie: Algoma University
- Cultural Careers Council Ontario (2011). *The Mentoring Project: Supporting the Career Development of Artists*. Toronto: Cultural Careers Council Ontario
- Duxbury, N. and Campbell, H. (2009). Developing and Revitalizing Rural Communities through Arts and Culture. *Small Cities Imprint*. Vol. 3 (2011) No. 1, pp. 111-132
- Hume, G. (2009) The Arts: And Creative Communities in Canada. *Municipal World*. Vol. 116. No 9: 9-12
- Lewis, M. & Lockhart, R.A. (2002). *Performance Measurement, Development Indicators and Aboriginal Economic Development*. Port Alberni: Centre for Community Enterprise
- mDm Consulting (2011). *Fostering Arts at a Local Level: A review of Community Arts Councils in Ontario*. Toronto: Ontario Arts Council
- Ortiz, J. (2013 forthcoming) Working title, Doctoral Thesis, University of the West of England, UK
- Ortiz, J. & Broad, G. (2007). Culture, Creative and the Arts: *Achieving Community Resilience and Sustainability through the Arts in Sault Ste. Marie*. Algoma University: Sault Ste. Marie
- Torjman, S. (2007). *Shared space: The communities agenda*. Ottawa: The Caledon Institute of Social Policy.
- Westley, F., Zimmerman, B., & Patton, M.Quinn. (2006). *Getting to Maybe: How the world is changed*. Random House Canada.
- WolfBrown (2011). Perspectives on Non Profit Strategies from WolfBrown. *Sounding Board*. Vol. 30. Cambridge: USA

Appendix I

Current		
Funders	Partners	Community Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ontario Arts Council LAMBAC: Local Initiative Fund LAMBAC/Ministry of Tourism/Culture Township of Billings Heritage Canada Business sponsors Community members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sudbury Arts Council Queens University Laurentian University Film Studio NORDIK Institute Conseil Des Arts De Hearst Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District Ontario Crafts Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LAMBAC-Cultural Mapping project Township of Billings Rue Studio Little Current Public School Central Manitoulin Public School Kenjgewin-Teg Educational Institute (KTEI) Centennial Museum United Church Little Current Manitoulin Fine Arts Assoc. Manitoulin Expositor Ojibway Cultural Foundation NEMI Public Library Resilient Manitoulin
Past		
Funders	Partners	Community Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laurentian University 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Debajehmujig Theater Manitoulin Secondary School (MSS) Dusk Dances Moving Pictures Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands (Municipality)
Potential		
Funders	Partners	Community Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SSHRC Arts Investment Fund Internships Student Projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Algoma University-CESD Contact North NORDIK (expand) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Museums Great Spirit Circle Trail KTEI (to expand) Schools- expand

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Training/RDSB • Co-op MSS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -need office space -need core funding • DSSAB/Ministry of culture interns • Ontario Trillium Foundation • Corporate/Individual Donation 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debajehmujig Theatre • Rue Studio (expand) • Weengushk Film Institute • Artists • Gore Bay Wharf Complex • Gore Bay Museum and Gallery • Townships
---	--	--

Appendix II

4elements Living Arts Projected 2 year plan

Summer-Fall 2012

Land / Art / Story Programming

- Bonnie Blink Project: Finalize course details; onsite sessions with students, artists, and local residents
- Day-Long Land/Art sessions: Sheguiandah October; Kagawong, November/December
- Partnership development with Algoma U for creation of Northern Ontario Institute for Land and Landscape Studies
- Community classes and workshops with various instructors

Community Cultural and Economic Development

- Billings Community Stories Project - committee development; begin community workshops
- Support LAMBAC to submit Cultural Mapping funding proposal
- Support MSS to pursue funding for stage/theater upgrades
- Apply for funding for further community development work
- Build partnerships with northern arts groups initiated out of NORDIK capacity building project

4e Organizational Development

- 4e Strategic planning/organizational development with NORDIK
- Complete 4elements strategic plan
- Develop and launch new 4elements website
- Further develop and increase memberships via clear strategy
- Clarify and progress on increasing financial income streams

- Recruit new board members to replace outgoing members
- Host AGM/10th Anniversary event – November
- Cultivate additional community and business sponsors and partners
- Find and hire part-time administrative support person
- Finalize brochure and mail out to key stakeholders, potential partners and funders

Winter-Spring 2013

Land / Art Programming

- Day-long Land/Art Sessions – Gore Bay, Providence Bay
- Bonnie Blink Project - Artists continue creative collaborations via blogsite, 4e support
- Content development for Northern Ontario Institute for Land and Landscape Studies
- Develop website or blogs further for cross-community Land/Art work
- Writing of articles based on work with Bonnie Blink Research, and communication of findings and sharing of articles with Island; teleconference with Queen’s University
- Apply for funding for Bonnie Blink, Phase 2, and application for new community project
- Build relationships with local schools for further development of land/story projects

Community Cultural and Economic Development

- Work with LAMBAC to offer arts organizational and capacity development training courses on Manitoulin and La Cloche
- Billings Community Stories Project - collate submissions, plan community open house
- Apply for funding for Billings Project Phase 2, if community interest indicates
- Collaborate with LAMBAC to develop Manitoulin community Cultural Investment Fund
- Research potential for other community development work on Manitoulin sprouted from Billings Project
- Support LAMBAC in offering community cultural planning event

4e Organizational Development

- Research and further solidify consistent income streams
- Continue and expand mentorship/learning with other northern arts groups
- Hire Intern in collaboration with LAMBAC
- Refine and develop advertising and sponsorships via website
- Refine and develop organizational policies, for guest instructors, etc.
- Apply for core organizational funding via OAC or Trillium
- Pursue 4elements charitable status designation
- Improve and develop services to 4e members - host a member event
- Assess board development needs

Summer – Fall 2013

Land / Art / Story Programming

- Day-long Land/Art sessions: locations TBA
- Community classes and workshops with various instructors
- Develop University/community partnership for new Manitoulin-based project similar to Bonnie Blink
- Further develop local school partnerships for land/story projects
- Develop college-university level course in arts/science intersection, based on landscape study with Algoma University as part of Institute

Community Cultural and Economic Development

- Funding applications to support 4e work in local and regional arts and culture capacity building
- Activate effective communication networks across N. Ontario between local & regional arts org's
- Billings Project Phase 2, if continued
- Writing/research of articles related to Billings Community Stories Project
- Contribute to/develop arts and culture stream of Taste of Manitoulin Festival

4e Organizational Development

- Access consistent funding for at least one part-time administration/teaching position
- Access consistent funding for core organizational costs

Winter-Spring 2014

Land / Art / Story Programming

- Work with Algoma U, Queen's, or other institutions for new course creation in conjunction with Landscape Institute
- 1 Land/Art workshop
- Application to OAC for artist in residence
- Delivery of one course in collaboration with Queen's and/or Algoma as part of Institute

Community Cultural and Economic Development

- Northern Arts capacity building conference?

- Development of regional website with Nordik
- Continue work with LAMBAC on Investment Fund, arts capacity development and training

4e Organizational Development

- Access consistent funding for 1 to 3 part-time admin and teaching positions