

CULTURE, CREATIVITY AND THE ARTS:

Building Resilience in Northern Ontario

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the University of the West of England,
Bristol for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education

May 21, 2017

Abstract

This thesis investigates the contribution of the arts to resilience within the context of Northern Ontario, a vast, sparsely populated geographical region dotted with isolated, rural, and smaller urban communities whose economies are based primarily on resource extraction. Industry restructuring and other pressing issues related to globalization are forcing communities to rapidly adapt to survive. Resilience is commonly understood as a community's capacity to resist adverse conditions, economic or otherwise, and the ability to adapt, transition, and prosper through change while retaining its core values (Lewis and Lockhart, 2002).

The arts have been hailed as economic drivers in the creative economy and many, primarily urban centres, are attempting to harness the arts in this regard; however, in the North there is limited understanding of the links between culture, community development, and the economy. They are typically seen within traditional economic frameworks, i.e. tangible outputs of cultural products with limited viability in generating wealth. This perspective poses challenges in drawing on residents' creativity and local and/or regional cultural assets to transition through significant change.

While the arts are widely recognized as contributing to resilience, less is understood about *how* engaging in the arts strengthens community identity and fosters the emergence of local culture-based economies, generally, and the critical role artists in rural communities play in achieving such, specifically. The study utilizes action research to investigate the sector's role in building resilience in rural communities. It studies the contribution of individual creative practice and art sector collaboration to developing skills and providing social and commercial infrastructure necessary for successful transitioning and continual adaptation. It is organized into individual, sectoral, and community level resilience to illustrate the benefits accrued within each scale and the significance of interconnectivity between them. The research indicates that creative processes inherent to engaging in the arts foster divergent perspectives, complex problem-solving skills, and an ability to work with complexity, emergence and uncertainty at individual, sectoral and community levels—all important characteristics when dealing with change. The production of cultural goods leads to increased understanding of oneself and others within the web of relationships that comprises place, enabling identity reformation and belonging, health and well-being, and agency, as well providing goods for localized and regional economies that link globally. Furthermore, the research highlights similarities between artistic and community development practices suggesting that capacities gained through engaging in the arts parallel those necessary for developers to work effectively within emergent, inclusive, and holistic approaches that underpin continual adaptation in addressing change.

Dedication

To the artists who live here

“We make the community”

(Organizational peer networking session)

Our passion and need, innovation and perseverance

– our resilience –

Reflects, informs and shapes the vast, shared region called Northern Ontario

To arts organizations and developers interested in working in the region

To my family – artists, organizers and travellers of many journeys

Acknowledgements

Dr. Linda Savory Gordon for launching the Community Resilience Sault Ste. Marie (CRSSM) research;

Dr. Gayle Broad for her continual guidance and understanding of the research within the context of Northern Ontario;

NORDIK Institute for the opportunity to conduct the study within an interdisciplinary environment;

Professor Danny Burns for starting me on the journey;

Dr. Barry Percy-Smith who guided and kept me moving forward upon my return to the research; and

Dr. Gillian Swanson who took the research to a new level of writing based on her expertise in the field.

The participants who generously volunteered time and knowledge to co-produce an understanding of the complexity of the North and the ways the arts build individual, organizational, and community capacity to transition through change while retaining core values.

Table of Contents

CULTURE, CREATIVITY AND THE ARTS:

<i>Building Resilience in Northern Ontario</i>	i
Abstract.....	1
Dedication.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
PART ONE.....	8
Chapter One: Introduction.....	8
1.0 The Northern Ontario Context.....	8
1.1 About the Researcher: My dual artist and researcher practice.....	13
1.2 Research Design.....	14
Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework.....	23
2.0 Community as a Complex Adaptive System.....	24
2.0.1. Relationships Between Individual and Community Resilience.....	27
2.0.2 Relationship Building, Innovation and Resilience.....	29
2.1 The Centrality of Place in Culture.....	39
2.2 Intersections and Resources for Building Adaptive Capacity.....	43
2.3 Creativity and Resilience.....	46
2.4 The Arts and Resilience.....	48
2.4.0 Creative Practice: Reflexivity, Local Innovation and Spillover.....	49
2.4.1 Artists, Art Work and Social Change: The measure and dismeasure of culture.....	53
2.4.2 Arts and Community Development.....	56
2.4.3 The Social Milieu and the Cultural Economy.....	60
2.5 Arts in Rural Communities.....	64
2.6 Arts and Culture Community Development Models.....	72
2.6.0 Policy and Planning Perspectives.....	72
2.6.1 Creative Class, Creative Cities and Municipal Cultural Planning.....	77
2.7 Community Development Practice within a Systems Approach.....	79
2.8 Conclusions.....	81
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	85
3.0 A Boundary Critique.....	85
3.1 Conceptual Analysis.....	88
3.2 Methodological Demands and Selection of Action Research as a Methodology.....	90
3.3 Action Research Methodology.....	91
3.4 Overview of the Cycles of Action Research.....	94
3.4.0 Cycles and Locations of the Research.....	95
3.4.1 Reflexive Practice.....	98
3.5 Cycles of Action Research.....	99

3.5.0 Cycle One: The Socioeconomic Impact of the Arts on the Economy of Sault Ste. Marie	99
3.5.1 Cycle Two: The Role of Art in Community Development and Resilience	102
3.5.2 Cycle Three: Innovation and Cultural Development	104
3.5.3 Cycle Four: Network Development	105
3.5.4 Cycle Five: Understanding Northern Artists' Context	109
3.5.5 Cycle Six: Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations through Peer Networking	114
3.3.6 Cycle Seven: Presentations	117
3.6 Reflection on the Research Methodology, Practice and Learnings	118
PART TWO: Building Resilience	124
Chapter Four: Building Individual Resilience	127
4.0 The Development of an Interdisciplinary Framework	127
4.1 Unpacking 'The Arts': The Intertwined Role of Creative Processes and Products	134
4.2 Challenges in Understanding Creative Practice	143
4.3 Increasing Agency and Adaptive Capacity	148
4.3.0 Building Adaptive Capacity	149
4.3.1 Maintaining Health and Well-being	153
4.3.2 Fostering Identity and Belonging	157
4.4 Mapping the Contribution of Individual Creative Practice to Resilience	166
Chapter Five: Building Arts Sector Resilience	169
5.0 The Value of a Sense of an Arts Community	170
5.1 Fostering Social Capital, Dialogue and Innovation	173
5.2 Capacity Building through Peer Networks	178
5.3 Creating Arts Clusters	182
5.3.0 Events, Workshops and Programming	185
5.3.1 Networks and Organizations	187
5.3.2 Creative Places	189
5.4 Mapping the Contribution of Sectoral Collaboration to Resilience	194
Chapter Six: Building Community Resilience	197
6.0 The Rural Social Milieu: Understanding and Revisioning Place	198
6.1 Creating a Culture of Resilience	204
6.2 Building Cross-Sector Relationships for Local and Regional Development	207
6.3 Community Development as a Creative Process	214
6.4 Mapping the Contributions of Cross-Sectoral Collaboration to Resilience	218
6.5 A Systems Framework for Understanding the Arts' Contribution to Resilience	221
6.6 Strengthening the Arts for Increased Resilience	224
6.6.0 Opportunities for Engagement and Education	225
6.6.1 Development of Networks and Organizations	227
6.6.2 Governance, Funding Models and Research Capacity	230

6.6.3 Capacity Building and Development Supports.....	234
Chapter Seven: Conclusions.....	239
7.0 Research Contributions to New Knowledge	240
7.1 Creative Practice’s Contributions to Building Northern Ontario’s Resilience	242
7.1.0 Individual Resilience.....	243
7.1.1 Arts Sector Resilience.....	246
7.1.2 Community Resilience.....	248
7.2 Ways to Strengthen the Arts in Continuing This Work	251
7.3 Creative Practice and Community Development: Reciprocal Relations	256
7.4 Impact of the Research	257
7.4.0 Artists’ and Community Identity.....	258
7.4.1 Social Capital Development and Innovation	259
7.4.2 Articulating the Sector’s Value and Making It Accessible.....	260
7.5 Final Thoughts	261
References	264
Appendix I: Overview of Summary Reports.....	280
Appendix II: Summary of Inquiry Groups’ Themes	281
Appendix III: Summary of Focus Groups’ Themes	283

Figures

Figure 1: Northern Artists' Work.....	19
Figure 2: A Systems View of the Research Components	86
Figure 3: Community Development within a Medicine Wheel Framework	89
Figure 4: Community Resilience within a Medicine Wheel Framework.....	89
Figure 5: An Overview of the Cycles of Action Research	94
Figure 6: An Integrated Framework of Culture, the Arts, the Economy and Resilience.....	131
Figure 7: The Transformative Process of Creative Practice	142
Figure 8: Traditional Cultural Goods, Kingfisher Lake.....	146
Figure 9: Stills from Video of Northern Artists.....	158
Figure 10: Birch Bark Canoe and Cedar-Strip, Canvas Covered Canoes and Snowshoes	160
Figure 11: <i>The Gifts of Mother Earth</i> and <i>Mishibizhew</i> , Zoey Wood-Salomon	161
Figure 12: <i>Poppy Brooch</i> , Bernadine Boissoneau	162
Figure 13: <i>Wasp Nest Paper Torso</i> , Kathleen Baleja.....	163
Figure 14: <i>Sphere</i> , Laurent Vaillancourt.....	164
Figure 15: The Contribution of Creative Practice to Resilience	168
Figure 16: The Transformative Process of Artists' Collaboration	177
Figure 17: <i>Fork in the Eye</i> , Kris Goold	179
Figure 18: The Impact of ArtReach	186
Figure 19: Art work from Mishkeegogamang and Summer Beaver First Nations	189
Figure 20: A Frame Gallery, Sioux Lookout and Aamoo Angecone, Lac Seul First Nation.....	193
Figure 21: The Contribution of Sectoral Collaboration to Resilience	196
Figure 22: The Transformative Process of Cross-Sectoral Collaboration	203
Figure 23: The Art of Being Billings, Land Based Art.....	211
Figure 24: Art in Kenora's Public Pathways.....	212
Figure 25: Group of Seven Train Event Poster.....	213
Figure 26: The Contribution of Cross-Sectoral Collaboration to Resilience	220
Figure 27: A Systems Framework for Understanding Creative Practice's Contribution to Resilience	222

Tables

Table 1: Overview of the Research Methodology	21
Table 2: Cycles of Action Research, Activities and Locations.....	96
Table 3: Cycle One Activities	99
Table 4: Cycle Four Activities	106
Table 5: Cycle Five Activities	109
Table 6: Cycle Six Activities	115

Maps

Map 1: Map of Communities Engaged in the Research.....	97
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PART ONE

Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 The Northern Ontario Context

The study was conducted in Northern Ontario with the researcher based in Sault Ste. Marie, a community of approximately 75,000 people located at the hub of three of the Great Lakes: Superior, Huron, and Michigan. It is a border city with an international bridge to the United States of America (USA). The city has four distinct seasons, is surrounded by some of the most pristine wilderness in the world, and is home to two of Canada's leading forest research centres. As with other communities across the North, it has been negatively impacted by the shift from a manufacturing and resource-based world economy to a global creative economy where mobile financial resources are turning to more profitable investments.

Regional centres and rural and First Nation communities are experiencing social and economic destabilization with the current situation extending well beyond the concerns of the boom-bust cycle that Northern Ontario has experienced for generations, scaling up to where entire communities are now facing crises with mine and mill closures and/or significantly reduced operations (Beckford, Jacobs, Williams, and Nahdee, 2010; Berkes and Jolly, 2001). The region's economies have been based primarily on resource-extraction around forestry and mining resulting in single industry towns whose economic health and well-being has been reliant on externally owned corporations that answer to distant shareholders. These multinationals have rarely taken an interest in local affairs. Entire ecosystems are being taxed, watersheds polluted, and shorelines eroded. Human and natural resources are being underutilized or mismanaged.

Despite the fact that Northern Ontario's rich resources have fuelled prosperity for the province, international and now transnational corporations, and provided critical materials for development around the world, Leadbeater (2008) a Laurentian University¹ economist, contends its communities have no wealth to show for it. They lack physical infrastructure including educational facilities, cultural, health, and social welfare institutions and social amenities. He argues there is considerable opportunity for prosperity; however, communities are struggling as a result of globalization and development policy and approaches. Since the early 1970s globalization has profoundly and adversely affected hinterland economic development and democracy as the power of transnational

¹ Laurentian University (<https://laurentian.ca>).

corporations have significantly increased relative to labour and communities (Leadbeater, 2008, p.11).

The region is a vast and distinct geological, biological and cultural area comprising 80% of the province of Ontario's territorial land, but is home to only approximately 700,000 people, representing 8% of the province's population of 13.6 million. As a comparison, it is a slightly larger land mass than the United Kingdom and France whose combined population exceeds 130 million people. While it is recognized as a geographical area it lacks political recognition: neither Indigenous peoples nor the settler population have any substantial degree of ownership or control over the resource wealth, directly through their own democratic or sovereign institutions (Leadbeater, 2008). The ancestral composition of the region—Indigenous, European, and Francophone—contributes to the complexity of relations, power dynamics, and identity. Twenty-seven percent of the province's Francophone population, and 102 of the province's 134 First Nation Reserves, representing 43% of the Indigenous population, resides in the North. Historically, First Nations have been excluded and/or have participated marginally in resource development (human, financial, and natural) benefiting only nominally from past economic development initiatives. The recent and growing control of First Nations over their resources, including education, is creating a resurgence of respect for traditional knowledge within and beyond First Nation communities altering power dynamics and contesting approaches to resource development.

There is a strong dissonance between Northern and southern Ontario due to population, cultural, and economic differences. Policy created in and for the more urban southern region of the province is most often irrelevant and/or detrimental to the development of the North's resource-extractive economy and sparse population, leaving the region to rely upon its citizens' capacity to survive (Robinson, 2009; Leadbeater, 2008). Economist David Robinson of Laurentian University (2009, p.2) and Director of the Institute for Northern Ontario Research and Development (INORD)² argues the problems are systemic arising, in part, from government structures based on stovepipe solutions for complex situations. This results in, among other things, an economy with a high rate of expenditure leakage; barriers to establishing industry clusters; a lack of design and management skills required to develop value-added industries; an education system that disconnects youth from the region and limits their opportunities within the region; and institutional barriers to resource allocation. Furthermore, government incentives to diversify the region's economy have shifted attention from building on the strengths of each community's assets and economy, toward applying generic

² INORD (<http://inord.laurentian.ca>).

solutions (p.6). He advocates for the development of industry clusters, i.e. Sudbury's globally linked mining cluster. More recently, Robinson (2014) identifies Sudbury as a potential arts education cluster based on Laurentian University's new School of Architecture—the first School of Architecture in Canada in more than 40 years and the first rural one—coupled with the explosion of local cultural production based on place. He ties the capacity for community governance and the development of strategic plans to its understanding of place as a community that cannot be realized without citizens seeing themselves as part of a culture that has its own history, with the arts providing the means to explore, co-produce, and generate such. Moreover, Robinson (2014) outlines four sound economic reasons for investing in cultural development to increase sustainability and resilience: i) the amount of existing economic activity; ii) its rate of expansion; iii) its inherently value-added production; and iv) its utilization of local labour and retention of monies, which has a disproportionately high impact on the economy, making it a high economic impact multiplier.

There are two regional development corporations in the North: the provincial Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation³ (NOHFC) and FedNor⁴, the Federal Economic Development initiative for Northern Ontario, as well as a number of smaller development agencies. The NOHFC invests in businesses and municipalities through a variety of economic instruments. FedNor is a program delivery system for Industry Canada. Although it provides an important organizational window to a wide range of government departments it is tied to a distant political environment with limited policy discretion to respond to local, private and community organizations' initiatives. Charles Conteh (2015, p.6) of the Northern Policy Institute⁵, purports to diversify the North's economy and increase competitiveness the region needs "... policy governance rooted in intergovernmental and cross-sectoral networks of agencies engaged in holistic, collaborative, and strategic investments in the regional economy".

Leadbeater (2008) suggests there are alternatives to hinterland development embracing both economic and social development, but the leadership must come from outside the transnational corporations, the political elite, and the business community which is predominantly locked into transnational corporations through franchises, licenses, and supplier relations. He posits that working people at the community level must be the agents of change, finding ways to regain control over their destiny to become more resilient (Leadbeater, 2008).

³ Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp (NOHFC) (<http://nohfc.ca/en>).

⁴ FedNor (<http://fednor.gc.ca>).

⁵ Northern Policy Institute (<http://www.northernpolicy.ca>).

In 2001 Algoma University's Community Economic and Social Development (CESD)⁶ program was established to address pressing issues through regional development in rural, smaller urban Northern and Indigenous communities. Subsequently, the Northern Ontario Research, Development, Ideas and Knowledge (NORDIK) Institute⁷ was launched in 2006 as a 'learning lab' and 'think tank' to support the program, and serve as a mechanism for community-university partnerships. The CESD program and NORDIK are closely linked and grounded in a cross-discipline theoretical framework with the central theme being interconnectedness: interdependent and praxis-based⁸ framework for policy analysis and social transformation. NORDIK is a community-based research institute drawing on community development, feminist, political, social policy, psychological and sociological theories, Indigenous teachings and action research models. Recognizing the need to build local capacity and increase control over community assets, the first Community Economic and Social Development Spring Institute in 2002 focused a Community Resilience (CR) approach to development. It was taught by Dr. Sandy Lockhart whose research at the Centre for Community Enterprise (now Centre for Community Renewal)⁹ was instrumental in the creation of the Community Resilience model that has been adopted by many communities and some countries around the world. It is a holistic approach, variously referred to as cross-sector or socio-ecological community development based on understanding the community as an interconnected, interdependent web of relationships influenced by community culture. It values community engagement in pan-boundary planning, building grass-roots support through social capital, fostering understanding of the impact decisions in one sector has on other sectors, and engendering the political will to implement initiatives. The model encourages the development of local ownership and alternative economies based on community assets.

Prior to the start of the Spring Institute course, Dr. Lockhart was invited to facilitate a community leaders' forum, a gathering of formal and informal leaders and decision-makers. Formal leaders included elected civic leaders and those in a professional leadership capacity in an organization and/or business. Informal leaders were individual community members who are perceived to be leaders and sought out for their opinions. The forum was entitled *Moving Forward: Beyond Job Losses* and was organized by the Labour Union, Sault Ste. Marie's Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP), and the CESD program to address the declining economic climate and the recent release of

⁶ Algoma University (<https://www.algomau.ca>).

⁷ NORDIK Institute (<http://www.nordikinstitute.com>).

⁸ Praxis is thoughtful reflection and action that occurs simultaneously. Praxis is the integration of knowing and doing (Kirby and McKenna, 1989. p.34).

⁹ Centre for Community Renewal (<http://communityrenewal.ca>).

Sault Ste. Marie's Economic Diversification Strategy (Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation, 2002) referred to as *Destiny*. Colonization in the North has been based primarily on extraction with little value-added production and/or secondary industry. Since the early 2000s the City of Sault Ste. Marie has made efforts to expand its economic base to weather global restructuring of the industries that have provided its historical purpose and the community's prosperity. During the forum, leaders concurred that launching a Community Resilience project would be a good strategy for overcoming some of the barriers to implementing *Destiny*, and identify strengths on which to build and diversify the local economy. Dr. Linda Savory Gordon (a CESD faculty member) secured funding to begin the Community Resilience of Sault Ste. Marie (CRSSM) project. The initiative attempted to affect a paradigm shift in community development approaches by focusing on perceptions of how healthy communities are created. It was launched at a time when the concept of resilience was very new, providing a conceptually-based model promoting developing people, relationships and community values in becoming more self-reliant rather than traditional outcomes of job creation, for example. The framework of twenty-three characteristics illustrates the interconnected attributes, organizations, processes and resources communities need to be able to respond and adapt to adverse conditions. It provides the ground work for understanding 'how to' work respectfully and collaboratively toward setting collective goals, and a model for assessing of 'how well' the community is achieving such. The CRSSM study utilized action research, organizing a series of community leaders' forums, a guest speaker series, and new educational and cross-sectoral networking opportunities, increasing community capacity and agency, thereby contributing to the City's diversification efforts. The project encouraged the development of the community's own economy (e.g. cooperatives, worker ownerships, and small enterprises) to increase local control over its destiny, countering an economy based on corporate decision-makers influenced by out-of-town shareholders who have marginal commitment to local people and the environment. It also assessed Sault Ste. Marie's resilience captured in the *Portrait of Community Resilience of Sault Ste. Marie* (Community Resilience Sault Ste. Marie, 2006). The CRSSM project began as part of the CESD program and in 2006 became part of NORDIK Institute once it was established. I was hired in March 2004 as the Project Coordinator/Facilitator until its conclusion in 2011. My position at NORDIK was then expanded to its current role of Research Coordinator with community resilience and the cultural sector as my main areas of investigation.

1.1 About the Researcher: My dual artist and researcher practice

I have been engaged in the development of the cultural sector throughout my working life. Long before I was aware of the concept of community development I contributed through organizational and policy development, launching cultural events and leading craft-based economic development initiatives primarily in Sault Ste. Marie, Bali, Indonesia, and the Canadian Arctic. I considered this work an integral part of my creative practice as an 'artist in society' variously described as an observer, recorder, interpreter, and visionary communicator (Vallen, 2004; Schein, 2001) with an evolving role that traverses the perceived boundaries of art and community development.

I began my artistic practice as a studio goldsmith making jewellery using non-traditional designs for broader social purposes within a framework of contemporary art (Turner, 1996). At the root of my practice is my desire to assist in creating more equitable societies by revealing cultural values, perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. I strive to build connections between people and place to improve the quality of life, utilizing jewellery to support change. Within a practice framework of contemporary art, my assessment of 'how to' effect change and 'how well' I am doing included continual reflection and reflexivity, coupled with direct and indirect feedback. These tools worked relatively well for the jewellery-based interventions. Transferring my skills from a craftsman of material goods to areas such as education and community work, however, gave me pause to revisit the conceptualization of my practice and evaluation tools. While working in the 'community laboratory of life' a contemporary art framework alone seemed quite limited to address large scale social change, leading me to expand it to include community development. My field work also raised questions regarding the multiple roles I play; specifically, Is the role of the artist separate from the role of the developer and the product? And what is the impact of these various roles on others? For example, I was contracted by the Ministry of Industry in Bali, Indonesia to establish and manage a craft development workshop, and by Nunavut Arctic College¹⁰ in northern Canada to procure the delivery of the Fine Arts and Crafts Department's programs across the Arctic. Both governments were focusing on craft introduced by foreign cultures as a tool for economic development; in Bali, for the further advancement of prosperity; and in the Arctic, for transformation to a market economy. Both instances involved transferring skills to Indigenous peoples to build their capacity, thereby improving their standard of living. While capacity was increased in the targeted area, the quality of their lives remained poor. I experienced firsthand the dismantling of traditional ways of life, Indigenous peoples' loss of self-worth, pride, and sense of community, and for many, the loss of meaningful life. These experiences raised serious questions regarding my involvement in

¹⁰ Nunavut Arctic College (<http://www.arcticcollege.ca>)

development and the methods and means of effecting change at a community level. I sought more insight into community development theory in understanding practice and alternative ways of reconnecting people to the environment. My search led me to Algoma University's CESD Spring Institute on Community Resilience, and subsequently being hired to conduct the Community Resilience Sault Ste. Marie research.

My position as a researcher deepened my theoretical understanding of community development and resilience, and thus, supported my choice of it as a studio practice framework. I saw community development theory, terminology, and assessment framework, in comparison to contemporary art, providing a more socially mainstream framework in which to locate my artistic practice, a more direct means of working toward them, and a more rigorous assessment of progress in meeting goals. As a researcher I work collegially with community partners and decision-makers rather than primarily as an artist through the medium of contemporary art outside of the circuits of power. As the CRSSM research continued, I increasingly noticed parallels between art and development confirming my 'knowing' that both are creative practices, strengthening my understanding of the links between the two perceived frameworks.

1.2 Research Design

The overarching goal of the research was to investigate the arts' contribution to rural Northern communities transitioning through significant socioeconomic change from the perspective of the community as a system, a complex web of interconnected and interdependent relationships; specifically, which aspects of creative practice increases resilience and ways to sustain, build on or leverage existing activity to increase its contributions. Large scale change underpinned the research. It was designed to bring artists' knowledge forward within a community development framework to increase understanding of the links between the arts and resilience within and across sectors and the broader public. It aimed to foster transformation of individual Northern artists, the arts sector, and community development and policy-making processes to create more equitable, healthier and resilient societies.

The necessity for understanding the role of the arts in rural community development evolved from CRSSM's research that focused on fostering self-reliance and resilience through shifting cultural attitudes toward more sustainable approaches. The identification of local assets (people, financial, cultural, historic, natural) and their respectful, strategic development is foundational in building, healthy, resilient people and places by increasing the quality of life and diversifying the economy.

The arts are heralded as a significant economic driver in regeneration efforts in this regard (Murray and Baeker, 2006; Florida, 2002); however, in Sault Ste. Marie the sector is not recognized or valued as such. Research undertaken in my role as Project Coordinator/Facilitator of CRSSM for the *Portrait of Community Resilience of Sault Ste. Marie* (Community Resilience Sault Ste. Marie, 2006) engaged diverse citizens to identify community strengths which I further organized into overarching themes. The study indicates the environment is perceived to be the greatest asset closely followed by location, tourism, and recreation. Arts and culture ranks eight out of nineteen themes. The low positioning of the sector was very surprising to me given that Sault Ste. Marie is one of the oldest settlements in Canada, has a rich cultural history that could be leveraged to build new economies. It has been a gathering place for Indigenous peoples to trade and fish through the centuries, and later, fur traders established permanent posts to sell wares. Located on the shore of St. Marys River, a world heritage river, Sault Ste. Marie sits at the hub of three Great Lakes, and is part of the Great Lakes Heritage Coast. In the early 1900s, the ruggedness of the pristine environment attracted the Toronto-based painter collective, the Group of Seven,¹¹ who established the first recognized style of ‘Canadian’ art, creating their most iconic work in the surrounding area. It has a very active arts community and has spawned many national and internationally recognized artists, including Ken Danby,¹² who are typically forced to leave the area in pursuit of a sustainable livelihood. The city boasts a unique repertoire of festivals and events reflective of its diversity, is home to the Algoma Conservatory of Music,¹³ one of the largest music conservatories outside of Toronto, and has one of the highest numbers of community theatre groups per capita in Canada¹⁴. With activities throughout four distinct seasons Sault Ste. Marie would appear to have considerable potential for developing culture as a part of its diversification strategy.

Moreover, the arts have long played an important role in rural subsistence economies by providing critical secondary and/or supplemental income. Surviving the boom-bust cycle of extractive industries and the seasonal nature of farming, logging, hunting, fishing and tourism frequently depends upon finding ways to bridge the financial gap between jobs. Cultural products (quilts, knitted garments, furniture) are frequently sold or traded for items beyond one’s financial reach and/or skill level. Cultural products often make the difference between ‘have and have not.’ Many families create hand-made goods for personal use, thereby increasing the comfort of home, and becoming heirlooms and legacies while reducing the necessity of spending limited, hard-earned cash

¹¹ Michael Collection Canadian Art Collection (<http://www.mcmichael.com/collection/seven>).

¹² Ken Danby (<http://www.kendanbyart.ca>).

¹³ Algoma Conservatory of Music (<http://www.algomaconservatory.com>).

¹⁴ Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District (<http://www.ssmarts.org>).

on manufactured products. In Indigenous communities the sale of art and craft provides an important source of cash within traditional land-based economies. In an area experiencing shifting economies, fuelling rapid job loss and a steady march toward short-term contract work opportunities for generating income—even if occasionally—may be a deciding factor in being able to sustain a lifestyle, remain in one’s home community or be forced to relocate, leading to further erosion of the social fabric and exacerbating the economic instability communities are currently experiencing.

Sault Ste. Marie, as well as many other communities in the North, has not readily invested in the arts sector perceiving it to be a luxury that cannot be afforded during times of economic uncertainty. As a result, the arts remain largely undervalued, under-resourced and underdeveloped in fostering local and/or regional sustainability. The sector lacks infrastructure including policy and planning, governance, human resources, research capacity, education, networks and organizations, sustainable funding models, business development supports, marketing mechanisms, and affordable operating space and live/work accommodations. The limited support for the arts is, in part, tied to development models that are conceptualized and organized into silos, or at best tangentially connected, with the cultural sector providing primarily social benefits that are separate from the economic equation. Within a resilience approach to sustainability, however, development is understood to be a complex web of relationships and structural interdependences with healthy, capable people integral to economic vitality. As a member of the arts community I highly value the arts, as do others engaged in the sector, evidenced through many years of ongoing dialogue and strategizing around ways of raising the visibility of the important social and economic role the arts play in many peoples’ daily lives and the broader community benefits it affords.

A number of questions emerged and resurfaced when leading the CRSSM research, eventually forming the basis of this PhD inquiry. The study raised fundamental questions regarding ‘how to’ shift attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, and expectations, and which methods, tools and/or resources Northern Ontario communities have to initiate a cultural movement toward those values more supportive of resilience principles. Although the CRSSM project engaged key representatives from both the social and economic sectors to guide the research, and brought together community leaders to encourage them to take a holistic approach, a number of the Oversight Committee members were concerned that traditional economic views would prevail based on historical and recent events. Without a change in culture, the status quo of attracting big industries would continue, making it unlikely the community would be able to move forward. My questions revolved around the relationships between cultural values and community change; the arts and social and

economic development; and creative practice and resilience. I was particularly intrigued by the central role community culture plays in resilience, if there were ways to increase peoples' acceptance of a holistic, cohesive approach to sustainability, and what role, if any, the arts played in this regard.

In designing the research methodology, a review of emerging community development literature, in particular, suggest the arts play a significant role in building healthy, resilient communities. They increase creativity and innovation through developing diverse networks of social relations that underpin the capacity to adapt to changing circumstances. Creative expression and unique cultural products portray stories and narratives reflective of people and place, providing goods for localized economies that attract and retain citizens and increase tourism. Little, however, is known about the relevancy of the arts in fostering resilience in rural, isolated, and Canada's northern communities. Northern Ontario is undergoing considerable social and economic destabilization due to global restructuring of resource-extractive industries upon which their economies and existence are built. External companies are closing and/or reducing mill and mine operations while largely retaining property rights, thus denying local residents' access to them and their livelihoods. What role does creative practice play within this context? Can the arts diversify economies, revision place from one of resource extraction to building value-added products based on the natural, cultural, and historical bounty of Northern Ontario? Can the arts build the skills, networks, and respectful cross-cultural relationships necessary to shift attitudes toward collaboration, and foster synergy to transition? Would a culture-based economy generate employment, define communities' competitive advantage locally and regionally in a vast, sparsely populated area? Does development of the arts sector contribute to reducing out-migration, and expand the tourism industry?

Furthermore, most culture research tends to aggregate the sector as 'the arts', is frequently discipline specific and generally tied to economic benefits. Would adopting a Community Resilience—a holistic, cohesive, cross-sectoral or systems perspective—contribute to understanding the arts' role in resilience? A systems approach would refocus attention on people, the basic element of community, and individuals' creative practice rather than genre or the artist's intent of the work. The nature of the products would then become secondary regardless of whether they were created as resistance art aimed to spur social change, as conceptual based work, as a form of production, as fashion or lifestyle goods, or if made simply for the pleasure of creative expression and not intended for the marketplace.

Moreover, there is limited literature indicating *how* the arts build resilience, the underlying processes (i.e. the mechanics of creative practice) and its impact on communities as interdependent relational webs, i.e. as complex adaptive systems. Also underexplored is research regarding *how* rural community developers can utilize and leverage creative practices and approaches to respectfully build a sense of place and localized economies while retaining core values. This study, therefore, will investigate:

1. How does creative practice contribute to rural Northern Ontario's resilience in a time of significant socioeconomic change?
2. How can the arts be strengthened to continue this work?

To map the conceptual framework and contextualize the research findings, the study drew together community development literature centred on understanding the community as a complex adaptive system, and arts and resilience literature with a focus on rural arts. Action research methodology was utilized to gather diverse people across perceived boundaries, building relationships through participatory dialogue, interaction, and education that supported co-producing understanding and disseminating knowledge about the sector's contribution to building healthy, resilient people, organizations, and communities. The study engaged artists, arts organizations, community development professionals, elected and non-elected community leaders, representatives from funding agencies, and the general public interested in advancing the sector. Participants were assembled through inquiry groups, focus groups, networking events, workshops, conferences, a symposium, and a video.

Diverse artists—primarily visual—participated in the study representing a matrix of: i) disciplines (e.g. painting, jewellery, weaving, pottery, sculpture); ii) duration of engagement (e.g. new, newer, long-time practitioners); cultural heritage (Anglophone, Indigenous and Francophone) iii) geographical locations (isolated, fly-in, Northeastern and Northwestern Ontario); iv) community size (small, second-tier regional centres, larger urban centres; and v) gender and age.

For the purposes of this thesis, the term *artist* refers to someone who engages in creative practice with a degree of regularity. Its use is intended to be generic, decontextualizing and flattening the hierarchical and often confusing nature of the sector's lexicon (e.g. emerging, mature, professional, hobbyist, high art, low art, fine art, craft, disciplines, genres) to focus attention on *engagement* in the arts; specifically, the benefits accrued and its impact on oneself and other people. Why one participates in the arts (e.g. creative expression, health and well-being, social relations, economic

gain) and/or the intended use of the products (retained, gifted, bartered or sold) is secondary in this study.

Figure 1 shows images of work created by Northern artists who participated in the study and exhibited in the curated, travelling craft exhibition *CraftCurrents: Contemporary Craft in Northern Ontario*. The artists' work and statements are drawn from the full colour brochure produced for the exhibition (Craft Ontario, 2011). A few of the artists also participated in other aspects of the research, for example, steering committees, workshops, and the symposium.

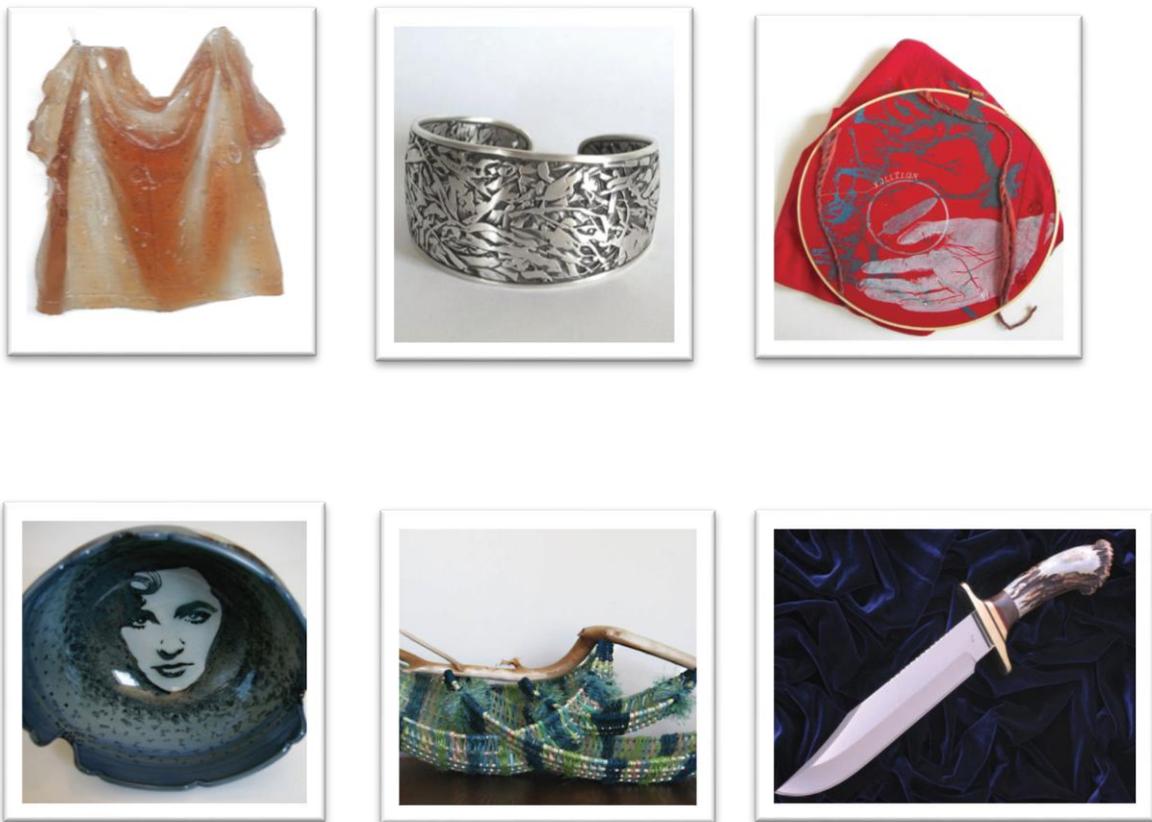


Figure 1: Northern Artists' Work

Figure 1: Artists' work in the top row of images, from left to right

Cheryl Wilson Smith was a member of the Northern Steering Committee. She is a well-established glass artist living in Red Lake who casts glass and manipulates it into many forms to evoke memories. She states "I love glass and its ability to dance with light. Possessing the knowledge and ability to cast it and manipulate it into whatever form I want is a dream come true" (p.40). The glass shirt aims

to recall the smell of clothes hanging on the line and the beauty of the neighbourhood's different garments fluttering in the wind. (Cast glass, 72 cm high x 45 cm diameter).

Jo-Anne Critchley Browne is a metalsmith living in Matheson and was a member of the Northern Steering Committee. Her work is rooted in the wild beauty and strength of the North. She states "The environment etches images on my mind and my craft develops them ... My feet are firmly planted—this gives me the courage and insight to step forward and express myself" (p.13). (Metal, 7 cm long x 6 cm high x 3.5 cm wide).

Christine Charette from North Bay works with themes centred on nesting and mothering, with the environment providing the narrative threads for her work. She creates fabric art "... as a means of stretching the envelope, flipping the mirror, and breaking my own path" (p.12). (Embroidery floss, thread, natural fleece, handspun yarn, mohair, silk screen print and lino-cut print on recycled fabric. 9 cm diameter).

Figure 1: Artists' work in the bottom row of images, from left to right

Keith Campbell lives in North Bay and presented at the regional conference *Reflecting the North: Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture*. He is an internationally recognized ceramic artist who has been producing functional and sculptural work for more than 45 years. He also has a long and distinguished teaching career at various educational institutions. Keith states "Life for me is about the creative process. The creative journey is what fulfills, consumes and drives me" (p.11). (White stoneware, 28 cm wide x 18 cm high).

Sharon Breckenridge is deeply connected to the environment surrounding her home community of Thunder Bay. She comments "My baskets are "of the earth" and they come from my soul. They come out of my experiences with the beautiful, clear blue Thunder Bay sky, and the constant rhythm of the waves of Lake Superior" (p.10). (Basket weaving 80 cm long x 11 cm high x 10 cm diameter).

Paul Beebe lives in Upsala. Speaking of his knife featured in exhibition he states "A good, handmade knife is not just a tool—it is an expression of the personality and discipline of its individual maker. It is a piece of art" (p.8). Paul also makes a variety of tools that are sold internationally through the Lee Valley Company (Bowie Knife. Blade, 440C stainless steel, sambar stag, brass, pau ferro, 9-10 oz).

The research was conducted in Northern Ontario with the exception of a few presentations delivered at provincial and Canadian academic and community development workshops and

conferences, government-funded conferences that served to broaden understanding of the region’s context and realities and would be important when making policy decisions and/or considering working in the area. There were seven cycles of research, six marked by the formation of an action plan, including a process for recruitment and engaging participants in sharing and co-producing a deeper and/or new understanding of the arts sector’s contribution to resilience, and concluded with a major summative analysis of the research findings. The seventh cycle was comprised entirely of presentations that traversed, intersected and informed the other six cycles; however, it did not include a summary report. Themes emerging from the study spanned cycles, adding new depth and/or subthemes as the study progressed. The research was conducted on a part-time basis beginning in January 2006 and concluding in October 2012. It engaged approximately 1,826 people: 1,187 participants in the first six cycles, and 639 additional people through the presentations. A matrix of individuals representing a variety of community sizes, locations and cultural heritages were recruited for the study. Populations of research locations ranged in size, with the smallest being isolated and fly-in First Nation communities (350 – 575 people), to second-tier communities serving as regional hubs (10,000 – 20,000 people), to the five large urban centres (43,000 – 160,000 people). A concerted effort was made to distribute the activities between Northeastern and Northwestern parts of the region.

Table 1: Overview of the Research Methodology

Cycle	Title of the cycle, timeline, location and methods	No. of participants
1	The Socioeconomic Impact of the Arts on the Economy of Sault Ste. Marie Sault Ste. Marie (Jan. 2006 – Feb. 2008)	
	Surveyed artists, arts organizations and arts-related business, institutions	130
	8 stakeholder engagement consultations	66
2	The Role of Art in Community Development and Resilience Sault Ste. Marie (Jan. 2007 – July 2008)	
	2 Inquiry Groups; one comprised of community developers; one of artists	9
3	Innovation and Cultural Development Sault Ste. Marie (June – Sept. 2008)	
	5 focus groups comprised of artists who were involved in the development of each innovative event	15
4	Network Development (Oct. 2008 – Feb. 2010) Local consultations and networking events, and a regional forum	
	Advisory Committee	18
	6 Artist-sector led consultations and network development sessions	70
	Regional Forum: Northern Ontario Regional Arts Network Development Forum: <i>Building Resilience through the Arts</i> (livestreamed)	30

5	Understanding Northern Artists' Context (Feb. 2010 – Feb. 2011) Local consultations and regional events	
	Steering committee	10
	5 professional development workshops; 5 Meet and Greet events	80
	A curated regional travelling craft exhibition with 6 touring locations	45
	6 Gala exhibition openings engaging artists and the broader community	575
	Regional Symposium: Reflecting the North: <i>Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture</i> (livestreamed)	50
	A video of Northern artists, arts organizations and arts development	30
6	Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations through Peer Networking Northeastern Ontario Hearst, Sault Ste. Marie and Manitoulin Island (July – Oct. 2012)	
	Organizational peer network	3
	3 community engagement consultations	24
1-7	Presentations (Jan. 2006 – Oct. 2012) 42 presentations in total PowerPoint contained graphics and hand drawn images accompanied by dialogue tailored to targeted audiences	
	21 presentations to participants in six cycles (counted above)	
	21 delivered at academic, community development, government-funded conferences and/or professional development workshops (8 local and regional, 584 participants; 3 Provincial and Canadian, 55 participants)	639
1-7	NORDIK staff and artist colleagues	32
1-7	Total participants	1,826

The findings and learnings from the seven cycles were collectively organized into three chapters around the contributions of creative practice to individual resilience (Chapter Four), arts sector resilience (Chapter Five), and community level resilience and ways of strengthening the arts to continue building capacity to transition through change (Chapter Six).

Chapter Two: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework draws together community development literature centred on resilience, the concept of the community as a dynamic system, an interconnected web of relationships and structural interdependences, and arts and resilience literature with a focus on rural arts, providing the basis for contextualizing and analyzing the findings and learnings.

The current context of world-wide destabilization exacerbated by the global interconnectedness of communities and countries and the scale, the speed, and the simultaneous nature of change is forcing communities to react quickly to respond to increasingly complex issues that transcend multiple boundaries and challenge core values and ways of life (Holling, Gunderson and Ludwig, 2002). Given the imperative to adapt to rapidly shifting landscapes, a central concern to community development researchers and practitioners is whether communities can self-organize and mobilize local assets (people, financial, historic, cultural, natural) to develop solutions given the competing views and perspectives of citizens, the state, and the marketplace (Torjman, 2007; Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006). The need to do such is fuelling increased interest in concepts of resilience and collective efficacy and exploration of other disciplines, ecological systems and adaptive capacities to inform understanding of how communities can effectively and efficiently respond to stressors and prosper (Holling, Gunderson and Ludwig, 2002). Crisis sparks novel solutions and at this time technological innovation underpinning the creative economy is driving connectivity, enabling collaboration and the co-production of knowledge locally and globally. Within this milieu new social and economic models are emerging providing opportunity for communities to respond by fostering economies based on the locale's resources and creative practices.

This chapter begins by setting the context for the challenges communities and developers around the globe are currently facing from which the concept of community resilience emerged, commonly understood as a community's capacity to resist adverse conditions—economic or otherwise—and the ability to adapt, transition, and prosper through change while retaining their core values (Lewis and Lockhart, 2002). I then critically assess the value of recent academic literature regarding the relationships between community culture, resources and resilience including: individual characteristics; policy and planning processes; economies; the centrality of place; and the role creative practice plays in building individual, organizational, and community level capacity for adapting and transitioning.

2.0 Community as a Complex Adaptive System

Recognition of the disastrous failure of local and large-scale third world development projects (Gilchrist, 2009), the increased voice and declaration for human rights (Flora and Flora, 2013), and environmental degradation resulting in a loss of ecological and cultural diversity is prompting communities to search for effective approaches in understanding 'how to' respond and measure 'how well' they are doing (Community Resilience Sault Ste. Marie, 2006, p.20). In seeking solutions to the complex problems facing communities, developers began exploring other disciplines to better understand ways in which agency and solidarity may be fostered to respond to and transition through major change. This section unpacks the origins of the concept of the community as a complex adaptive system, the interconnected web of relationships between the components, and the implications of such to community development practice.

Shaw's (2010, cited by Monaghan, 2012, p.10) history of the term resilience cites its origins in Holling's ecological work that recognizes that the environment functions as a complex adaptive system, a dynamic web of relationships. The structural interdependencies that define complex adaptive systems means the sum of the system's parts is greater than its individual pieces. A system cannot be understood or described solely in terms of its individual pieces (Holling and Gunderson, 2002). An ecological system is comprised of several interconnected systems including water, atmospheric, forest, botanic, entomological, geological, and avian systems, each a separate system but part of an ecology, contributing to and dependent upon the others in maintaining balance. In contrast to simple systems where causal relationships are more evident and responses more easily forecasted, the dynamic, emergent nature of structural interdependencies is unpredictable in the way they adapt. Stress on an individual system alters its functioning capacity, thus impacting on the entire system at various points and scale (Holling, Gunderson and Ludwig, 2002). Complex adaptive systems are in constant motion, cycling through various stages of change in reaction to stressors. Cycles of accumulation are interspersed with states of disequilibrium and phases of rapid reorganization. Some stages are more stable, longer, and/or resilient than others; however, the phases are not necessarily linear in order, but iterative, making the impact of responses on the system not immediately visible or observable. Resilience, within an ecological model, Shaw (2010, cited by Monaghan, 2012, p.10) states, is commonly defined as the "... measure of the persistence of systems and of their ability to absorb change and disturbance and still maintain the same relationships between populations or state variables."

Holling's (1973, cited by Holling, Gunderson and Ludwig, 2002) ecological understanding of resilience was later transferred to human systems, i.e. cultural, social, governance, and economic. This seminal work led to the concept of resilience being adopted as a means for understanding and responding to significant change in two broad ways. Initially, it focused on addressing civic emergencies such as environmental disasters, utility disruptions, and terrorism. More recently, it has evolved as a model for community development to assist coping with external stresses and disturbances caused by environmental, social, or economic change (Monaghan, 2012, p.10).

Within community development literature, Lewis and Lockhart (2002) and Colussi (1999) understand resilient communities as those communities which have a strong resistance to adverse conditions, economic and otherwise, and which can absorb short or rapid change such as mill or plant closures (Walker and Salt, 2006; Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006). Intentional action and reorganization is implicit in the concept of resilience: communities must find ways to restructure and reform patterns of responding, acting and behaving in addressing changing conditions (Hopkins, 2008; Colussi, 1999). Resilient communities are able to make short and longer-term adaptations while retaining their fundamental identity (Davidson-Hunt and Berkes, 2003; Berkes, Colding and Folke, 2000). Location plays a role in resilience, with rural communities facing challenges around accessibility, service provision, connectivity, and shifting demographics impacting on their capacity to adapt (Steiner and Markantoni, 2013). Rural, resource-extractive communities are seen as being resilient, proactive, empowered and capable of influencing local life when the community has the collective capacity to develop and engage members in coordinated action projects despite events and structures that constrain such work (Steiner and Markantoni, 2013, p.3; Buikstra *et al.*, 2010, p.976). Resilience also implies a state of wellness through the ability to bounce back and be stronger as a result of the crisis (Torjman, 2007, p.13; Centre for Community Renewal, 2000). While there are varying definitions of resilience, the challenge is how best to promote evidence-based research to inform policy decisions and community development practices that foster characteristics supportive of resilient societies (McAslan, 2010, p.11).

Conceptualizing communities as complex adaptive systems provides developers a cross-sectoral perspective for effecting large scale change in becoming more resilient. Trans-disciplinary relationships are central to creating synergy and enabling adaptation. Resilient systems develop more and diverse connections, intersections, and tight feedback loops, communication and information flows within and across systems that underpin the system's capacity to respond quickly (Walker and Salt, 2006; Holling and Gunderson, 2002). Opportunities for change occur during the reorganization phase when the system is most open to new input. At this time there is considerable

uncertainty, increasing opportunities for novel ideas to emerge and take root, challenging the status quo (Walker and Salt, 2006, pp.81-82).

Communities contextualized as complex adaptive systems are seen as alive, emergent, unpredictable, and constantly evolving through human intervention as it self-organizes in response to change (Dale, Ling and Newman, 2010, p.217; Holling and Gunderson, 2002). Understanding the community within this interconnected, relational model is a paradigm shift in perceiving how a community functions, reframing the primarily 'machine' view of community being comprised of independent parts operating in relative isolation, to a 'whole system' perspective (Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006). An ecological perspective values each system's unique contribution to, and dependency upon, other systems within and across scales. It also shifts sustainable development from a command and control model to one of a continual process of change. Holling (2001, cited by Dale, Ling and Newman, 2010, p.271) argues:

Sustainability is the capacity to create, test and maintain adaptive capability. Development is the process of creating, testing, and maintaining opportunity. The phrase that combines the two, 'sustainable development' thus refers to the goal of fostering adaptive capability and creating opportunities. It is therefore not an oxymoron but a term that describes local partnership.

Within this imperative every adaptation is only a temporary solution to changing conditions and initiatives, and therefore, interventions require constant monitoring, adjustment, and evolution to address responses to moving targets (Dale, Ling and Newman, 2010, p.217).

In terms of the ability and capacity to change, a distinguishing and unique feature of human systems, in contrast to ecological ones, is that societies are greatly affected by cultural belief systems. People are embedded in culture that underpins the way they make sense of the world and respond, and as such, provides a divergence within Holling's and Gunderson's (2002) ecological model of complex, adaptive systems. Cultural values are understood to be ideas about what is important in life and are often manifested as social norms influencing how individuals, groups, and societies see the world, resulting in patterns of reactions that shape reality (Sharpe, 2010, p.15; Knott, 2008, p.23; Hawkes, 2001). Geertz (1973, p.44) indicates the concept of culture has moved beyond understanding it as a concrete set of behavioural patterns of customs and traditions, etcetera, to a set of control mechanisms that guides and governs our individual and social lives. Unlike ecological systems that are driven by genetic programming, culture is the foundation of humanity. People are born into culture, comprised of significant symbols and rituals influencing identity and expressions of self—we are not independent of culture, but rather created by it. Geertz (1973, p.45) posits the role of culture

is one of becoming, creating who we are, shaping how we learn to live individually and collectively, stating “We all begin with the natural equipment to live a thousand kinds of life but end in the end having living only one.” He explains we start life as unfinished humans unable to care for ourselves and are shaped through highly particular forms of culture resulting in, for example, Italian upper-class or lower-class. He argues some cultural values remain unchanged throughout one’s life and others are altered with demarcation between what is inherent and learned not clearly defined. Hawkes (2001) offers a similar understanding of culture, as a powerful, dynamic, social construct in a continuous process of evolution whereby people are actively recreating and/or reinforcing group life expressed through actions and material culture. Every person, therefore, plays an important role in creating individual and community resilience through their responses to daily life. The Conference Board of Canada (2008, p.7) recognizes culture as providing the basis for stimulating connectivity, creativity, innovation and well-being that becomes the driving force for human development—economic, intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual. Thus, the nature of culture, the underpinnings of its social functioning, is a determining factor in attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours that impact on resilience. Paramount for transitioning is recognizing community culture as a social construct, an adaptable environment with underlying mechanics or process influencing how it functions, and identifying ways to foster effective responses that support and enable continual adaptation over the short and longer term.

2.0.1. Relationships Between Individual and Community Resilience

Within the concept of the community as a complex adaptive system individuals are the foundational element, and as such, play a critical role in resilience (Wheatley and Frieze, 2006). This section provides insight into the contextual variables, e.g. community culture, family, social norms, networks and relational processes that shape individual resilience, impacting on the broader community’s capacity to transition through change.

People need to be able to respond and adapt in meeting life’s various challenges. Egeland, Carlson and Sroufe (1993, cited by Sonn and Fisher, 1999, p.458) define individual resilience as “the capacity for successful adaption, positive functioning or competence.” There is a strong relationship between individual and community resilience that is deeply contextualized in community (Chaskin, 2008; Sonn and Fisher, 1999). Resilience is a highly complex, dynamic phenomenon comprised of interrelated dimensions that fluctuate over time (Buikstra *et al.*, 2010). The factors that comprise resilience are not necessarily distinct to each level, individual or community; they generally contribute to both scales to varying degrees (Buikstra *et al.*, 2010).

Metzl and Morrell (2008, p.305) outline three operational models of individual resilience: i) stable personality traits that protect individuals from the negative effects of risk and adversity; ii) positive outcomes, (e.g. self-esteem) and achievements despite exposure to risk; and iii) a dynamic process contingent upon interactions between individual and contextual variables that evolve over time. The third model proposes understanding resilience as conditions or processes rather than as personal traits or outcomes, shifting perceptions of resilience from being solely a private, individualistic characteristic to a process-based notion contextualized within culture and norms (Metzl and Morrell, 2008). This view places community culture at the centre of the resilience schema with relational processes shaping one's capacity on an ongoing basis. Chaskin (2008, pp.65-66) proposes a similar perspective regarding the centrality of community culture to resilience impacting on: i) community as the context; and ii) community as the agent of change. Community as the context for resilience highlights the embeddedness of people within social norms, its direct influence on interactions with family, peers, group, and school, and its indirect impact on cultural norms and macro level policy. Community as the agent for change, or the resources for action, underscores the extent to which the community as a whole has the collective ability, or not, to respond to adversity as engaged actors.

Resilience is perceived to form through lifelong process-based learning that begins in the early years and is reinforced through daily social interaction and personal reflection. Robust and diverse social networks and supports are seen as the most critical factor in resilience, providing opportunities for people to participate, and to draw on others' personal resources and formal services in times of need (Buikstra *et al.*, 2010, p.981; Chaskin, 2008, p.66). Opportunities to interact and form relationships, and the presence of infrastructure supporting such, is dependent upon community cultural values, and thus leadership priorities for resource allocation. Values supportive of investing in social and economic infrastructure enable and activate citizens' willingness to form social groups and cooperate, leading to healthy lifestyles and innovation—all of which are identified as significant characteristics of resilient people and communities (Buikstra *et al.*, 2010).

Locality and external relationships also play an important role in resilience, highlighting the significance of regional inter-connectivity, with rural communities at an advantage when located in proximity to larger centres and/or when relationships between places are established that enable localities to draw on external resources (Buikstra *et al.*, 2010). Thus, cultural norms of place and connectivity play a central role in individual and community level resilience.

2.0.2 Relationship Building, Innovation and Resilience

Relationships don't lead to quality of life; they are quality of life

(Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006, p.74).

Grounded in complexity theory, the concept of a complex adaptive system is a theory of change; specifically, how systems adapt and respond to stressors (Holling and Gunderson, 2002). In community systems, complexity theory assists to understand the self-organizing networks that emerge when experiencing change (Onyx and Leonard, 2010, p.2). Wheatley and Frieze (2006, p.1) posit social relations are the only organizational form on this planet used by living systems, describing emergence as "... how life creates radical change and takes things to scale." The following sections foreground the significant role respectful relationship building, interaction, emergence and dialogue play in strengthening individual, organizational and community innovation and identity, and thus, the capacity for continual adaptation.

2.0.2.1 A Sense of community

Community development and community psychology literature indicate a sense of community impacts on trust, social cohesion and collective will, and thus, the ability to self-organize, respond and adapt. Interaction fosters shared histories and reciprocal relations, strengthening the community system through belonging and membership, leading to social and economic innovation.

Sarason (1974, cited by Sonn, Bishop and Drew, 1999, p.206) describes a sense of community as "the sense that one belongs in and is meaningfully part of a larger collective ... the sense that there is a network of and structure to the relationships ...". He argues that it should be the defining principle of community research and action due to its centrality to well-being and its role in social justice and social change. Many other researchers have illustrated that one's health, psychological well-being, sense of identity, and quality of life is correlated to integration into networks that support a sense of belonging. Family, work, church, and community are primary settings for evaluating one's sense of community. As family relationship change due to (among other factors) work force mobility it negatively impacts on one's sense of belonging unless other networks are developed allowing for membership and integration to occur (Sonn, Bishop and Drew, 1999).

McMillian and Chavis (1986, cited by MacMillan, 1996, p. 315) propose a theory for the evolution of a community, focusing on social cohesion and identifying the elements, dynamics, and processes that lead to a sense of community. The theory provides insight into the transformative nature of relationships when individuals are linked within and across the community system with one aspect

of community development leading to the next, yet reliant upon the previous one. McMillian (1996, p.315) later revised the framework, extending, reorganizing and renaming the principles, viewing a sense of community as:

... a *spirit* of belonging together, a feeling that there is an authority structure that can be *trusted*, an awareness that *trade*, and mutual benefit come from being together, and a spirit that comes from shared experiences that are preserved as *art*.

Unpacked, McMillian (1996, p.315) explains friendship is the spark that becomes the Spirit of a sense of community, underscoring the need for connection to others “... so that we have a setting and an audience to express our unique aspects of our personality ... where we can be ourselves and see ourselves mirrored in eyes and responses of others.” Relationships with others provide emotional safety, a range of degrees of intimacy, a sense of belonging, membership, and acceptance. Trust, the second aspect of a sense of community evolves into justice. There needs to be an authority structure, an allocation of power that enables community members to influence each other and the larger public (p.318). Communities that engender reciprocity are more cohesive, trusting and orderly, increasing decision-making capacity and developing authority based on principles rather than individuals, thereby fostering equity and justice (p.320). When communities have Spirit and Trust an economy founded on mutual benefit begins to emerge. Trade is first a community economy (i.e. a social economy) based on barter later moving to a market economy with all members becoming potential trading partners (pp.321-322). Interaction sparked through Trade creates a shared history, emotional connections in time and space that become the community’s story. Art symbolizes the community’s heart and passion; its shared history and emotions, i.e. the transcendent values of community (p.322). Art expressive of community values supports Spirit, the first element in a sense of community hence the cycle begins again, in a self-reinforcing circle. Thus, opportunities to connect and foster respectful relationships spur a sense of community, facilitating the development of place-based economies.

2.0.2.2 Social Capital Development

Human interaction is the foundation of all communities (Flora and Flora, 2013, p.118).

The following section is a critical review of linkages between the development of social capital and community engagement, collaboration and collective will that is essential for mobilizing and transitioning through change.

Margaret Wheatley (Tamarack, 2009) succinctly captures the relational concept of systems. Her understanding of quantum physics as the basic element or building blocks of the universe bridges scientific grounding and community development. Wheatley explains that such 'building blocks' are in fact not 'blocks' that are separately manoeuvred to create the universe, but elements that can only be understood in relationship to each other. Quantum theorists have long established that elementary particles cannot be seen unless they bump against each other. Wheatley (Tamarack, 2009) posits the fundamental bottom line of science is that the individual does not exist unless in relationship:

... it's the way life organizes itself. It's the most natural form of existence not just to mankind but to all species on this planet. Nothing lives alone except us westerners who got hooked on the idea that it's all about individualism and competition. It is the basic form of organizing. There is no other way to live.

On a biological level unhealthy systems are restored by creating more connections, i.e. relationships to increase adaptive capacity and resilience. On a human level Wheatley (Tamarack, 2009) states this translates into connecting people through building respectful relations between and among demographics, systems (cultural, social, governance, economic) and scales, thus supporting other researchers such as Gilchrist (2009) who argue the relational web is central to understanding a community and its resilience. The Berkana Institute,¹⁵ which was founded by Margaret Wheatley in 1992 to develop radically new practices and ideas for organizing where people are seen as a blessing, not a problem, focuses on the transformative life cycle of emergence; specifically, how living systems begin as networks, shift to intentional communities of practice, and evolve into powerful systems capable of global influence. Wheatley and Frieze (2006, p.2) note global does not necessarily mean planet-wide, but a larger scale.

Self-organizing and reorganizing emerges with recognition of structural interdependences with resilient systems developing in ways that support diversity and viability for all. The networks of social relations that emerge, referred to as social capital, serve as critical mechanisms for creating and initiating change, facilitating coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Wheatley and Frieze, 2006). They are an effective information channel for accessing and/or dispersing concepts and critical data that underpins innovation (Kay, 2006). As a concept there are various approaches and ways of understanding of social capital; however, there is general consensus that there is an intangible 'something' that exists between individuals and organizations that emerges from connecting and is further developed through trust, mutual understanding and reciprocal actions

¹⁵ The Berkana Institute (www.berkana.org).

based on shared norms (Kay, 2006, p.165). Within a community development context social capital is considered the 'glue' that holds the community together (Mills, 2003, p.9) and in the private sector the 'grease' that enables things to happen smoothly (Kay, 2006, p.166). Social capital in and of itself is "*value free*" (Kay, 2006, p.165). As a capital it exists as a resource that can be utilized for community development, but unlike other forms of capital that deplete, it increases with use, i.e. the more trust and relationships develop between people, the stronger they become, thus increasing one's sense of community, health, well-being, and resilience (Flora and Flora, 2013; Kay, 2006).

Social capital literature typically identifies three types of networks—bonding, bridging, and linking—with each playing a specific role in developing adaptive capacity. Bonding connects people who are similar to one another and involves multiple ties among people or organizations closely located within the socioeconomic system. These networks are homogeneous in nature (for example, family and kin), are affective or emotionally charged and create a sense of community. Bridging networks bring together people who are not like oneself in some demographic, and linking refers to connecting to people with power. Bridging and linking social capital tend to be single-purpose or instrumental and contribute to a broader sense of community (Flora and Flora, 2013, p.127). Communities with strong social capital are at an advantage by being able to draw on diverse connections to respond quickly to situations and pool resources for collective benefit (Gilchrist, 2009; Torjman, 2007; Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006). Gilchrist (2009 p.12) refers to social capital as the "... fountain that the community drinks out of in times of crisis" (p.12). Field (2003, cited by Gilchrist, 2009, p.11) regards it as "... quintessentially a product of collective interaction." Networks and linkages support community transitioning by strengthening people's capacity to deal with stressful conditions and assists in their recovery. Built on strong relationships rooted in trust, mutuality, and reciprocity they facilitate stretching, reshaping, and reorganizing the community fabric necessary for change at the individual, organizational and community level (p.11).

The development of social capital is fundamental to community vitality and survival, particularly in smaller communities (Flora and Flora, 2013, p.119). Although people may live in close proximity, cultural norms, community history and power relations play a role in its development, or its lack thereof. A community's capacity for collective action and adaptation is contingent upon its citizens' individual social capital; however, individuals do not build social capital by themselves—it is a group phenomenon dependent upon human interaction (p.119). An individual's social capital forms the basis of one's sense of community derived from one's lived life based on the multifaceted experience of daily living that shape perception, understanding, attitudes and feelings about the

locale (Sarason, 1976). Those who feel excluded, oppressed, alienated, and/or stigmatized do not have a sense of shared experience, of community (Sonn and Fisher, 1999, p.459). Sarason (1976, p.407) in his seminal book recognizes culture and place are central to its emergence, noting the developmental aspects of a sense of community may change over time; however, they remain directly related to local contexts indicating “... sense is always embedded in and shaped by a particular part of a particular society within a distinctive, ever present history.” Thus, social capital development is linked to and dependent upon the community context, its culture and the resultant social norms.

Precursors for social capital development are opportunities for people to connect and work together with informal networks playing a key role. Social activities, e.g. helping neighbours or organizing local events, create windows of opportunity for bringing diverse people together making it easier for people to communicate and cooperate to support each other in collective action to achieve, or defend, common interests (Gilchrist, 2009, p.15). Sustained group forming processes enable relationship building, allowing those with similar interests to connect, develop a common vision of what is possible and work collaboratively in ways that are empowering, leading to collective efficacy, spirals of learning and social innovation. Robust and diverse networks across the community promote effective and inclusive empowerment as they encourage a wider range of people to become active citizens and leaders (p.16). Fostering critical connections—rather than aiming for a critical mass of people—is where change is initiated. Linking kindred spirits is fundamental to develop new knowledge, practices, patterns and capacities that facilitate and enable scaling up change (Wheatley and Frieze, 2006, p.1). Opportunities to connect with diverse people and build social relations are, therefore, crucial to individual, organizational and community level resilience; it enables drawing on local and/or external resources to support responding and transitioning through change.

It is important to note social capital can be inclusive, supportive, and extremely helpful in community development; however, it can also be exclusive, exploitive, and suppressive (Kay, 2006, p.165). Community development researchers including Gilchrist (2009, p.18) caution that informal networks are not always visible and/or do not always lead to positive community efficacy. For example, social and cultural pressures can create elitist, tribal, and gang networks that are closed and well-protected from other people and not supportive of the community’s established norms. In these cases, community ties may work against inclusion, limiting adaptation and resilience.

2.0.2.3 Dialogue

Across academic disciplines dialogue is recognized as being a key process of growth, development and positive change. The necessity to communicate, to foster diverse relationships in broadening peoples' self-interests and consequently work collectively, situates interpersonal communication skills high on the list of capacities essential for resilience. A critical review of the literature indicates dialogue plays a transformational role in individual and community change by raising awareness of cultural values contributing to shifting norms, bridging social divides and engendering mutuality, openness and collaboration.

Cooper *et al.* (2013) provide an informative review of dialogical literature from psychological, educational, community development and social transformation traditions. The researchers identify three principal ways the term dialogue is used: i) transformative, where there is opportunity for profound learning, change or growth, prescriptive in what some theorists consider conversation should be, ii) ontological, referring to the nature of being human, inherently intertwined within social relations, descriptive in what dialogue is; and iii) everyday, referring to conversations and social exchanges, a descriptive term focusing on what actually occurs.

At the individual level, dialogical research is found in psychotherapy. Burber (1947, cited by Cooper *et al.*, 2013, p.72) defines it as a form of communication "where each of the participants really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular being and turns to them with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation between himself and them." Integral to 'turning' toward the other is being open to receiving something outside of one's own assumptions and understanding and taking a risk of being affected in unpredictable ways (p.73). To engage in dialogue individuals must be self-aware of their internal experiences, open to accepting all the facets of oneself that may arise during the exchange, and willing to communicate these experiences to an 'other'. Burber (1974, cited by Cooper *et al.*, 2013, pp.74-75) explains the exchange facilitates connecting to an emerging consciousness; it is a process that leads to expressivity, the capacity to share authentically. Bakhtin (1984, p.346) differentiates between "authoritative discourse", a prior discourse that is only transmitted, in contrast to "internally persuasive discourse", an internal process, an ideological becoming that is not finite. The primacy is on the listener who must understand their own conceptual system and assimilate the speaker's alien world. Bakhtin (1981, p.282) explains it requires the capacity for "... establish(ing) a series of complex interrelationships, consonances and dissonances with the world and enrich(ing) it with new elements."

For Freire (1970, 1973, cited by Cooper *et al.*, 2013, p.79) respectful dialogue must be achieved in order to address community development approaches that are hierarchical, i.e. where outside 'educated experts' may be perceived as delivering community development to local 'ignorant' communities. In these instances, one perspective is considered to be the authoritative voice when in reality there are alternative ways of doing things. Community change involves acknowledging others' forms of knowledge as legitimate, and relating to others as subjects not objects. A primary concern for Freire (1973, 1970) is internalized oppression, where poor people's self-perception of themselves and their knowledge is viewed as being of lesser value than those of privileged groups. Conversely, those occupying dominant positions may consider their knowledge to be better, with little need or reason to consult others. Dialogical interventions provide opportunities for critical cultural discourse, revealing norms that enable people to reflect on them and generate new shared values.

Bohn (1990, p.1) also provides insight into the role dialogue plays in shifting perspectives. He perceives the primary purpose of dialogue is not to communicate, but to address the blockages in communication, revealing the consciousness behind one's stance. He understands dialogue as a proposal for exploring meaning together, as a creative perception that is actively evolving from thinking and feeling together with no one person prevailing. When differences arise, Bohn (1990) posits, dialogical processes can transform culture from the hate and anger of an impersonal fellowship toward establishing a common consciousness supportive of collective action. He contends that dialogue may or may not produce a result at the time of interaction; however, it plants seeds that may lead to transformation (p.1). This perspective of dialogue is particularly relevant to community development where ongoing communication is needed to build understanding and solidarity across diverse disciplines and cultures in order to reorganize, create and implement plans.

Born (2006, p.1) contextualizes dialogue within community development referring to it as the "... flow of meaning between or in a relationship" providing space for opening up judgments and assumptions, moving from convincing others to giving opportunities to build upon other people's ideas. At the community level, *how* dialogue is orchestrated impacts on resilience. Processes that create space for citizen participation as equal representatives foster empowerment and community building (Cooper *et al.*, 2013, p.492). In summary, traits common to transformative dialogue include a deep respect and value for others as people rather than objects, and a mutual sense of equality that fosters the capacity to view the world through different lens, engendering openness and willingness to change one's perspective. Given the primacy of dialogue to fostering social change it is imperative for individuals and communities to develop these characteristics.

2.0.2.4 Clustering, Innovation and Continual Adaptation

Understanding innovation, social or otherwise, has shifted from conceiving it as a linear pipeline to an iterative process that is increasingly reliant upon cultural and social capital. This section underscores the significance of connectivity and direct interaction between diverse people in facilitates transformational learning, sharing and co-producing knowledge, which in turn, fosters a culture of innovation, vibrancy, investment, and continual individual, organizational and community level adaptation and renewal (Leicester and Sharpe, 2010; Miles and Green, 2008; Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006).

Innovation is based on interactive learning processes where tacit and/or codified knowledge is constantly being transformed through complex social relations that lead to new ways of solving particular problems. There are key underlying conditions that foster such whether it is within or across firms, organizations or communities, and/or locally or globally. They include: a culture of innovation, diverse networks and social capital, connectivity and interaction, close proximity, and linkages to external assets (Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006; Bathelt, Malmberg and Maskell, 2004). Paramount is the culture of a network, firm, organization or community; specifically, the relationships between and among members, underpins the capacity for continual transformation and success (Senge, 2006; Schein, 2004). Continual innovation and renewal is dependent upon the intertwined and dynamic processes of the organization's culture and leadership, i.e. how networks coalesce—the process of group formation and its subsequent evolution—shapes membership, identity and the collective's effort to cope and learn. Cultures rooted in open communication channels encourage people to be proactive problem-solvers committed to the learning process rather than one particular solution, fostering respectful relationships that support sharing and collaboration, enabling new ideas to emerge, generating innovative solutions (Schein, 2004). Senge (2006) provides a systems view of the ingredients necessary for continual evolution and adaptation advocating for 'learning communities'. Essentially they are teams of people working together in ways that support personal and collective growth by shifting relationships between bosses and subordinates toward less hierarchical organizational structures. Three core learning capacities that must be developed and present as an ensemble in effective learning communities are: fostering aspiration; developing reflective conversations; and understanding complexity, i.e. shifting to systems thinking. This approach supports re-conceptualizing how one sees oneself within the world through the realization that people are creating their own reality, bolstering the desire to engage and act in making necessary changes.

Drilling down into the organization's composition and functioning, the presence of diverse social capital increases the likelihood of the 'strange attractor,' the introduction of new people and 'animators' that spark novel ideas and the emergence of alternative pathways of development and innovation at an individual, organizational and/or community level (Westley, Zimmerman and Patton (2006, p.37). In terms of functionality, connectivity and interaction underpin co-producing shared knowledge that enables those within the cluster or network to continually combine and recombine in new ways (Bathelt, Malmberg and Maskell, 2004, p.37). Geographical proximity generates a 'buzz', a milieu, a vibrancy of inspiration and ideas that Bathelt, Malmberg and Maskell (2004, p.38) define as "... the information and communication ecology created by face-to-face contacts, co-presence and co-location of people and firms within the same industry and place or region." These types of situations foster local innovation by their very existence of "being there" (p.38). Leveraging local assets, however, requires investment in networks that link to external sources, creating information channels or pipelines that are mutually beneficial in dispersing localized knowledge and accessing rich sources of expertise. Horizontal networks support lateral learning that enable communities to learn from each other, between and within communities, and vertical networks link regional, state, resources, and organizations. The more connected a place is the greater its access is to new ideas and information, thereby increasing knowledge and generating value through the creation of enterprises or products (p.41).

Flora and Flora (2013, p.129) underscore that networks with permeable boundaries support the expansion of new partnerships and collaboration. Flexible networks assist in avoiding burnout, ensuring people maintain a genuine interest and enabling opportunities for more people to participate and become leaders. Strong bridging and linking social capital allows communities to gain control over their social and economic development, effectively becoming entrepreneurial through mobilizing local resources and the willingness to consider alternative ways of reaching goals. Rural entrepreneurial communities, in particular, seek outside links to access critical information and provide leadership development to buttress and leverage local assets (p.135).

Once again, culture and respectful relationships, creativity and interaction are at the centre of the schema. The ability to connect, tap into one's creative forces, co-produce, innovate, and adapt to changing environments is directly related to individual, organizational and collective resilience.

2.0.3 Systems, Economies and Value

Despite advancements in understanding community as a 'whole system' metrics for community health and success have typically remained within the postmodern era of economic frameworks based on the monetary system as the generator of wealth (Sharpe (2010, p.11). Recent literature, however, is expanding the traditional lens toward perceiving the community as comprised of many overlapping economies, each with its own pattern of organizing, values and currencies and role in creating and maintaining vitality and resilience. This section contributes to reimagining the concept of the economy, enlarging understanding of how organizing, i.e. connecting people with similar interests and values, fosters the emergence of dynamic, place-based economies by linking producers, intermediaries (e.g., outlets, service organizations, agencies) and consumers across the community system, and beyond to other locales.

Sharpe (2010, p.12) challenges the view that economies and subsequently 'economic value' means 'monetary value' arguing monetary value is alienable value that is separable from oneself, i.e. it can move or be given to others, such as property. Most of what people value, however, is inalienable, the polar opposite of money: what is meaningful to oneself is part of who one is and one's quality of life (Leicester and Sharpe, 2010, p.11). Sharpe (2010, p.32) repositions the concept of economy from a system of monetary exchange to "... a coordinated pattern of human activity enabled by a currency" that facilitates linkages and systems to emerge based on interests and values. These meaningful relationships foster networks that intersect and intertwine across the community landscape evolving into economies founded on shared values, and underpinning the construction of healthy and resilient place-based systems. Sharpe's (2010) perspective promotes the concept of community being a dynamic system comprised of multiple, simultaneous and potentially increasing number of economies, based on its capacity to self-organize, connect, and form relationships with others who hold similar values and interests in specific products, objects, and/or services. He posits economic value is determined by the interconnected web of people comprising a particular system and what they have identified as being important from their own point of view. As an example, Sharpe (2010, p.24) offers a tree: a tree has a nesting value, aesthetic value and furniture value. Value is not universal or intrinsic in an object; it is created and sustained through relational processes that extend within and across boundaries. When people with similar or shared appreciation of value are coordinated, an economy is created in which value can be realized and traded.

Resilience is dependent on each of the system's economies being maintained, separately, and in balanced relationships with the others. Within a healthy ecosystem Sharpe (2010, p.64) insists one economy should not hold domain over others; it requires all economies to be individually vital with currencies flowing between them in mutually sustainably ways. Sharpe's (2010) concept of multiple economies supports the growing recognition of different economies including the cultural economy, social economy and environmental economy. Shifting perspectives about the economy from one dominant, monetary-based economy to patterns of life refocuses attention to the necessity of understanding sustainability in terms of its relational value, highlighting the dynamic and potential role everyone plays in creating community prosperity and resilience, and the importance of policies and interventions that facilitate connecting like-minded people, encouraging emergent, novel production and consumption networks that increase synergy and wealth across community systems.

2.1 The Centrality of Place in Culture

Community is a cultural value, not a political value (Mommaerts and White, 2014, p.2).

When attempting to understand what makes communities resilient, early research studied places that were comparative in size and assets. Some were successful in adapting, while others were less capable. The studies reveal community assets are important in terms of 'what to develop', i.e. resources that could be strengthened and/or leveraged to revision place and foster new economies; however, the underlying process of transitioning, the 'how to', proved to be more of a determining factor in community success (Centre for Community Renewal, 2000). Resilient places have a culture that fosters and supports inclusive community engagement and the development of social capital, holistic, cross-sectoral planning, and local resources including people, financial, cultural, historical, and natural. Given the significance of culture to resilience, as the context in which society is embedded and the role it plays in shaping and shifting community values, foundational questions for community developers revolve around how to utilize it in becoming more vital. This section critically reviews literature regarding culture's impact on society's collective understanding place, planning and development processes, and revitalization as a tool to attract and retain mobile people and financial investment.

Place, as the geographical location of the community system, is enmeshed in cultural values that shape all aspects of life at the local level as well as being deeply contextualized within larger political structures. In terms of self-determination, in comparison to the international policy arena, communities are of a scale where engaged citizens may influence development processes, and be

influenced to make change at a personal level. Localities that have established a sense of community through citizen participation, social capital development and shared values are considered abler to address change, and therefore, more sustainable (Dale, Ling and Newman, 2010, p.217; Hopkins, 2008).

Geographer Tim Creswell (2006) and artist, art critic and writer Lucy Lippard (1997) offer a multi-centred schema of place. Creswell (2006, p.7) states that whether explicit or not, culture plays a central role in place: it is a 'space' that people have an attachment to in some way, a location that is meaningful. Similarly, Lucy Lippard (1997, p.11) speaks to culture's central role in its construction, "Culture is usually understood to be what defines place and its meaning to people. But place equally defines culture." She posits place is the intersection of nature, history, culture and ideology informing the locale through politics and spiritual legacies. Unpacking the relationships between them Lippard (1997, p.7) explains:

Place is latitudinal and longitudinal within the map of a person's life. It is temporal and spatial, person and political A layered location replete with human histories and memories It is about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there, what will happen there.

Lippard (1997, p.7) underscores the concept of the locale as a significant aspect of one's health and well-being, the sense of community and the role people play in creating place:

It is the geographical component of the psychological need to belong somewhere, one antidote to a prevailing alienation. The lure of the local is that undertone to modern life that connects it to the past we know so little and the future we are concocting.

Lippard (1997, p.6) speaks of the dynamic nature and the impact on people becoming 'one of the ingredients' of place's current composition that shape the hybridity of the locale—the way individuals collectively impact place:

Each time we enter a new place, we become one of the ingredients of an existing hybridity, which is really what all 'local places' consist of. By entering that hybrid, we change it and in each situation we may play a different role.

Regarding a place's historical significance to present culture and psyche, Lippard (1997, p.8) instructively offers "Places bear the records of hybrid culture, hybrid histories that must be woven into a new mainstream. They are our 'background' in every sense."

Returning to the influence of people's values on lives, Lippard (1997, p.9) contends that "... our personal relationships to history and place forms us as individuals and groups and in a reciprocal way

we form them.” Cresswell (2006) concurs, positing identity and place are not solely about social relationships; it is intimately connected to place as a spatial experience, to the events and history that are associated with place, including the development and aesthetics of the built environment. These two researchers depict place as a matrix of relationships, extending from the past into the present, within a confluence of interconnected value-based systems. Malpas (1999, p.70) understands place, and one’s sense of self in place, is constituted through one’s perspective of other things, as an ordering of the world, comprising a framework of place as interconnected subjective and objective space. These ideas reinforce Hawkes (2001), Geertz (1973), and Sarason (1976) regarding the centrality of culture to place and community functioning.

Pred (1984, cited by Cresswell, 2006, p.35) deepens understanding regarding the construction of place, positing “Places are never ‘finished’ but always ‘becoming’...” underscoring the dynamic interplay between processes, structure and agency. Thrift (1996, cited by Cresswell, 2006, p.37) too, focuses on the role processes play, bringing forth an understanding of place as an “... embodied relationship with the world.” Cresswell (2006, p.39) draws on a number of studies to bolster understanding place as being constituted through a “... reiterative social practice—place is made and remade on a daily basis” characterizing the locale as the “... raw material for creative production of identity rather than an *a priori* label of identity”. It is an open, boundless space that is constantly changing, allowing for the possibility of a “creative social practice” in contrast to an ontological thing that is rooted in permanence.

Cresswell (2006) and Lippard (1997) provide important insights into the conceptualization of place as a dynamic, adaptive community system that is in constant motion of ‘becoming’ through citizens’ embedded in their individual biographies that impact on identity, a sense of community, and community processes and practices with cultural values playing a central role in its continual evolution. Place, therefore, operates as a collective society shaped through interaction suggesting the interplay between norms and agency—individuals’ histories and present behaviours—play a key role in community vitality with more resilient places fostering a sense of place that is respectful of its history while also being meaningful to current citizens.

The dynamic relationship between culture and place foregrounds the significance of adopting emergent and inclusive community development approaches to create room for diverse meanings of place to unfold. Torjman (2007) proposes ‘shared space’, i.e. a physical location, and the conceptual area where common vision and goals are identified and set, is where resilience is created.

Community animators collaborate with citizens, building on local strengths to develop short and long

term trans-boundary plans, enabling the community to advance synergistically and simultaneously on many fronts in 'becoming' an exciting, engaging and resilient place. Emergent planning processes, in contrast to cookie-cutter approaches to development, are flexible allowing for the investigation of community context and the application of creative problem-solving that underlies success (p.46). Such processes require an emerging leadership style, a 'leading between' (Chrislip, 2002), to guide the collaborative process through the complexity of consensus building and the application of new knowledge and solutions (Torjman, 2007, p.33). These types of processes underscore the necessity for practitioners to be grounded and skilled within the context of uncertainty and constant change, i.e. to have a "creative social practice" that fosters participants' ability to embrace other knowledge. The role of culture in place is not about linear 'top down' pipeline planning and predetermined measurable outcomes: it is about principles, values and relationships, ways of patterning and networking to build solidarity while respecting diversity, and leveraging local assets to creativity develop place.

The centrality of place in culture is foundational in Florida's (2002) ground breaking research *The Rise of the Creative Class*, foregrounding policy and planning priorities within local and regional sustainability. Shifting demographics and economies resulting from global restructuring is forcing communities to revision and compete for people and investment that is increasingly mobile. Florida (2008, p.148) states "... place is the precursor to everything else ... affect[ing] our ability to lead happy and fulfilled lives." Where one lives, he claims, is one of the three most important decisions in life impacting on economic and social destiny. The other two foundational decisions are 'what one does' and 'with whom ones does it'. Place determines who one may possibly meet (partners, neighbours, colleagues); networks (family, social, business) that could develop; education and employment opportunities; and socioeconomic mobility. Culture and happiness play a key role in community and regional revitalization. The mobile creative class is relocating to communities that align with their quality of life values—places that have talent and technology and are tolerant of creative and diverse peoples. Physical infrastructure and taxes, the competitive advantage of the industrial age, are being replaced by lifestyle amenities that are culturally rather than geographically based. The culture of place and its physical beauty matters more than where the mine or mill is located.

Regardless of geographic location and locale, i.e. rural, urban, and/or city centre, people value places which provide the following opportunities:

- i) a major source of excitement and creative stimulation in maintaining psychological well-being;
- ii) physical and figurative space where one can gain a sense of self, derive happiness, and define oneself through self-expression; and
- iii) a sense of belonging, pride, and attachment.

Drilling deeper, Florida (2008, pp.158-159) cites Harvard Business School's workplace performance study that discovered happiness leads to creativity—rather than vice versa—and innovation leads to positive moods suggesting a socioeconomic value chain that moves from happiness to innovation, which is then leveraged for economic development. Many jurisdictions are adopting Florida's (2008, 2002) framework for culture-led regeneration; however, there is criticism regarding its applicability to smaller centres and its sustainability that shall be considered within the Arts and Community Development Models section of this thesis.

2.2 Intersections and Resources for Building Adaptive Capacity

Holling and Gunderson (2002) argue that understanding how communities learn to change is fundamental to identifying sources for and challenges of renewal; specifically, the ways various community systems organize and generate knowledge and synergy, and points of intersection and influence between them that support innovation and solidarity. This section focuses on community assets, in general, and the utility of cultural and social capital, in particular, as junctures for effecting change through the emergence of new relationships that foster shared values and the collective will to work collaboratively and equitably in addressing change.

Emery and Flora (2006) understand capital as a currency that acts as a social relation within a system of exchange. The Community Capitals Framework (CCF) uses capital as a primary analytical tool and as a strategy for community change through the lens of relationships, particularly power inequities. It aims to provide developers with a model for systematic change through fostering a holistic understanding of ways capital can be accessed and leveraged more equitably for broader community health and well-being, and thus, resilience. CCF highlights interdependence, interaction and synergy among the capitals and the ways one type of capital can impact on others, i.e. the assets in each capital (stock), the types of capital invested (flow), the interaction among the capitals, and the interaction across capitals. There are seven tangible and non-tangible capitals that a community

has to work with: natural, cultural, human, social, political, financial, and built capital (Emery and Flora, 2006, p.20).

The ability to adapt depends upon community resources being accessible to its citizens, and effectively mobilized. Each type of capital enhances the productivity of others within the system, building synergy and resilience within the broader community, therefore, decision-making and actions must consider the interplay and relationships between the capitals. Should one type of capital dominate, other resources are decapitalized, negatively effecting the whole system. Fundamental to creating and leveraging capital is recognizing where systems of capitals intersect and how assets overlap and flow between them. To build synergy for revitalization Emery and Flora (2006, p.31) posit cultural capital—attitudes and norms that hinder working together to achieve community change needs to be reformed to “... foster a sense of agency within the community, to reduce long-term conflict, and to appreciate assets and invest them wisely.”

The concept of cultural capital has been largely shaped by French socialist Bourdieu’s extensive research into theories of society and social practices resulting in an analytical framework for understanding power structures and power relations in the context of development, social change processes, and human agency (Navarro, 2006, pp. 12-13). Bourdieu (1986) identified three types of cultural capital: i) embodied capital (or habitus), the system of dispositions that shape an individual’s character and guides actions and tastes; ii) objectified capital, the means of cultural expression, e.g. the arts, that is symbolically transmissible to others; and iii) institutionalized capital, academic qualifications that establishes the value of the holder of a given qualification. Navarro (2006, p.14) explains Bourdieu conceptualized the social world as “... a series of relatively autonomous but structurally homologous fields of production, circulation and consumption of various forms of cultural as well as material resources.” Bourdieu’s theories are based on two premises: that all social interaction is driven by self-interest resulting in social struggle due to individuals trying to maximize their gains and accumulate resources under different forms of capital (economic, social, cultural, symbolic); and that culture is the ground for human interaction, domination, and change (Navarro, 2006, pp.14-16). If cultural capital is the arena for change, where are the junctures that can shift people from narrowly defined self-interest, to one where self-interest becomes mutually beneficial for broader societal benefits? What role, if any do the arts, objectified cultural capital, play in this regard?

Flora and Flora (2013, p.55) broaden the concept of cultural capital to include assets, resources or 'legacies', i.e. what exists in the community, as well as what it has inherited, and identifies ways it can be utilized to take charge of destinies and become more inclusive and economically secure. Cultural capital includes one's social class, influencing social capital development. Cultural capital, however, can be transformed into social capital through opportunities to engage and interact with diverse people (p.79). Knott (2008) concurs, but contends shifting cultural values is a complex process that occurs at the intersection of individual, social, and institutional behaviors and attitudes. Cultural change, or shifting the 'social zeitgeist' (p.14) involves interventions that influence: i) underlying attitudes, values and aspirations and how these manifest into behavior; and (ii) the dynamic process by which behavioural patterns become established as part of underlying attitudes and values. Navarro 2006 (pp.16-18) indicates opportunities, intersections and junctures for changing relations between people and reshaping values and norms occur during unexpected situations, for example, when new experiences challenge current perspectives. Interaction through networks or sets of relationships, e.g. intellectual, religious, educational, or cultural, create space for shared meaning to develop and influence one's relationship with others. Jeannotte (2003, p.48) provides a similar view stating:

... "singing together" (or even "acting together" or "visiting a museum together") may hold benefits not only for oneself, but also for the people around us. Indeed, preliminary evidence would suggest that even "singing alone" may be a transformative experience, and one of the key elements of a sustainable community.

The interplay and impact of personal and collective cultural capital on the community's capacity to bridge networks and systems necessitates understanding the context of place—the diverse cultural values embedded in past and current relationships. It underscores the importance of providing opportunities to connect and revisit values in developing the collective will move forward. Culture, therefore, is the 'space' in the community where change can be initiated, and the arts, the objectified expression of cultural capital is the means. Engagement in artistic activities gathers diverse people, providing the impetus for crossing socioeconomic boundaries, impacting on values and norms. The production of cultural products facilitates sharing histories and ideas and co-producing knowledge and understanding that encourages and supports alternative behaviours, underpinning solidarity and change.

2.3 Creativity and Resilience

Many researchers claim creativity to be one of the most important human qualities (Metzel and Morrell, 2008, p.308). The following section assess the contributions of creativity to resilience gleaned from social science, health and education related literature identifying benefits such as the development divergent and higher level thinking, awareness of self, and the capacity for solving complex problems—all interdependent traits supportive of adapting to change.

Creativity and resilience are complex phenomena that are not easily defined, and the relationship between the two is not well researched (Metzl and Morrell, 2008, p.313). Both are underpinned by characteristics that facilitate adaptation. Both involve bringing something new into existence through ideas or novel concepts by reshaping something that currently exists—whether through one’s mind or materials—increasing adaptation by propelling personal or cultural domains forward. People do not have the capacity to create something out of nothing, thus everything involves revisioning and reconfiguring in response to adversity or risk and/or for the sheer pleasure of creating (Metzl and Morrell, 2008, p.305; Carter, 2004).

In the social sciences, Hunter (2001, cited by Metzl and Morrell, 2008, p.304) explains resilience is understood as “the process of bending and rebounding to overcome adversity” requiring elasticity and flexibility to re-shape identity and chart new pathways. As with resilience, creativity is grounded in complexity. Creative people are able to draw on interdependent traits that increase their capacity to engage in higher order thinking (e.g. divergent thinking, awareness of oneself, and expressiveness), enabling them to be more flexible and flow freely between tolerance and ambiguity, which is necessary to transition through change. Early attempts to measure creativity gave way to researching associated traits including initiative, adaptability, spontaneity and originality. These characteristics, considered essential to problem-solving, are equally important to resilience (Metzl and Morrell, 2008, p.304). Sternberg (2006, p.88) proposes a model of creativity that identifies six distinct but interrelated characteristics: intellectual abilities; knowledge; styles of thinking; personality; motivation; and environment, i.e. the context. Since none of the attributes are fixed, the confluence and balance of one’s competencies impact on creative synergy. According to Sternberg (2006) creativity is a choice: one can decide to think and act creatively, or not. This point raises important questions around people’s relationship to creativity and which situations or environments encourage and/or hinder it. What role can the arts play to foster creativity within and beyond the sector? How can people be encouraged to engage in and support creativity in other domains to increase broader resilience?

Creativity is contextualized and valued within time and place in relation to its ability to propel thinking forward. Csikszentmihalyi's (1996, cited by Metzl and Morrell, 2008, p.309) defines creativity as "a process by which a symbolic domain in the culture is changed." It is framed primarily within transforming an existing domain into a new one within the external world. Metzl and Morrell (2008) underscore there are different kinds of creativity including advancing new ways of thinking through minor replication such as transferring ideas to another field, or major redirections within and/or beyond disciplines. Interestingly, Metzl and Morrell (2008) note creativity itself may not differ between a lay person engaged in creative expression that generates change on a personal scale and a renowned scientist who impacts culture on a world level. Creative problem-solving and divergent thinking are required to function and adapt daily in all spheres of life (p.310).

Understanding creativity manifested in one's personal domain as an expression of resilience, therefore, contributes to recognizing its foundational role in individual adaptive capacity. Sternberg (2006, p.90) notes that while creative ideas are novel and valuable, they are frequently rejected when innovation challenges the vested interests of the status quo. One could have all the internal resources, but without an environment supportive of creativity it is not easily sustained, thereby limiting innovation and adaptive capacity.

Metzl and Morrell (2008, p.304) suggest there is a growing body of literature indicating creativity plays a significant role in successful transitioning; however, little research examines relational connections and creativity and their impact on people's social relations and synergies. Although creativity is typically considered a private characteristic Duffey (2006, cited by Metzl and Morrell, 2008, p.308) posits it is a collaborative, relational experience that is fostered, in particular, where there are situations involving differences (i.e. diversity) and where talents are shared, negotiated and appreciated. The inherent benefits of individual creativity are further developed with opportunities to collaborate. Thus, engaging with others in creative activity simultaneously forges empowering relationships while increasing broader resilience.

Recognizing resilience as a relational, multifaceted, contextual development process shifts thinking from perceiving it as an individual trait of a few people within a specific domain to an ongoing act, manifested through everyone's engagement in the myriad of minute and large scale, collective processes of daily life. It is, therefore, important for people of all ages and sectors to first learn to think creatively, and second, appreciate the diverse ways creativity is manifested across domains. Encouraging a culture of creativity fosters more creative capacity and confidence, and thus, agency in one's individual and collective ability to address challenges.

2.4 The Arts and Resilience

There is considerable literature identifying the arts' contribution to community development. Widely recognized benefits include increase health and well-being and social capital development through engaging people across socioeconomic boundaries (Cooley, 2003). Culture-led revitalization is also well-documented with creative goods diversifying the economy and defining place (Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006). More recently, Sharpe's (2010) systems perspective of multiple economies based on meaning (i.e. what matters to people), is strengthened through opportunities for people to connect, establish and articulate what is meaningful, and methods of transmitting these to others to generate expressive economies that define place. He explains that art is the currency of the 'economy of meaning'—it is the primary means of making meaning, and sharing one's unique experiences with others sets the currency into motion (p.32). This section provides insight into the significant role the arts play within relational frameworks by providing both the impetus to self-organize into economies, and the objects for exchange.

There is also a body of literature investigating the similarities between the disciplines of arts and community development. From a systems perspective, Crane (2010) presents them as two separate yet intersecting ecosystems with overlapping foundational goals of building healthy, sustainable communities. The model positions the arts as both the means and the ends for development, and defines development as place-based change. The arts and community development build on each other's agendas and outcomes for place-based change with both being understood as "world-builders" (Crane, 2010, p.2). A locale's cultural ecology is frequently a complex mix of: development focused on preserving cultural traditions, language, stories, etcetera by connecting people to retain diversity and/or supporting, developing and promoting individual arts businesses and related industries that contribute to creative place-based economies with global links. Crane (2010) notes that community development ecosystems are also complex with an array of organizations, private entities, planners, elected officials and agencies that may have arts within their mandates, such as delivering arts programming, providing development and/or living space, and employing and/or partnering with artists. Identifying and understanding the numerous and diverse intersections between the socially constructed fields of arts and community development, and recognizing cultures' contributions to the physical, social, and economic dimensions of the locale increases awareness of the foundational development role they play in making communities more sustainable.

With regard to the arts' efficacy in effecting community change, Stern and Seifert (2010) present three conceptual action theories for such based on the nature of arts engagement: i) didactic action often utilized in political campaigns and social movements to present information from a particular

platform; ii) discursive action providing people opportunities to discuss issues, make connections and take action; and iii) ecological action. Ecological action was first introduced by Jane Jacobs in her seminal book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961, cited by Stern and Seifert, 2010, p.23). In contrast to the didactic and discursive pathways that focus on purposeful, intentional action, ecological theories view all participation in culture as a form of civic engagement, generating a variety of spillover effects that increase resilience. Spillover includes skills, knowledge and/or experience gained through engagement that is incorporated into one's life and transferable to other fields, domains, sectors or spheres increasing individual and community level adaptive capacity (Sacco, 2011; Savory-Gordon, 2003). Since culture is in and of itself a form of social capital—it is shared life—gathering diverse people fosters intercultural dialogue and relationships, and the inspiration to work toward common goals (Stern and Seifert, 2010, p.23). Ecological theory, therefore, is a sound overarching framework for understanding the arts' contribution to resilience within a dynamic, complex adaptive community system comprised of structural independences, as it highlights the important contribution didactic and discursive interaction plays in effecting change.

This section takes a critical perspective of the various ways the arts build resilience, its effectiveness in engaging citizens, and its impact on individuals and the broader ecology of the community system. It draws on Stern's and Seifert's (2010) three theories of action to analyze how engagement in the arts contributes to individual resilience, and ways it scales up adaptive capacity to a community level ability to transition through change. Three broad categories of engagement contributing to this work are: i) creative practice; ii) the artwork; and iii) engaging others in creative processes, including artist-led interventions and others utilizing artistic activities in community development processes to revision and regenerate place. The following sections unpack each category.

2.4.0 Creative Practice: Reflexivity, Local Innovation and Spillover

The arts have long been considered an effective engagement tool, creating opportunities for participating in the life of the community, life-long learning and fostering diverse relationships. Less prominent in the literature, however, is the critical role reflexivity, local innovation and spillover play in transitioning through change, and their respective impact on the public's capacity to adapt. This section assesses the efficacy of reflexivity, inherent in creative practice, for building characteristics identified with resilience including understanding place, reshaping identity, and generating local knowledge and place-based economies. It also identifies ways knowledge and skills gained through engagement spillover to other sectors and domains and are leveraged beyond the arts to significantly increase agency, contributing to large scale change.

Artistic practice and social capital developed through the arts play a significant role in reshaping identity and belonging that enable transitioning through change. Carter (2004, p xii) posits if communities are to sustain themselves it is essential for individuals and societies to understand how relationships and identity are actively created and reformed. Creative practice—as creative research—materializes divergent thinking about the human situation, rendering it into tangible objects that manifest new knowledge and ideas, and as the objects are circulated and consumed, initiates others’ reflection on such, further generating insights and transformation. Practice connects people to their creative forces, drawing on one’s whole being, psychological and physical, that enables self-reflection and transformation. Artists rematerialize culture through creative processes, introducing ideas, thoughts and stories that are more sustainable, and bridging new relationships with the environment (xii). Engagement begins the internal creative, dialogical and investigative processes Carter (2004) refers to as ‘material thinking’. It leads to self-discovery, the creation of ‘local knowledge,’ and ‘local invention’ with the object as a record of the creative research (p.7). Exploring the materiality of the thing that is being made and/or the relationship of the maker and the materials—inquiry and reflection on what matters, in life and in the materials, the theoretical framework for making, the thoughts that arise and comprise the creative process of making, the interaction, response and reaction of maker and materials—opens new ways of perceiving the human situation that are specific to the creator and contextualized within place. Carter (2004, p.7) describes ‘local knowledge’ as being local within the maker and rooted in a specific locality, and ‘local invention’ as the creator’s internal, localized act of creation that materializes the inventions, or novel goods. Vaughan (2007, p.1) expresses material thinking as “... an experience of the *local* and the articulation of *place* Place is more than where we are, place is also how we are; how we connect to the location we are in.”

Reflexivity raises consciousness of one’s values, norms and attitudes, and connections between oneself, location and the things that happen there. It fosters the capacity to think autonomously, described by Mezirow (1997, p.6) as having the understanding, skills, and the disposition to engage effectively in discourse to validate one’s beliefs and be open to, and capable of, integrating new ideas. Reflection contributes to revisioning personal perspectives, reforming identity and transforming cultural values—essentially expanding consciousness (Taylor, 2007, p.173; Imel, 1998, p.3) and implementing plans that bring about new ways of acting and defining oneself (Vaughan, 2007, Malpas, 1999; Mezirow, 1997). Carter (2004, p.xii) adds the dimension of time, i.e. the contribution of continued engagement in the arts to ongoing identity reformation and transformation, stating cultural products materialize and contextualize ourselves at particular points in the continuum of life, imbuing the complexity of the process “... of *becoming* (collectively and

individually) *oneself in a particular place.*” As the vehicle for the maker’s thinking and stories, the tangible artifacts connect people to the personal, the maker behind the object—a human connection rooted to time and place that enables sharing insights and knowledge of one’s creative investigation with others, impacting broader change (Carter, 2004; Inkson, 1987).

Making visible one’s understanding of past, current and potential future relationships with oneself, others and place has the capacity to transform identities and communities through re-scripting and revisioning unsustainable stories and narratives into sustainable ones (Reinsborough and Canning, 2010; Sarkissian *et al.*, 2008, p.29; Barndt, 1989). Malpas (1999, p.80) links identity, narrative and agency explaining that the reconstruction of ourselves through stories, the fitting together of the parts, serves to understand our past and future and is integral to our attitudes and actions. Malpas (1999, p.94) states:

It is largely through narrative, in fact, that we are able to project into the future, and in so doing, we are also able to explore and map out future possibilities for action. Purposive behaviour... would seem to depend on the capacity to play out possibilities in one’s mind and to fit actions and events to a history and context ... the capacity for action comes to depend crucially on a capacity to construct narratives and to understand them.

Re-scripting stories through art enables bridging difficult subject matter by providing a vehicle for exploring sensitive issues, facilitating revisiting cultural perspectives and norms, enlarging understanding of the complexity of individual and collective values upon society as whole. It can raise the visibility of the challenges different people face or provide important opportunities for re-scripting beliefs through showcasing marginalized groups’ contribution to the community, increasing cultural appreciation and supporting social integration and identity and belonging within a broader social context (Cooley, 2003, p.45). The process of bringing people together, facilitating interaction and exchange between diverse demographics fosters multiple-group membership, creating a complex social identity which leads to a higher degree of tolerance, openness to change and increased creativity and problem-solving skills (Roccas and Brewer, 2002, p.102; Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Creative processes inherent in artistic practice also assist to negotiate new identities outside of the dominant culture by providing a neutral ‘space,’ physical and emotional, for creative expression of our multiple selves, to try on, imagine, experience, and envision new ways of thinking and rethinking issues, allowing space for alternative perspectives and innovative solutions (Brown and Mills, 2004, p.9; Cooley, 2003, p.23; Sonn and Fisher, 1999). For cultural minorities and marginalized groups, in particular, the arts play a critical role in cultural continuance by providing a safe space to practice and transmit values and stories intergenerationally through the production of meaningful objects (Sonn and Fisher, 1999, p.459).

The spillover of skills and knowledge gained through creative practice to other domains and spheres greatly contributes to individual, organizational and community level resilience. Schein (2001) draws on his experience as an organizational theorist and artist to highlight resilience-related benefits acquired through the arts that are valuable in others sectors. He considers the most important aspect of engagement to be its capacity to spur creative thinking; specifically, artists and their work encourage people to view reality in different ways—to recognize it as a social construct—and to draw on one’s own creativity to reshape daily life and activities in ways that reflect what is meaningful and important to each person. Furthermore, practice fosters the ability to articulate one’s aesthetic sense and supports others to perceive, appreciate and legitimize beauty in all facets of daily life. He notes that society has limited conceptual tools to analyze and reflect on such dimensions; however, the arts garner respect for diverse cultural practices in which aesthetics is contextualized. Creative practice also contributes to one’s leadership development and capacity for managing change, fostered by artists’ ability to draw on one’s own emotional and unconscious self in decision-making processes, relate to and coordinate with others, and improvise which is essential in occupations that are interactive such as teaching, consulting and sales.

In terms of capacity gained through creative practice being utilized in other areas, Markusen *et al.*’s (2006) *Crossover: How Artists Build Careers across Commercial, Non-profit and Community Work* illustrates artists’ ability to move among sectors cross-fertilizing ideas, building networks and honing skills that impact on the community’s creativity and connectedness. Furthermore, NESTA (2008) heralds a Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) degree to be the new Masters of Business Administration (MBA) as a requisite for adaptation in the knowledge economy. The research indicates fine art graduates possess a combination of key technical, cognitive, and interpersonal skills that underpin innovation, particularly sound analytical and interpretive capacity, an aptitude for teamwork, the ability to explore alternative outcomes and work within unknowns. NESTA (2008) notes, however, the very limited recognition of these cross-over skills is attributed, in part, to curricula that do not prepare students for work in other fields and businesses’ lack of awareness of the valuable skills artists possess.

The perception that artists’ contribution to society is limited to the sector is very narrow. Creativity is a fundamental component of community functioning and adaptation. Sacco (2011) argues the arts should be assessed within the broader community context rather than individual and/or sector contributions. They spillover and widely impact on large scale change and resilience through: innovation; health and well-being (cultural participation is the second predictor of psychological well-being after the presence/absence of major diseases); social cohesion; life-long learning and the

development of a learning society; sustainability through the social transmission of positive behaviour patterns; new entrepreneurship models; a vibrant cultural milieu that generates tourism; local place identity; and defining global place identity as a magnet for investment, new relations and markets. Moreover, cultural products in and of themselves provide important spillover effects that connect people to place and influence others. They are replete with concepts underlying ‘transference’ put forth by Freud and described by Hushka (2010, p.48) as “... the unconscious process in which someone says or does something that reminds you of your past.” Cultural goods—through the object itself and/or the context of acquiring them—connect people to their past and to the present, thereby fostering meaningful attachment to place.

Creative practice provides space for critical self-reflection on one’s frames of reference—the structures of assumptions that make sense of our lives and guide our actions—and the space and the means for understanding oneself in the context of place, materializing its expression through cultural products. It facilitates adaptive capacity through inquiry and reflexivity that is manifested in tangible goods, enabling others to revisit cultural norms and personal perspectives, re-script stories and actions and expand and/or reform identity. The spillover of skills and knowledge accrued impact on broader community capacity for transitioning through change. Thus, creative practice is a very effective means and a critical point of intersection for fostering multi-scale resilience; however, traditional assessment frameworks for valuing the arts do not capture these significant contributions.

2.4.1 Artists, Art Work and Social Change: The measure and dismeasure of culture

This section critically assesses the various roles artists and art play in society, and the efficacy of cultural objects to capture complex issues and foster agency, solidarity and social change at an individual and collective level. It investigates creative practice, and the significance of art work as a didactic and/or discursive action tool for shifting cultural values to strengthen and/or challenge the status quo.

Gielen *et al.* (2014, p.22) contend the primary objective of the cultural sector is to give meaning to life and create ways of living together. Its ‘core business’ is to influence the social sphere in a reflective manner through: i) socialization, e.g. integration of people into a specific social, political and economic order by teaching ways to act and be; ii) qualification, e.g. the continual process of evaluating what is deemed important and of vital necessity; and iii) subjectification, e.g. empowerment to formulate one’s own ideas, fostering self-reliance, independence or autonomy that may be critical of the dominant cultural order, thus reshaping the social commons (p.13). The

culture sector effects societal change through 'meaning making'. Artists, arts organizations and art itself can strengthen the existing systems or provide alternative perspectives by acting as change agents, introducing concepts that challenge normative thinking and behaviour.

The arts have a long and well-documented history of being utilized as a tool for social action through circulating ideas that raise awareness in support for, or in protest of issues (Anwar McHenry, 2011, p.246). For example, popular education draws on the arts for their efficacy to create visual images that illuminate structural challenges (Freire, 1967). They can illustrate new and/or complex concepts that inspire and support people to find solutions to addressing inequities and other community problems created through policy and/or globalization (Reinsborough and Canning, 2010; Barndt, 1989; Gatt-Fly, 1983). Gathering and organizing develops informational networks and builds social capital that serve to generate solidarity and disperse new ideas and action plans.

The use of art significantly increases agency by conveying ideas without having to rely on permission from someone else. The ease of producing and circulating images empowers people from diverse socioeconomic demographics to express their views. Tangible cultural objects are circulated or utilized as discursive tools to engage others in validating or challenging one's frames of reference and assumptions, sparking change. Stern and Seifert (2010) caution that the proliferation of mass media and technological advancements, e.g. access to the internet and powerful graphic programs, have fuelled the propagation of art that maintains the status quo, and/or plants mistruths.

The importance of art—the underlying issue—is less about whether it depicts a beautiful, viable, interesting and/or a truthful alternative, and more about presenting the possibility of a different viewpoint (Gielen *et al.*, 2014, p. 16). The arts can sometimes confirm identity and normative beliefs, and at other times it may shake the foundation of one's existence, which Gielen *et al.* (2014, p.17) contend is "... the most essential value that artists have to offer society." This contextualizes culture as the 'measure' of a society, confirming the status quo, and its 'dismeasure', as a change mechanism, revealing culture is a social construct, questioning and/or challenging customs and traditions, disrupting the status quo (Gielen *et al.*, 2014, p.15). Criticism of aesthetic art, particularly avant-garde work, as not having a function and therefore 'useless' to society is rebuffed by Luhmann (1997, cited by Gielen *et al.*, 2014, p.16) arguing it plays a critical role of introducing a sense of possibility "Nothing is either necessary or impossible', or 'everything that is, can also always be otherwise." Art and historical avant-garde remain rather isolated in society touching a relatively small percentage of people, however, Gielen *et al.* (2014, p.23) underscores:

... it is a practice can be at the epicentre from which everything may be set in motion. To phrase it in somewhat poetic terms: art is like a soft song that not everyone can or wishes to hear, but that can on rare occasions make a complete society resonate with it.

In a similar vein, Leicester and Sharpe draw on Wigner's (1960, cited by Leicester and Sharpe, 2010, p.28) concept of the 'unreasonable effectiveness' of mathematics to advance the social sciences through its embeddedness in the discipline, supporting its expression of the world, framing the arts in the same regard premised on the arts' ability to foster broader innovation:

Great art of any form has an unreasonable effectiveness to relate us to each other in a way that allows us to share our unique experience of the world ... Art thus intertwines with all our culture, infusing it with the means to express what we find to be the general experience of being human, and the particular path of our own life.

The fundamental role artists play in society as observers, interpreters and documenters of life through creating meaningful objects is summarized by social theorist Hannah Arendt (1985, cited by Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1968, p.517). She explains the whole factual world of human affairs depends for its reality and its continued existence, first, upon the presence of others who have seen and hear and will remember, and second, on the transformation of the intangible into the tangibility of things. Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi (1968, p.518) uphold Arendt's position regarding the artists' purview in society as ensuring its "continued existence" of thoughts, ideas and values over time. To her foundation they add the transformative aspects artists and art contribute to society:

... artist's role is to maintain and change creatively the patterns within his own system and in so doing to affect the values of society at large by transforming fleeting, personal experience and the "spirit" of his time into artifacts which build a "culture" for the present and a "heritage" for the future.

Artists' capacity to render concepts and intangible nuances into tangible forms support possibilities for change that enables deeper and/or alternative ways of knowing and being to emerge. These societal tasks are undertaken through "conforming", "innovating", "retreating", "ritualizing" or "rebellious" depending upon one's cultural norms, artistic production and social goals (p.519). Conforming and ritualizing artists play a critical role in maintaining the continuity of artistic methods and symbols, providing documentation and artifacts for future generations. Innovating artists are rebellious, creating "transitional" responses seeking to institutionalize new processes, advancing formal considerations of the craft and/or shifting cultural values and goals through changing existing structures (p.519). Artists as innovators, in particular, build resilience by charting new pathways, becoming models for others through advancing practice within the discipline, fostering new ways of seeing and/or remembering within society as whole.

Artists play a number of critical roles in society through didactic and/or discursive action and the reflexive nature of artwork. The tangible goods contribute to cultural continuance, supporting the status quo as the measure of culture, and its dismeasure through illuminating possibilities of other perspectives of social constructions with the interaction of artists, artwork and people underpinning the efficacy of the sector to fulfil its 'core business' of influencing society through reflection.

2.4.2 Arts and Community Development

This section investigates intersections, relationships and perceived differences between the arts and community development sectors. It explores the arts' contribution to building adaptive capacity through the lens of creative practices that engage others, enacting change through relationship building, leading to increased resilience. It critically assesses a variety of artist-led initiatives that stimulate civic dialogue, for example, community arts, as well as creative processes utilized by others including developers in planning processes that impact on identity and belonging and place. It begins with defining community arts practice and its participatory underpinnings that create space for diverse voices to be heard. It then discusses the ways creative processes and activities are employed beyond the arts sector to understand complex issues, and finally, outlines the contribution of the arts to social and economic development and animating place.

There is growing interest in community arts, what some authors describe as the synthesis of community and professional art. It is a large and diverse practice that is also known as arts and community development or arts-based community development (Cleveland, 2010, p.2; Crane 2010, p.2). The preferred term in Northern Ontario is Community Arts and the practice is still very nascent compared to the United Kingdom (UK) or USA and even in the rest of the province. Community Arts is defined by the Canada Council for the Arts (McGauley, 2006, p.4) as "... an arts process that actively involves the work of professional artists and non-arts community members in creative and collaborative relationships". It aims to improve economic and/or social health and well-being through public participation, i.e. civic engagement, increasing community access, ownership, authorship and accountability. Cleveland's (2010) conceptual map depicting the ecology of community arts provides a system's overview of the far reaching tentacles of community arts' contribution to what is typically considered the purview of community development.

The website of Animating Democracy¹⁶, a program for the Americans for the Arts, holds a wealth of initiatives evidencing the critical and varied role artists and the arts plays in resilience through participatory interventions that revision identity and belonging and place. The vast majority artist-citizen, art-based community collaborations involve individual and/or collective creation of art or creative activities. The process draws out latent talent and tacit knowledge to advance understanding of the locale, and build community through the construction of respectful place making strategies (Stern and Seifert, 2010). Duxbury and Pepper (2006, p.6) refer to community place making as a:

... process of transforming the physical environment into something culturally meaningful and collectively personal. It's about transforming space into place. In an inclusive and culturally sustainable society it is important for citizens to see themselves reflected in their environment.

Place making is becoming an increasingly important transitioning strategy when competing for limited mobile resources including people and investment. Increasingly communities, governments and civic entities are turning to the arts to address planning and adapting complexities. These interventions position artists as social innovators and the creative processes they employ as vehicles for participatory democracy, i.e. as change agents within government, educating, advocating and driving policy (Catherwood-Ginn and Leonard, 2010). Every community has a unique combination of people and cultural expressions underpinning its essence and values that can serve as magnets to attract resources, and as anchors in retaining them. Understanding place—as relationships between and among people and the locale—lay at the core of revisioning. Catherwood-Ginn and Leonard (2010) suggest artists can bring a “searching” quality, a less linear and more opportunist spontaneous and responsive approach to seeking solutions to community issues in comparison to institutionalized planning that tends to be more top-down with predetermined goals and known pathways for achieving them (p.23). As a result, artist-led planning is an effective community building tool, increasing participation of diverse peoples and strengthening capacity for participatory democracy through story-telling, imagery and open dialogue. Art assists to express and define oneself and aspirations, and the tangible object enable others to confirm, accept and/or appreciate differing views. Dialogue enables articulating and discovering what is uniting between people, the common values across diverse populations, and areas that are challenging. These processes create space that allow for individual, and often hidden voices to be heard, facilitating learning from one other in understanding and conceptualizing place from many different perspectives.

¹⁶ Animating Democracy (<http://www.animatingdemocracy.org>).

Wood, Landry and Bloomfield (2006) also known as Comedia posit there are many nuanced ways of 'knowing' a place. Citizens engaged in exploring history, cultural values and forms of expressions often reveal divergent and multiple stories, experiences and aspirations. Making sense of the various cultural meanings attributed to place is key in laying a foundation to move forward (p.18). Cultural literacy plays a significant role in traversing and making sense of others' world views. Woods, Landry and Bloomfield (2006, p.17) describe it as "... the capacity to acquire, interpret and apply knowledge about cultures. This creates the possibility to take an apparently familiar issue or discipline and to look at it afresh through an *intercultural lens* ..." It assists in mitigating the embeddedness of each person within their own normative system, facilitating crossing boundaries of meaning and perspectives. The ability to express one's culture and understand others' values and priorities contributes to interpersonal communication, extending beyond the arts sector into daily life experiences and interactions (Anwar McHenry, 2011, p.251).

Utilizing artists in community processes brings great dividends, but can be challenging for collaborating partners for a number of reasons. Artistic processes and their effectiveness are not widely understood and they tend to be messy, slow and cumbersome. Engaging people, however, is essential to understand the unique cultural, social, political ecology of each place and is an indispensable part of building community trust. Cleveland (2010) argues relationships fostered through collaboration strengthen the resilience of the partnerships, forging critical bonds for future endeavours. Stuver *et al.*'s (2012) research substantiates similar benefits garnered through collaboration are found in rural communities.

In addition to contributing to the formation and development of community plans, artists play a significant role in shaping and animating place. Public art is another area of participatory civic engagement that contributes to understanding and constructing place, both through the creation of the work and the end product. Discursive theories of action are frequently tied to creation processes and the resultant art (for example, murals) contribute to place making and the quality of life by animating the space, providing opportunities for expanding citizens' engagement with one another (Percy-Smith and Carney, 2011; Nowak, 2007, cited by Stern and Seifert, 2010, p.19). Stern and Seifert (2010) indicate some practitioners consider discursive approaches as an end in itself, a deliberate way of increasing democracy through greater participation, while others perceive it as means to a broader end of raising awareness or empowerment (p.17). Either way, artists stimulate civic dialogue by assembling diverse people, playing the role of a provocateur or an amateur to motivate citizens in collective action. These processes create space for personal stories—the human dimension of place—eliciting new thinking through metaphor, humour, and abstraction (p.17).

Grant Kester (2004, p.8) refers to discursive art practices as 'dialogical practices', performative, process-based approaches that can break through the limits of fixed identities and staid discourse. Nicholas Bourriaud (1998, p.113) describes them as 'relational art' a "... set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context." Thus, the boundaries between the arts, creative practice, and community development are increasingly blurred as more artists engage others to investigate social and economic issues within the community arena.

Much has been written about the positive benefits of clustering that facilitates networking between and among individuals, organizations and business. Arts and cultural districts contribute to community vitality and diversity through co-locating, increasing the ease of collaboration and raising the presence of arts and culture within the locale and beyond. Natural districts emerge organically based on grass-roots interactions that are authentic cultural scenes. Planned cultural districts also contribute to resilience and sustainability through large-scale development projects that define place and attract tourists. Artists contribute to the functionality and aesthetic beauty of places through collaboration with, for example, municipal public works departments as demonstrated in Calgary, Alberta in western Canada. Artist-run centres are an important aspect of culture-led regeneration, raising the visibility and accessibility of the sector and place identity. The presence of arts-based microenterprises spurs larger commercial development such as live/work space and cultural suppliers. Cultural tourism and community branding have become foundational marketing tools in revitalization. Murals and public art are well-documented interventions that shape and animate space through the development of the work and/or the continued interaction of people and with the completed work. The strategic location of art can serve as an anchor or focal point and/or create a sense of neighbourhood boundaries (Crane, 2010).

The arts are also utilized by a wide spectrum of developers, researchers, and organizations within and beyond community development practice for many of the aforementioned reasons. Further examples are Burns (2007) who draws on the transcendent nature of art to understand complex contexts and issues within a systemic approach to action research. Participants create drawings to depict relationships across boundaries that reveal linkages and gaps as a means of sparking discourse and action in addressing deficits. It facilitates building relationships and bridging knowledge between diverse actors. Percy-Smith and Carney (2011) highlight the significant opportunity to explore aspirations of place through art as a creative social process of revitalization (p.29).

In summary, the arts contribute to place making in a multitude of ways, though community planning processes, animating public space, enhancing and improving infrastructure, and social and economic development (Crane, 2010). The two sectors, arts and community development, intersect and overlap with delineation becoming increasingly challenging, perhaps questioning if it is even necessary within a community system. Both function as world-builders (Crane, 2010) underpinned by transformation, rooted in place. The arts engage people in artistic practice at the individual and/or community level, building creative capacity, diverse relationships, innovative solutions and alternative actions. Within this role, artists are social innovators, animators and developers. Similarly, when developers and others utilize artistic processes and activities in their work they draw on the tools of artists. The two ecosystems, therefore, do not appear to be separate, but rather different notions, or working perspectives of manifesting change within the interconnectedness and interdependencies of the community system. Crane (2010, p.6), however, raises an important point regarding the perceived lower value of arts sector's development work in comparison to field of community development; specifically, arts organizations are not frequently on equal footing or seen as equals to community developers—but notes, it is beginning to change.

2.4.3 The Social Milieu and the Cultural Economy

Many decision-makers understand the importance of arts and culture in meeting social and economic development agendas (Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006), including its contributions to creating distinctive places; however, less clear is the reverse, the impact of the dynamics of place on artistic and cultural production and why some locations become vibrant, innovative and resilient. This section focuses on literature pertaining to the relationships between social capital, built infrastructure and the development of cultural economies, deepening understanding of the interconnectedness of the production, circulation, and consumption of creative goods, and highlighting the way value is created.

Currid's (2007a) investigates how the arts and culture sector works—how it is created and recreated—and why it happens in large urban centres, focusing on the mass production of fashion, art and music in large metropolises such as New York City and other dominant American locations. Questions arise regarding the relevancy of Currid's (2007a) research to smaller locales and/or those more interested in developing localized economies with global connections, rather than large-volume production systems. In other words, what is fundamental and scalable to the functioning of the arts and culture sector, and can it generate similar benefits in rural locales?

Studying the inner workings of the arts and culture sector Currid (2007a) uncovers two central, interconnected themes: i) the social life of creativity is inextricably tied to economic viability; and ii) valuation is an integral part of the social construction process. She posits the sector operates similar to other industries such as finance, law, and manufacturing in some areas, but is unique in certain core processes. Specifically, industry clustering, i.e. the density and close proximity of suppliers, agglomeration of labour pools, firms, and suppliers, etcetera, and the ensuing social environment fostering informal intermixing of the various sectors through people living in the same neighbourhood or frequenting the same restaurants and bars, is referred to by economists as an outcome—a successful by-product of such clustering. In contrast, the arts and culture sector's social life is the central force, the *raison d'être*. Currid (2007b, p.4) states "Creativity would not exist as successfully or efficiently without its social world—the social is not the by-product—it is the decisive mechanism by which cultural products are generated, evaluated, and sent to the market." The conflation of the social and economic spheres in the creation, circulation, and consumption of cultural goods creates the social milieu that drives the industry (Currid and Williams, 2010; Currid, 2007a). The sector operates outside of boardrooms, skyscrapers, and the business world's hours of nine to five: it is built on social re-interaction that occurs during the night life of gallery openings, runways and after-parties. Socializing leads to business transactions, e.g., connecting with other creative people to get jobs, and meeting producers, editors, curators and organizers that drive sector promotion and make things happen. It is where careers are launched and/or ended, and where everyone sees what is happening, spurring new ideas for collections and stimulating business deals across the creative industries (Currid, 2007b, pp. 4-6). Timing, synchronicity and simply "being there" play a role in the emergence and development of individual success and sector prosperity (Currid and Williams, 2010, p.428).

The formation of social networks is paramount to creative workers and the social milieu is where they are fostered (Currid, 2007b, pp.4-6). Being in the right place at the right time is a key factor, underscoring the spontaneity and emergence of face-to-face encounters (Currid, 2007a, p.12). To meet demands and develop creative potential workers draw on networks that extend within and across disciplines and sectors, organizing into nodes that support direct collaboration and/or production chains that add value with each contribution. Markusen and King (2003, p.9) indicate that "These relationships are relatively symbiotic and involve complex chains of activity and connection in which creativity and innovation move both up and downstream." Once the job is complete, the artist-producers regroup forming another creation/capacity building/production cycle. The self-organizing patterns of cultural workers build strong and diverse relationships that enable them to respond quickly and effectively to meet ever-changing criteria. This networked or shared

pool of creative workers results in complex intra-and inter-dependencies that supply the broader economy artistic capacity to remain competitive, particularly within the tourism, information and communications technology, advanced manufacturing, financial and business services and sciences sectors. The ability to cross over, transferring skills, knowledge, and networks to other disciplines furthers innovation and transformation at various scales (Markusen and King, 2003; Florida, 2002).

In addition to the community benefits of having a vibrant arts scene, Markusen and King (2003, p.6) refer to the presence of artists in a community as the 'artistic dividend', an investment worth garnering due to the economic return. These benefits include the recruitment of other skilled workers to the area that lead to a larger and more diverse talent pools, enabling businesses to design better and more specialized products, and increase successful marketing outputs locally, and beyond. While cultural workers are well-educated, skilled and entrepreneurial the majority are reliant upon part-time, contract or self-employment that is frequently supplemented by revenue generated in other sectors. As a result, they are often not highly visible to decision-makers and the impact of the sector is not captured through traditional economic mechanisms, and thus, often not considered viable investments (Markusen and King, 2003). Creativity and innovation, however, are key operating principles for this century, and these mutually-reinforcing systematic processes require planning and investment. Markusen (2013) argues for nurturing cultural entrepreneurs by first identifying who they are and supporting their development through providing organizational and built infrastructure.

The sector catalyzes prosperity through the provision of content and products that are defined by the originality of their "expressive value"—the symbolic, aesthetic or artistic nature of the products—and the successful commercialization through a range of production systems or networks linked to social and commercial infrastructure. There are a number of factors contributing to successful cultural economies. Place, specifically, geography, density, and urban planning are key to enabling creative development and industry clusters through the close proximity of artist studios, galleries and night life that support perpetual creativity (Currid, 2007b, p.2). People drive growth, and places that have more citizens participating in idea-driven industries and occupations experience more economic productivity (Currid, 2007b, p.70). Leftover infrastructure from the manufacturing era provides low rent and vast space for artist lofts. The walkability of cities, New York in particular, encourages chance encounters between those offering artistic skill sets and those in need of them (Currid, 2007b, pp.8-9). Marketing and messaging a place as a creative environment contributes to spreading the word and attracting more creative people and/or tourists.

Currid and Williams (2010, p.425) identify five interconnected elements that play a critical role in this complex, highly emergent and dynamic sector. They are: i) the social consumption of art and culture is not spatially random, i.e. events tend to occur within a limited district; ii) there is a recursive mechanism that reinforces specific places as centres of activity and may be linked to the broader notion of “place as product”; iii) various disciplines tend to organize their events within the same narrow area; and iv) iconic infrastructure and historically significant sites may play a key initial role in the cultivation of ‘place branding,’ as specific goods may require types of space, such as theatres; and v) clustering of the social milieu also implies the clustering of the media.

The second central theme Currid (2007a, p.4) brings forth is the valuation of cultural goods as an integral part of the social construction process. It is grounded in the fact that culture is consumed based on taste making it very difficult to determine a method or means of evaluating the object because it is not dependent on performance, e.g. how well an appliance works. How the outputs are measured is central to understanding the sector (Currid and Williams, 2010, p.426). People buy things because they like them for one reason or another. In many cases, particularly for more expensive items such as investments, the reason is often based on the value it has been assigned by experts, newspapers, galleries, or organizations that have the perceived authority to make such decisions. It is a social construction: the gatekeepers and tastemakers tell the public what is worth owning in our symbolically and status-driven society (Currid, 2007b, p.5). They play a crucial role in establishing “conventions” that shape the sector and inform the public (Currid and Williams, 2010, p.426). Cumulative collective consumption that transforms people into superstars and cultural products into “must haves” occurs when the masses choose to follow the trends, consuming the same cultural goods as everyone else. This lowers peoples’ search cost in determining taste, leading to the most well-known being valued rather than the best (Currid and Williams, 2010, pp.428-9). While it is recognized that people do have choice and many follow and develop their own tastes, the media (newspapers, magazines, and television) as well as critics and editors play a critical role in mass consumerism. There is room for agency—specifically through individual decision-making. In smaller centres refocusing gatekeepers and media attention toward locally produced goods encourages an aesthetic of place to emerge.

The success of the social milieu, as Currid and Williams (2010, p.428) indicate, also depends upon the media’s co-location and capacity to generate the requisite “buzz” by distributing information such as “Who else attended?” “Which critics showed up?” and “Was there a line up to get in?” The conglomeration of media, however, has left the periphery with limited, if any, local independent

media making it more difficult to get the word out. Despite this challenge, social media is playing an increasing role in the effort to generate interest and create an art scene.

Thus, places become vibrant and distinctive through the presence of creative people, a mix of formal and informal, social, organizational and physical infrastructure within a defined area, media attention, and events that enable frequent re-interaction. The degree of national, regional, or global recognition is related to marketing mechanisms, gatekeepers and tastemakers that shape public opinion and choice (Currid and Williams, 2010, p.425). Community size, therefore, may be less important than an environment that enables the development of a social milieu and ensures marketing arms support the social construction of values that foster the production and consumption of local goods.

2.5 Arts in Rural Communities

Rural communities in the North are facing many challenges including employment loss due to restructuring of extractive industries, declining and aging populations, retention of younger people, limited social opportunities, reduction of local services and increasingly urban-focused policies. Developing new sustainable sources of wealth is paramount. Duxbury and Campbell (2011, p.112) purport a growing recognition of the importance of each community redefining itself in support of self-determination. Understanding community culture, social norms and how it celebrates and expresses itself, i.e. what makes it unique, underpins its ability to develop a new identity and weather significant change. The arts have been heralded by many governments and regions as an engine for urban renewal. Questions remain regarding its efficacy in rural revitalization and sustainability compared to the scale, location, and cultural assets upon which large metropolitan areas leverage and generate wealth.

This section critically reviews the role of the arts in the periphery, its effectiveness as an economic diversification strategy, i.e. reducing reliance upon primarily one industry by building on the particular characteristics of place. It begins with a brief overview of rural arts literature, and then identifies key areas where the sector significantly contributes to resilience including community participation and vitality, fostering identity through festival and events, and ways entrepreneurship and diverse artistic practices encourage social change and the development of creative and culture-based economies, thereby retaining younger citizens and attracting new people and investment.

There is growing recognition that rural communities are not simply scaled-down versions of urban centres. Duxbury and Campbell (2009, p.4) unpack culture—its context, multiple roles and dynamics as being key to understanding rural issues of “... demographic change, economic productivity, environmental and climatic crisis, Indigenous/non-Indigenous relations and land ownership and the role of ‘cultural’ factors in the renewal, or potential renewal, of country towns and communities.”

Duxbury and Campbell (2009) indicate rural arts literature falls into two major perspectives: i) community cultural development emphasizing the social role; and ii) economic development that includes the economic impact of festivals on attracting and fostering creative businesses. While the extent of existing cultural/creative work remains undercounted, under-recognized, and undervalued, the researchers suggest a growing trend to consider the arts (artists, creators, and entrepreneurial businesses) as potential residents and growth areas, and thus, a means for survival.

A resounding theme in rural arts literature is the close connection between the arts and community vitality. The culture sector engages people across the spectrum. They are the ‘glue’ and the ‘fabric’ that hold the periphery together, providing space for civic and social participation—the cornerstone of rural community health and resilience. As a result, the arts are being revalued as a predictor in this regard (Anwar McHenry, 2011, p.246). The genesis of arts activity tends to be more holistic and framed within community engagement, capacity building (individual and collective), empowerment, collaboration, network development and transformation (Duxbury and Campbell, 2011, p.113). Citizens indicate the most successful arts projects contribute to skill development while building social structures that enable expression of one’s emotional and spiritual life. Overton (1987, cited by Duxbury and Campbell, 2011, p.114) suggests many see the purposeful intent revolving around “... art as process and citizen as participant”—with participation playing a significant role in inspiring and activating community self-determination—rather than the more limited view of “... art as product and citizen as patron.” This differentiation illuminates the deeper role the arts play in rural communities in building resilience. For example, Brown (2002, cited by Duxbury and Campbell, 2009, p.5) highlights the embedded role creative people play in the periphery, and underscores the perception that they are valued, active members, part of, not separate from the rest of the community—another key factor that impacts on social cohesion and place identity:

... The arts flourish in rural and small towns in every form because of committed artists and arts activists who live there ... In rural communities, people come together to present art for people they know and to support artists they know ...The arts are a part of the fiber of small towns because they are part of the tradition of the community.

With fewer opportunities in smaller communities to formally study art, engagement in participatory community art practices provides the space to experience the transformational power of creative processes in two broad ways: through the emergence of the tangible art work; and the fostering of solidarity that engenders a sense of community and collective will (McGauley, 2006, p.12). While the aforementioned perspectives of rural artists as participant citizens may resonate for the majority of people engaged in rural arts as recreation and/or creative expression, this broad brushstroke tends to paint over artists whose intent may include, and extend beyond, the banner of citizen as community level participation; specifically, those who consider their practice a profession and/or those engaged for economic reasons.

Anwar McHenry (2011, pp.248-249) offers a number of ways the arts contribute to rural resilience. The broad appeal of the arts is due, in part, to the diversity of disciplines (e.g. painting, craft, theatre, film), as well as their flexibility as they do not require a minimum number of participants in comparison to most sporting activities. Cultural activities offer pathways to belonging, promoting social cohesion where other avenues of participation may be exclusionary. For marginalized groups, i.e. women, low income, younger people, seniors, and Indigenous people, where formal civic engagement is particularly limited, the arts are critical pathways for seeing themselves reflected in the community. Participation in the creation of culturally meaningful work and the presence of cultural symbols and icons increases pride, assisting to instil a sense of place for all residents. Cultural visibility fosters a shared sense of meaning and identity that builds both confidence and understanding which can be very valuable in addressing social and economic inequity. For Indigenous peoples, culture and identity is foundational. Knowledge and traditions are passed intergenerationally through the arts, maintaining critical connections with one's history and creative expression. Moreton-Robinson (2002, cited by Anwar McHenry, 2011, p.248) states "... identity, sense of belonging and culture is intimately linked with an understanding of sense of place." Belfiore (2002, cited by Anwar McHenry, 2011, p.248) succinctly captures the essence of the arts as an expression of culture, an important aspect of creating meaning in one's life stating "... culture is not a means to an end. It is an end in itself".

With regards to redefining communities to foster self-determination, locations that lack the mobile, economic resources of labour and money tend to be more vital and resilient when their economies are based on their unique histories, culture, and social context (Patterson, 2008, p.352). In these economies, Craik (1997, cited by Patterson, 2008, p.352) indicates that tourism often plays an important role, underwritten by service-based, consumer-oriented industries associated with

“the production of symbolic or cultural capital rather than materials goods” based on each community’s unique characteristics.

Festivals and events are a foundation of rural communities, maintaining diversity and connection to place. Traditionally tied to agricultural and environmental events such as harvests, equinoxes and feasts they serve to create a sense of shared history and mutual belonging, embracing and celebrating diversity, reforming individual and collective expression of place, leading to stronger community civic and social participation. Communities can build on cultural resources and continually reinvent new ones. Within this planning framework, however, there must be opportunities for local artists and citizens to engage in, make visible, and express the soul of the community (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009, p.9). More recently, festivals and related cultural events have been leveraged as an economic tool, attracting nearby and distant tourists, particularly in view of changing demographics and declining industries. The over-dominance of the tourism imperative and over-commercialization and/or commoditization in the service of cultural tourism is of particular concern for rural communities. There is ongoing dialogue regarding the impetus and content of cultural activity; specifically, production that is of local importance, original work, and/or ‘art for art’s sake,’ versus work geared to economic survival within the context of local and/or tourist audiences’ receptivity and demand. It is a divisive issue with concerns that local meaning is being eroded by the opportunity for commercialization (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009, p.9). Over-commoditization of cultural heritage and legacies as ‘arts destination’ can destroy the dynamic nature of culture, leading to folklore spectacles or time-capsule living museums in the rush for economic benefits (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009, p.19). The relatively new themed rural festivals, with a greater economic focus run the risk of creating an ‘assumed identity’ if not organically linked to the community context, or are ‘top down’ initiatives. Such tourism products, if successful, can contribute to revitalization and the creation of new local identities (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009, p.10).

On a larger scale, regional ‘cultural routes’ contributes to tourism through providing an effective means of attracting and circulating visitors around communities (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009). The rise in cross-sectoral tours combining the arts with artisanal agriculture products, for example, increases the need for appropriate planning. Development, branding, and marketing strategies must align with various communities’ values and bring sufficient returns. To this end, MacDonald and Jolliffe (2003, cited by Duxbury and Campbell, 2009, p.29) propose a four stage cultural tourism development model that begins with grassroots recognition of a resource, that is then integrated into tourism strategies, gains momentum through local and regional partnerships, and reaches

maturity when planning is responsible in meeting short and long-term benefits while preserving the resource. As festivals grow, however, organizational responsibilities shift away from self-organizing grassroots process to a more formalized structure, and with it, the loss of community engagement and capacity building, particularly leadership (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009, p.10).

Despite the increasingly recognized community-building and economic benefits of rural arts festivals, there remains a policy disconnect within community planning contexts (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009, pp.9-10). Furthermore, professional cultural workers, if present, do play an important role in rural development. However, success relies heavily, if not solely, upon volunteers for the drive and delivery, with artists often called upon to participate pro bono. The “backbone of cultural capacity” is volunteer and community participation, weighing heavily upon limited and aging sectors (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009, p.8). Questions regarding ways of sustaining arts activities arise, particularly in rural locations, where human and financial resources are scarce. In addition to adequate financial resources, governing bodies’ support for the arts is seen as a catalyst in sustaining the initiatives, underscoring the importance of sector appreciation on peoples’ desire to engage and contribute to building the community’s social and economic fabric. This tendency has important community development and policy implications, i.e. jurisdictions that foster an environment of citizen appreciation are more likely to capitalize on engagement (Anwar McHenry, 2011, p.251).

Creative and culture-based economies are not limited to large cities and metropolitan areas. Duxbury and Campbell (2011, p.115) argue every community has creative people engaged in the arts that could be leveraged to strengthen the sector, realizing broader community benefits. Moreover, three key mobile populations for citizen recruitment and retention to support creative and culture-based economies are: i) younger people; ii) artists and creative entrepreneurs; iii) and urban-to-rural migrants. Engagement of younger people as a retention and community revitalization strategy is well documented. They are a critical component of the arts and culture sector, incorporating the latest technology, bringing new ideas, and a seemingly unlimited supply of energy. Research conducted in Northern Ontario focusing on this demographic has identified the arts as an important factor in the decision to leave rural areas for larger urban centres (Thompson and Date, 2011; Gosselin and West, 2004). Collaboration with younger people in the development and delivery of cultural activities contributes to social development, leadership skills, and volunteer experience, building community ties through exposure to heritage and history (Duxbury and Campbell, 2011, p.115). More recently, the arts are recognized for providing important cultural and entrepreneurship employment opportunities; however, skill development and training and business support is

essential for a younger workforce to develop and/or create such industries (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009, p.9).

A number of rural communities are capitalizing on the low value of real estate to attract artists who are either no longer able to afford urban rents and/or seeking a better quality of life. Artist and creative entrepreneurs who choose to live in rural areas tend to be older and have more established businesses marketing arms enabling them to sell their work externally, which benefits the local community by bringing in outside cash (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009, p.23). Once integrated, they can contribute to a community's artistic matrix that can be leveraged to attract other artists and cultural tourists. In comparison to other creative economy workers such as scientists or architects who are almost always employed through large firms, government or institutions, artists are more likely to have entrepreneurial drive and skills (Markusen and King, 2003). Rural communities tend to have limited formal research opportunities and large-scale infrastructure, therefore, attracting and leveraging artists' creativity and innovation is seen as a better return investment.

The increasing trend for people not engaged in the culture sector to migrate from urban to rural communities also provides opportunities for revitalization. This population tends to be relatively wealthy, middle-class people pursuing a different lifestyle for a variety of socioeconomic reasons. Many seek places that have cultural amenities, e.g. festivals and events, and a vibrant arts scene. This demographic can also play a role in community reinvention; however, issues of gentrification and differing visions between urban/rural or long-time residents/newcomers can be divisive. Central to the debate are questions regarding the degree to which a place can revision, yet retain its core values and genuine charm. Key is finding ways for newcomers to gain an understanding of the local context and find a place within it, contributing to their adopted community's vitality (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009, p.22).

Although rural areas may lack the business and consumer services of metropolitan areas, landscape and place draws people to such locales. A number of residents are returning to their Northern Ontario home communities after living in larger urban centres (Hall and Donald, 2009, p.22). Those who are mobile and return to the area with creative skill sets and networks contribute to building new place-based knowledge economies, thereby combating the transient nature of resource-extractive industries. Current, newly attracted and/or returning residents launching individual and micro-scale businesses also foster entrepreneurship and growth in reaching a critical mass of this capacity (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009, p.25). There are, however, essential ingredients, including

leadership and infrastructure, i.e. access to broadband Internet and physical space that impact on development, and which notably, many rural communities lack.

Leaderships' understanding of the links between rural arts and creative and cultural-based economies is becoming increasingly critical to community sustainability (The Conference Board of Canada, 2008, p.1). In small communities, however, creativity is often overlooked or invisible, masked by perceptions of the cultural sector that is based on large-scale metropolitan manifestations dominated by 'attractions' (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009). Conventional economic policy focuses on framing creativity within global, urban-centric 'place-wars.' Decision-makers either tend to perceive culture as separate from the economy, or follow neoliberal policies that fold the arts into the economic sphere in terms of place promotion (Waitt, 2006, p.182). Growing the cultural sector from an emerging, to a sustaining, to a mature phase where the arts are highly integrated into the community and engage a significant number of people is dependent upon knowing who the artists are and respectfully involving them in planning to meet sector needs (Markusen, 2013; Duxbury and Campbell, 2009; Bash, 2006). Successful collaborations recognize the foundational role the social milieu plays in the creation of unique goods as well as the importance of interconnected networks and flows that bridge rural-city boundaries and encourage the establishment and/or expansion of such. Policies and strategies that support peoples' imagination and talents—the "raw materials" of cultural vitality—and facilitate social re-interaction of those engaged in the creation, circulation, and consumption of artistic goods add value at various points in the ecosystem, generating demand for more unique work and expressive qualities and niche markets that command higher prices.

In rural areas infrastructure (social, organizational and built) is as essential to fostering and establishing a vital arts sector as it is in metropolitan centres. Affordable live and/work space is necessary to attract and retain creative people. Industrial buildings and old theatres can be repurposed to create shared space. Education and training, particularly informal entrepreneurial business skill development, including peer mentoring that link artists to business sector mentors are a very important part of the ecosystem. Smaller-scale, networked, innovation-based initiatives (e.g. as shared space and incubators) aimed at increasing linkages between artists, cultural activities, and microbusiness fosters, facilitates and supports rural production by offering systemic and synergetic approaches to overcoming barriers of location and distance (Work in Culture, 2011, p.3). Non-profit organizations, social networks, schools (especially extracurricular activities), municipal support, private investment, and other funders are necessary to advocate for, link to, and coordinate development plans between skills development, including higher education, creative industries,

cultural tourism, and place making opportunities. Inter-regional networks can leverage opportunities to wider markets and access to key industries (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009, p.31).

Hall and Donald's (2009) Martin Prosperity Institute's study of Northern Ontario's innovation indicate the region's advancement is primarily in 'old sectors' of mining and forestry and within emerging creative economies in the area of remote health care, cultural production and other knowledge intensive industries (p.11). The area's landscape is attributed to inspiring artists for its beauty and, in some cases, the detrimental impact on the environment from resource-extractive industries (p.13). Film and digital animation are emerging with a number of film companies from other regions attracted to the North for its small town look and feel, and government incentives. Challenges to growing the creative and culture-based economy in this peripheral region include younger demographic out-migration; lack of passenger rail transportation in and across the area; and "natural resource complacency", i.e. the limited drive for economic diversification when resource industries are doing well within the boom-bust cycle, rather than being an active goal at all times (p.16).

Stark and Robinson (2010) build a case for exploring the links between the arts, the economy and the boreal forest of Northern Ontario for its potential to produce value-added goods based on the arts' sectors inherent relationship to design and production of artifacts. Questions arising in their research centre on how to increase the number of artists to produce creative goods, in general, and identify and connect those interested in development to value-added design processes. They suggest social networks and a research agenda would expedite linkages. Doing so would foster place-based cultural economies that would result in significant spillover to community governance, strategic planning capacity and resilience (Robinson (2014).

Evans and Foord (2006) question the viability of Florida's (2002) creative class regeneration for smaller communities arguing the industry clusters associated with such tend to be dominated by white males, under thirty with a limited shelf life of establishing a long-term sustainable economy. By comparison, rural communities world-wide that have focused on the cultural industries (artists, filmmakers, writers, etc.) have realized benefits. Cultural industries develop links to local heritage and identity, with regeneration and the quality of life for local people as a primary concern, rather than catering to those who live in large urban centres (Evans and Foord, 2006, pp.155-156).

Rural communities, therefore, are well positioned for utilizing the arts for social and economic transitioning through change, leading to healthy, resilient people and places. Given the rich and diverse cultural heritage and natural and geological assets of Northern Ontario communities, they

are well positioned to take advantage of local strengths upon which to build cultural placed-based economies.

2.6 Arts and Culture Community Development Models

Embedding culture (how we understanding ourselves and what is meaningful) as the fourth pillar of sustainability into community planning frameworks at a policy level has been particularly challenging, raising questions regarding: i) the relationship of culture to the economic, social, and environmental aspects, the other three pillars of sustainability; and ii) how the inclusion of culture in urban planning has been framed and conceptualized (Duxbury and Jeannotte, 2012). This section reviews various perspectives on the relationships between culture, creativity and the arts from a policy and planning perspective, and the various implications to resilience. It critically assesses a number of issues integral to value-based sustainability frameworks including Hawkes' (2001) argument for culture as the foundational pillar and its linkages to effective planning. It identifies two broad development approaches to culture (i.e. as a driver and as an enabler), the complexity of integrating it into local plans, and the current limitations of public sustainability discourse. Three development models are discussed, the Creative Class, Creative Cities and Municipal Cultural Planning for their relevancy to and effectiveness in increasing individual and collective resilience.

2.6.0 Policy and Planning Perspectives

Hawkes' (2001) seminal work instituting culture as the fourth and central pillar of sustainability argues for understanding culture as the foundation of society rather than a luxury, with participation in the arts building capacity for civic engagement that leads to more resilient people and places. This section reviews policy and planning perspectives and challenges of integrating arts and culture into development frameworks that remain largely focused on the economic pillar.

Hawkes' (2001) four pillar model is based on understanding the concept of sustainability to be value-based, i.e. it means different things to different people and ways to achieve it varies depending upon one's interest. Hawkes (2001, p.11) states "It is largely a debate about values; it is a cultural debate." Orr (2005, cited by Sarkissian *et al.*, 2008, p.24) concurs "The way we do or don't relate to sustainability emerges from our values and this is the place to create change that is ongoing and in which we ultimately bring into effect true sustainability." Culture, therefore, is central to sustainability discourse.

Culture as the fourth pillar acknowledges the pivotal and dynamic role culture plays in sustainability—it is the foundation of community development. Hawkes (2001, p.3) posits:

... culture is the both the means and the message – the inherent values and the means and the results of social expression ... culture is not the decoration added after a society has dealt with its basic needs. Culture is the basic need – it is the bedrock of society.

Situating cultural considerations at the core of sustainability ensures a formal space for community discourse and debate about the values and norms that inform society. Well-being can be achieved when there is open, inclusive and lively cultural activity that is embraced as part of the community's culture. A society cannot be considered fully democratic if there are not opportunities for expression of community values and the means for these expressions to influence its direction (Hawkes, 2001, p.vii). As a living and dynamic sum of our collective selves, culture is the vehicle through which adaptation and transitioning occurs. By understanding culture as the basis of social production and transmission of values and meaning, and public planning as the expression of social purpose and aspirations, the relationship between culture and effective planning becomes clearer (Hawkes, 2001, p.1). Culture must be a separate reference point in the framework. Hawkes' (2001, p.25) sustainability framework, therefore, is built around: i) cultural vitality; ii) social equity; iii) environmental responsibility, and iv) economic viability. Unpacked, cultural vitality includes well-being, creativity, diversity and innovation; social equity centres on justice, engagement, cohesion, welfare; environmental responsibility refers to ecological balance; and economic viability is material prosperity.

The growing utilization of the four pillar model of sustainability has spurred a number of policy and planning initiatives to investigate ways of leveraging culture in building more creative and sustainable communities (Duxbury, 2014). While models now include culture as the fourth pillar, many differ from Hawkes' (2001, p.25) proposition identifying cultural vitality as the first, and thus, central pillar of sustainability that informs all the other (cultural, social, environmental, economic). Elsewhere the model has been portrayed with culture tacked onto the end of the other three dimensions (economic, social, environmental, cultural) encouraging the adoption a 'cultural lens' while retaining the predominately economic focus, rather than being the guiding compass for resilience.

Duxbury (2014) suggests there are two broad ways relationships between culture and sustainable development is approached: i) culture as driver through solid cultural policy that supports the development of the sector itself (arts, heritage, cultural industries); and ii) culture as an enabler by

advocating for a cultural dimension be present in public policies. Duxbury and Jeannotte (2012) draw on a number of researchers to identify a few of the challenges within the sustainability dialogue that contribute to the complexity of linking culture to community development and integrating it into local plans. Challenges include: the separation of ecology from the cultural milieu, e.g. power relations centred on appropriation of natural resources and associated cultural meaning, and citizen participation in its management; and the many and often conflicting discourses within the dominant capitalist ideology privileging the economic form of value. To this list Duxbury and Jeannotte (2012, p.5) call for recognizing *linguistic framing* of what sustainability means, gained heuristically through cultural narratives and language structures that shape understanding, necessitating space for citizen participation to articulate divergent perspectives of development between cultures, holistic world views, and generations.

A review of Canada's federally legislated integration of the four pillar model of sustainability (i.e. economic prosperity, social equity, environmental sustainability and cultural vitality) by Duxbury and Jeannotte (2012) indicates many communities have been successful in mobilizing and leveraging diverse knowledge and community animators to develop rich grassroots plans emerging through local processes. They note, however, the degree of culture's integration into development and actions plans varies widely, reflecting the fractured public sustainability discourse and limited conceptual guidance currently contributing to culture being prioritized within environmental and economic development strategies with a particular focus on tourism initiatives.

The embeddedness of culture and the arts within economic frameworks poses a great concern for many researchers. Gielen *et al.* (2014) posit the responsibility of cultural policy is to safeguard the autonomy of culture, creativity and art. As more of the economy is dependent upon creative capacity to generate wealth and define place, Gielen *et al.* (2014, p.25) argue it is increasingly important to retain the cultural commons and actively engage all citizens. Equally important to resilience is the autonomy of creativity. Cultural capitalism, the privatization of what formerly belonged to the commons Hardt and Negri (2009, cited by Gielen *et al.* 2014, p.38) warn, is steering society towards a crisis that is not restricted to the cultural sector but extends across the entire system. Creativity flourishes in environments of openness that enables access to and exchanging ideas with others; however, new initiatives within this type of market economy must immediately yield high returns, spurring competition between organizations, thus limiting sharing.

With regard to the autonomy of art, Gielen *et al.* (2014, p.40) posits art exists on its own accord—it does not simply coincide with the creative industries arguing the end goal of cultural industries is not in fact creativity, but the market. Production is shaped by the potential for technological or organizational innovation. Art on the other hand, exists for its societal measure and dismeasure, i.e. for reflecting and commenting on society. This of course does not exclude art from cultural industries; it presents a case for art as a discrete category, part of, yet separate from, cultural industries, operating under a different value-based framework contextualized within the broader community system.

Sacco (2011) advocates for strategic investment in broad-based, active participation in culture due to its significant spillover effect that drives adaptive capacity beyond the creative and cultural industries to the wider community through the complex web of structural interdependences. Recognizing the effects engagement in the arts has outside the cultural realm is key to resilience. They include: community health and well-being; new entrepreneurship models; and a learning society. He refers to the current revolution as Culture 3.0, comprised of an expansion of demand as well as production based on the easy access to professional production technology. As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish between producers and consumers. Access to cultural experiences sparks peoples' desire to develop their own capacity to assimilate and manipulate the cultural contents they are being exposed to. Skills gained in the culture sector flow across systems that spur new forms of entrepreneurship, collaboration and solutions to a wide range of issues.

Hawkes (2001) also presents a persuasive case for engagement in the arts to build capacity for civic participation. An active, democratization of arts practice must be forefront in development strategies and aim to nurture and cultivate skills and processes that support the development of cultural vitality by ensuring conditions that create opportunity and autonomy for citizens to manifest a conscious, symbolic and effective expression of their own values (Hawkes, 2001, p.24). Communities where the arts are endemic as active engagement—in contrast the consumption of products—are vastly more sustainable; they make their own culture by generating community-owned expressions of what is important. The trend of cultural development to focus on the economic aspects, Hawkes (2001, p.23) underscores marginalizes the sector's true contribution to resilience which is "... the paramount symbolic language through which shifting meanings are presented." The tangible outcome of cultural production and its marketplace value is only one of the many benefits gleaned through engaging in the arts. Culture springs first and foremost from human interaction. The tangible products are ultimately secondary to the daily exchanges between people,

whereas culture is made on a daily basis in schools, shops, and in the streets (Hawks, 2001, pp.23-24).

Duxbury (2014) and Hawkes (2001) acknowledge the importance of professional artists and the strive for excellence; however, they contend that 'ordinary creativity' (Duxbury, 2014, p.23) generated from broad-based community activities greatly builds capacity to navigate and transform place by connecting with each other, fostering sharing and reclaiming marginalized wisdom. Interaction builds capacities to find ways for people to understand, respect, and trust others that underpins social capital and cohesion. Therefore, linking culture's societal role to development frameworks and ensuring the arts remain autonomous, offering a range of opportunities to participate and interact with others builds stronger more resilient communities.

There is substantial literature from various disciplines that indicate the arts are of significant value. The challenge, however, is identifying, articulating and measuring what the value is, and expressing it in ways that resonate with multiple stakeholders within the community spectra and broader policy and planning spheres (Badham, 2010; Duxbury, 2007, 2003; Brown, 2006). Sharpe (2010) argues evaluative frameworks are primarily economic, and in understanding communities within a complex ecosystem the economic system is only one of many. Value is not universal but is created and sustained through relational processes with people who hold similar values for the same product.

Traditional economic evaluation frameworks typically used to inform community planning are of limited utility in quantifying the economic contributions of the arts for a number of reasons. Economic multipliers that are standard economic practice used to calculate impact are a statistical construct that rely upon averages and do not take into account technological change, economies of scale or surplus capacity. Statistical classifications do not easily capture market-driven cultural industries that cross over to different sectors or may exist only in small pockets. Cultural industries classifications extend well beyond the arts to include a broad spectrum of creative based activities including libraries, museums, and associated retail supports and academics and governments, and in some jurisdictions zoos, parks and gardens, thereby making it difficult to determine the economic impact of the sector. Cultural activity may be a secondary business activity and not calculated in standard statistical tabulations. Non-ticketed attendances are not captured. Much of sector is supported by volunteers who are not normally assessed a value are not included in calculated formulas. Local data is often difficult to attain resulting in having to relying upon aggregated census data (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009; Gordon and Beilby-Orrin, 2006; Johnson, 2006).

Johnson (2006) contents the conflation of artistic genres into a Cultural Industries framework representative of neo-liberal politics that demand an economic return on government investment, situates the arts within a classical framework of supply and demand with production and consumption responding to individual behavior. She argues this perspective limits the arts to economic goods within a "... society comprised of self-interested consumers seeking to maximize their own utility and producers seeking to maximize their profits." Offering a fundamentally opposing view of the manner in which arts activity occurs and is circulated Johnson (2006, p.299) postulates the arts "... reflects and draws on collective goals and derives its nature and meaning, if not its value from expressing the beliefs, aspirations and identities of groups in a web of interlocking networks." Buttressing this argument, she draws on Throsby (1997, cited by Johnson, 2006, p.299) explaining the impetus of the arts is comprised of individual and collective motivation: "The economic impulse is individualistic, the cultural impulse is collective". Frameworks that render the arts to a more linear economic exchange between individuals, therefore, do not capture the complex social and economic wealth the sector generates, and thus its contribution to community development and resilience.

The challenge of utilizing traditional frameworks to assess the value of the arts and cultural sector fuels supports for creating new assessment models that recognize its significant contribution to societal development as a whole. Furthermore, the changing nature of the workplace reflected by multiple contracts and/or part-time positions, rather than life-time employment, is becoming the norm thereby greatly increasing the spillover effect of the arts, extending its value and its resilient-building characteristics beyond the economic sector, across the entire community system.

2.6.1 Creative Class, Creative Cities and Municipal Cultural Planning

This section examines three models of culture-led development and their various impacts on community revitalization, social equity, artistic practice, and resilience.

Many jurisdictions are embracing culture-led regeneration spurred by Florida's (2008, 2002) creative class research and Landry's (2004) creative cities approach. These approaches have successfully sparked creativity, engaged citizens in place making and increased competitive advantage. It is evidenced through the Creative City Network of Canada, an inter-municipal sharing network aimed to build the capacity of local cultural planning, improve the operating climate and conditions for artists, arts, heritage and cultural organizations across the country, and the quality of life in Canadian

communities of all sizes.¹⁷ There remains, however, ongoing opposition to Florida's (2008, 2002) creative class approach to sustainability by a range of scholars and groups around the world based largely on differing cultural values. Sustainability discourse that perceives community success through an economic lens implicitly demands continued urban development, growth and expansion. Thus, community culture based on inclusivity, understanding place as an organic, living, complex adaptive system and sustainable planning practices and priorities do not easily align with unabated expansion. Krichberg and Kagan's (2013) consolidated research suggests one-sided 'creative city' strategies aimed at attracting this demographic to transform post-industrial cities into vibrant ones do so at the expense of other populations, groups or classes. Three key unsustainable creative cities theories are identified that reconfigure the social class of the inner city. They are: increased commodification of the commons; the 'growth machine', driving real estate costs; and gentrification, well-recognized for displacing citizens, and frequently artists. Kirchberg and Kagan (2013, p.142) reveal many artists in major European cities are protesting—literally in some locales—against "... the misuse of the arts and of artists as creative forces for an entrepreneurial city that is almost solely based on creative economies." Artists are rallying against being utilized as a branding mechanism for cities preferring to focus their creativity on nurturing the city, as a community, by strengthening its existing fabric, in contrast to the out-put and consumption oriented creativity of the creative class. On the other hand, the researchers note, there are artists who capitalize on the creative class logic to lobby support for their endeavours. Clearly different perspectives and uses of the creative cities agenda exist.

In Ontario, the Ministry of Culture has adopted Municipal Cultural Planning (MCP) based on the four pillars of sustainability model (economic, social, environmental, cultural) to define the role of municipalities in development. Baeker (2005, p.6) indicates MCP establishes the conditions necessary for local development through identifying and supporting opportunities for place making, shifting thinking away from "... planning for culture as only about planning for cultural facilities and cultural programming, to planning for the lived culture of a community." Culture-led economic development (i.e. quality of place, the creative economy, cultural tourism) is the framework's key premise and tool to address the pressing economic challenges many communities are experiencing from globalization. This approach is spurred by increasing recognition of Florida (2008, 2002) and other researchers promoting culture-led development as a means of generating wealth. Murray and Baeker (2005) suggest MCP is a corrective move toward combating the 1950s and 1960s professionalization and institutionalization of urban planning as a function of local government that

¹⁷ Creative City Network of Canada (<http://www.creativecity.ca>).

currently undermines holistic approaches. The integration of culture into municipal planning—cultural, land use and economic—they posit facilitates more powerful and effective leveraging of growth to create authentic urban environments that increase prosperity and attract and retain creative people.

MCP calls for establishing a shared vision and a decision-making process resting on cultural democracy, inclusive cultural practices and intercultural dialogue; however, its economic development lens is of concern. With a strong economic bent it raises questions regarding, ‘Whose vision?’ i.e. the openness of the model to incorporate divergent meanings and purposes of engagement in the arts. Healthy, respectful development would require collaborative leadership; specifically, people who are flexible and adaptive with a clear and nuanced understanding of the arts’ societal role in well-being, sustainability and resilience, ensuring the arts’ inclusion as an entity—a foundational, yet distinct component of cultural industries. Without such a vision creative practice as active engagement becomes marginalized and undervalued. The necessity of divergent discourse regarding culture’s inclusion and its role in development and sustainability underscores the significance of participatory democratic processes. Issues regarding ‘how to’ navigate the complexity of power relations and formulate and implement prioritizes within divergent meanings associated with resources and the locale lay at the core of community development and resilience.

In summary, arts and culture as a community development model is extremely efficacious, i.e. cultural expression is embedded into society, and the relatively low entrance barriers to participation are appealing. They are a recognized social and economic development tool with culture-led regeneration gaining ground. Another model of community resilience, the Transition Towns Movement, focuses on an energy decent plan that has attracted a world-wide following and sparked transformation in many communities. Criticism of the initiative, however, centres on participation. From its onset those driving the movement have been primarily well educated, middle-class citizens who are privileged to voluntarily adopt a low-carbon lifestyle (Alloun and Alexander, 2014; Hardt, 2013; Connors and McDonald, 2010).

2.7 Community Development Practice within a Systems Approach

In this final section of the conceptual framework, community development practice is assessed within the context of a complex adaptive community system. Increased understanding of the dynamic and emergent nature of development work implicates a changing role for practitioners, one that fosters a culture of responsiveness, in the moment, necessitating new skills and competencies.

An ecological systems understanding of place as ‘becoming’ repositions community development as an innate, emergent and natural process. A practitioner’s role becomes one of intervening in existing processes, raising consciousness and increasing resourcefulness to respond and adapt, rather than being the purveyor of development. Westoby and Kaplan (2013, p.4) explain the practitioner is embedded in the process, as part of the dynamic system of “... relationships and connections ... where life is constantly dancing about just beyond your reach, so that everything including the practitioner—is always in movement.”

Acknowledging place as constantly ‘becoming’, community developers are beginning to envision practice as a ‘responsive dance’ (Westoby and Kaplan, 2013, p.3). McKnight and Block (2010) propose a jazz metaphor (improvisational form of music where individuals play off each other to create music collectively) to describe how healthy communities evolve; specifically, from the desire to work together, intuitively, creating new possibilities in response to emerging concerns. Drawing on his own experience as a musician and buttressed by other researchers Pstross (2014) too, parallels community development practice with jazz suggesting it as a means of fostering different ways of thinking about development. These perspectives, Westoby and Kaplan (2013, p.9) argue, situate the practitioner as ‘embodied in the dialogue’ rather than being an observer. Conversations, spontaneity, participation and community ownership are the dynamic building blocks of resilience. Reflexive, dialogical and emergent practices become central in being present in the moment. Practitioners must be aware of the complexity of the community’s context—the power relations, the history of place underpinning current relationships and ways they are unfolding—in order to facilitate building consciousness and solidarity, as well as having the capacity to respond to the many challenges and rewards that engaging with others entails.

Proposing a framework for an ecological social practice Westoby and Kaplan (2013) suggest a convergence of developmental and dialogical approaches that are underpinned by intuition, imagination and ethical engagement. The developmental framework, with its roots in the consultancy sphere of community development, typically engages organizations and positions practitioners as intervening, relying upon observation and listening skills, with dialogue seen as more of a supporting aspect. A dialogical approach emerges from the traditions of adult education and critical literacy and, therefore, is more grassroots focusing on what is understood as co-motion (Westoby and Kaplan, 2013, p.7). It rests on ideas such as ‘community as dialogue,’ a humanizing process that fosters mutual reciprocal relations and has strong ties to Freire’s (1972, 2006, cited by Westoby and Kaplan, 2013, p.6) arguments that development processes require group consciousness alongside critical and contextual thinking and action.

The responsive dance of community developers requires technical skills as well as the capacity to let go and get into the flow. It requires balancing awakening energy and imagination necessary for gathering the courage for collective action with diverse understandings that can impede focused direction (Westoby and Kaplan, 2013, pp.11-12). The potential for change lies in the aliveness of one's practice, the tensions between order and chaos, and the direction and contingency within an organic, emergent, ecological approach based on skilful means and integrity. Pstross (2014), Westoby and Kaplan (2013) McKnight and Block (2010) draw on the arts as a metaphor in re-conceptualizing community development practice as a responsive dance, akin to playing jazz. Cartier (2004) indicates creative practice builds capacity for working in unstructured, emergent contexts bringing forth insights, local knowledge and local invention. Crane (2010) posits the arts and community development to be overlapping ecosystems, with the goal of place-based change. Collectively, these researchers indicate a strong relationship between the two disciplines. Community developers, therefore, may turn to the arts sector to gain insight and develop creative practice competencies necessary for succeeding in their redefined role.

2.8 Conclusions

The conceptual framework developed for this research provides a critical assessment of resilience-related community development and arts literature creating the context for analyzing the study's findings. Resilience is commonly understood as a community's capacity to resist adverse conditions—economic or otherwise, and the ability to adapt, transition, and prosper through change while retaining its core values (Lewis and Lockhart, 2002). Understanding the community as a complex adaptive system, a web of structurally interdependent relationships is essential to grasping the concept of resilience. Community, as a system of relationships, reframes how a community functions from conceiving it as separate silos operating independently, i.e. a 'machine' view (Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006), elaborating it to a dynamic, emergent, ongoing process of becoming (Dale, Ling and Newman, 2010; Creswell, 2006). In contrast to ecological systems from which the concept of resilience emerged, community culture—societal values and norms—play a central role in the capacity to adapt and transition, impacting on the desire, manner and opportunity to connect, as well as development priorities and resource allocation.

There is a strong relationship between individual and community level resilience (Buikstra *et al.*, 2010). Communities that are resilient have developed dense, diverse networks within and across sectors and community dimensions, i.e. people, organizations, community planning processes and resources (Centre for Community Renewal, 2000). Respectful, inclusive relationships and holistic, cohesive plans stimulate human development within the economic, intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual spheres of life (Florida, 2008, 2002; The Conference Board of Canada, 2008; Hawkes, 2001). More recently, Sharpe (2010) has expanded on the traditional monetary-linked concept of the economy providing a systems' perspective of multiple overlapping, dynamic, relational, place-based economies fostered by connecting people with shared interests and values.

At the core of creative practice is the transformation of people and materials, providing the space and means for innovation, adaptation and transitioning. Opportunities to investigate oneself in the context of place raises awareness of cultural values, develops insight and deepens understanding of others. Artistic activities build resilience-related characteristics including increased complex problem-solving skills, divergent, lateral thinking, and artistic, technical, and business skills that spill over into other sectors and domains, increasing broader community resilience (Sacco, 2011; Brault, 2005; Cooley, 2003; Savory-Gordon, 2003).

The arts are acknowledged for fostering diverse relationships across socioeconomic boundaries, providing a sense of a community. Within the lens of the community as a system, networks of social relations facilitate scaling up benefits gained through individual creative practice to sector level, and increasing attachment to place, particularly among younger and mobile artists. Networks raise awareness of divergent cultural perspectives, create space for inter- and intra- cultural and generational sharing and learning contributing to cultural continuity. Connectivity facilitates collaboration and peer mentoring, leading to further transformation through increased artistic activity and business, fostering industry clusters. Cross-sectoral relationships strengthen the precarious nature of the arts while simultaneously creating more diverse cultural products, forming the basis of localized creative and culture-based economies that connect regionally and globally (Florida, 2002). Connectivity between producers, intermediaries and consumers form the social milieu, symbiotic relationships underpinning the arts sector's creativity, innovation and capacity to continually regenerate through the social and commercial functioning of the industry (Currid, 2007b; Currid and Williams, 2010). Many researchers, including Duxbury (2014), Gielen *et al.* (2014) and Hawkes (2001) argue for broad-based engagement in the arts to foster many diverse resilience benefits generated through creative practice, cautioning against focusing on the economics of culture-led regeneration when integrating culture into planning,

Creative processes are also utilized by artists and developers to engage people in other sectors and the broader public in development processes that contribute to relationship building, enlarging understanding of place, and the co-production of knowledge in generating innovative solutions, and consequently increase agency and control over local resources, leading to greater self-reliance and self-determination, and the fostering of localized economies (Crane, 2010; Gilchrist, 2009; Torjman, 2007). Within a systems perspective, community development is re-conceptualized to being process-based, that is, emergent, inclusive and contextualized within place. Practice shifts from a purveyor of development to facilitating fostering a culture that supports connectedness, a sense of community, and collective will to address challenges. Pstross (2014), Westoby and Kaplan (2013) and McKnight and Block (2010) draw on the arts, envisioning development as jazz, and the practitioner's role a 'responsive dance' which necessitates acquiring creative practice skills and competencies.

Arts-related literature provides evidence of significant sector contribution to community development and building healthy, resilient people and places. The majority of arts research, however, is discipline focused, aggregated as 'the arts' and frequently linked to economic benefits. Moreover, traditional economic evaluation frameworks are of limited utility in quantifying the economic contributions of the arts for a number of reasons centring on: economic multipliers; statistical classifications; cultural activity may be a secondary business; non-ticketed events and volunteer labour are uncouncted; and availability of local data (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009; Gordon and Beilby-Orrin, 2006; Johnson, 2006). There is, therefore, a need for new frameworks that identify the sectors' impact across the system to facilitate understanding, and thus, valuing the contributions of the arts to resilience beyond these limited models.

There are, however, gaps in the literature regarding the applicability of the arts to fostering resilience in rural, isolated and Northern communities in Canada. These communities are experiencing significant social and economic stress due to world-wide restructuring of resource-extractive industries upon which their economies are founded. Little is known about whether the arts in rural locales can foster networks, develop social capital and build synergy across boundaries to shift community culture toward becoming more self-reliant. There is also limited research into the effectiveness of creative practice in the periphery for building resilience-related skills, or evidence if increasing individual capacity impacts on, or scales up to community level agency. Additionally, there is a gap in current research about the relevancy of envisioning community development as emergent and process-based within smaller community systems. Other key questions and areas for investigation regarding the efficacy of the arts in sparsely populated locales include: Do cross-

sectoral relations generate more collaboration and innovation? Does connectivity create a social milieu that supports sector employment and fosters creative place-based economies that link regionally and globally, attracting and retaining citizens, investment and tourists?

This study researches these key questions and underexplored areas in the literature by investigating the relationship between culture, creativity and the arts in building resilience in Northern Ontario. It focuses on creative practice's contribution to rural, Northern communities transitioning through significant socioeconomic change and ways the arts can be strengthened to continue the sector's current work in this regard. Chapter Three, the methodology outlines the aims of the research, the challenges faced in developing the research design, the reasons for selecting action research as a methodology, and the various data collection cycles of the study. Chapters Four, Five and Six present the study's findings in relation to individual, organizational and community level resilience.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter identifies the research boundaries and what lies within the study; relationships of the various components; my role in the research; the cycles; the geographic location of activities; and the limitations to the study. It outlines the methodological demands of the study and the suitability of action research to meet these needs. It reflects on the effectiveness of the methodology and my action research practice and learnings.

3.0 A Boundary Critique

A systemic approach was adopted for the study acknowledging the researcher's embeddedness in various components of the study that were contributing to the investigation including CRSSM and NORDIK research, studio practice, social relations (cultural, community development and personal), and community and academic events at the local, regional, provincial and national level.

Figure 2 depicts a system's perspective of the components of the research and their interconnectedness. At the centre of the system is the researcher immersed in my own culture, characterized as history, visions, plans and actions. The study's activities included the seven cycles of action research, a continuous review of literature, and interaction with advisors. NORDIK provided the research environment, the ongoing collegial support, access to faculty with expertise in a variety of fields and library resources. NORDIK researchers were the 'constant ground', informing the study and contributing to building my researcher capacity. I drew on my art and community development social relations to initiate targeted discussions regarding specific themes that had emerged from the research and/or to test new ideas that had surfaced from my reflective practice. Additionally, I met informally on a regular basis throughout the research with one artist colleague, with a second one joining in the final two years. My reflective practice of journaling and map making connects the various study components.



Figure 2: A Systems View of the Research Components

First and foremost, I led the research inquiry by holding the questions and guiding the study. My responsibilities and roles in the research varied depending upon the activities required in each cycle. I organized and facilitated inquiry groups, focus groups, and community consultations and attended to administrative details including logistical tasks related to workshops, forums and symposia, ethics approvals, developing promotional materials and presenting the learnings in different contexts. In support of the research, my administrative duties included working closely with funders, writing reports and monitoring and managing budgets.

My position in the research constantly changed. My dual artist and researcher positions constituted an insider/outsider role, (Bartunek and Louis, 1996) a boundary that required continual awareness of, and shifting between, respective locations in real time, in 'action', as the study unfolded. The internal position investigated my artistic knowing drawing on my studio experience, a more

subjective, empirical knowing. The external one demanded my researcher stance, an outsider, that of a facilitator, a more objective perspective. The dialogical stream of my reflexive voice traversed the boundaries of both positions in making sense and meaning, confirming and/or contrasting the findings and learnings, analyzing it in relation to relevant literature, leading and/or monitoring the event's functionality as I attempted to ensure the participants' well-being. I was aware of my changing location and resulting shifts in identity as I moved between these boundaries. Learning was constant and sometimes difficult to determine the initial spark or source that led to new connections, portals of insight and transformation. My understanding was continually reconstructed as I moved between the different elements of my personal system.

I came to the research from my artistic practice, a practice based on technical skills acquired through training and experiential learning, 'learning by doing', i.e. iterative cycles of observing, reflecting, planning and acting, finding a way through, solving artistic, technical and client demands, a process I referred to as 'research' designed to meet specific and varying practice needs. This doctoral study drew on my studio and community development approaches to engagement and collaboration. The process significantly reinforced these areas and built new ones, for example, the articulation of my practice—both studio and community development—as research.

My studio practice of map making was transferred to this research for similar uses, i.e. to visually test ideas and relationships as I sorted and made sense of the material in relation to the study's goals. In the case of this thesis themes emerging from the dialogues were contextualized within community development and arts and resilience literature. The process captured the research's findings visually on paper forming a circular process of 'dialoguing about art and making art about dialogue' that deepened my understanding of the study and relationships between studio and community development practices' inherently creative aspects.

The research was to be based in Sault Ste. Marie; however, the geographical area expanded when two provincial arts organizations, Community Arts Ontario¹⁸ and Craft Ontario¹⁹ (formerly Ontario Crafts Council) contracted NORDIK to conduct regional initiatives that provided the resources to travel to many communities that I would not have had access to otherwise. Communities were selected based on a matrix composed of size, location, and cultural heritage. Population density ranged from approximately: 305-575 people in small, isolated locales; 10,000 – 20,000 people in second-tier communities serving as regional hubs; and 43,000 – 160,000 people in the five larger

¹⁸ Community Arts Ontario has since dissolved.

¹⁹ Craft Ontario (<https://www.craftontario.com>).

urban centres. Northeastern and Northwestern parts of the region and spatial isolation was considered in capturing a pan-Northern perspective. Cultural heritages included Anglophone, Indigenous, and Francophone communities. Map 1 (p.97) depicts geographical locations of participating communities.

There were a number of limitations to the study reflective of rural and Northern communities in general, and to Northern Ontario, in particular. The sheer size of the region coupled with the dearth of social and organizational infrastructure challenged contacting key community members and participant recruitment. My artistic networks were heavily relied upon initially to identify local resource people. Few roads, rail and air routes and the financial cost of travel negatively impacted on the number of communities that could be engaged. And, not inconsequently, time was a factor. Many new organizations and networks have recently formed spurred by increased availability of technology, dial up and broad band internet, and peoples' capacity for utilizing them. Individual web presence has escalated, as has opportunities for technology-based 'face-to face' individual and collective dialogue since the study was launched.

3.1 Conceptual Analysis

CRSSM's conceptual framework for holistic community development was intended to be used for the analysis of this thesis. It is an evolution of NORDIK's model based on a medicine wheel approach (Martell, 1988) that some First Nations in the Sault Ste. Marie area utilize. It is founded on understanding community development as a transformative process, fostered through relationship building as people move around the wheel toward collectively creating more equitable and just societies. The wheel is divided into four 'directions' flowing from East to South to West to North, with a new cycle of transformation beginning again in the East. Each quadrant is associated with a colour as depicted in Figure 3 and Figure 4. The colours red, yellow, black and white represent the four peoples of the earth coming from the four directions. In Figure 3, NORDIK's community development model, the inner circle aligns the four directions with community development processes: East, observe; South, reflect; West, plan; and North, act. Transformation begins in the East where people observe. The outer cycle depicts relationships between the four directions and community development content: East, people meet; South, people build trust; West, identify issues and developing solutions; and North, implement plans (Ortiz and Broad, 2005). Figure 3 presents these relationships within a wheel format.

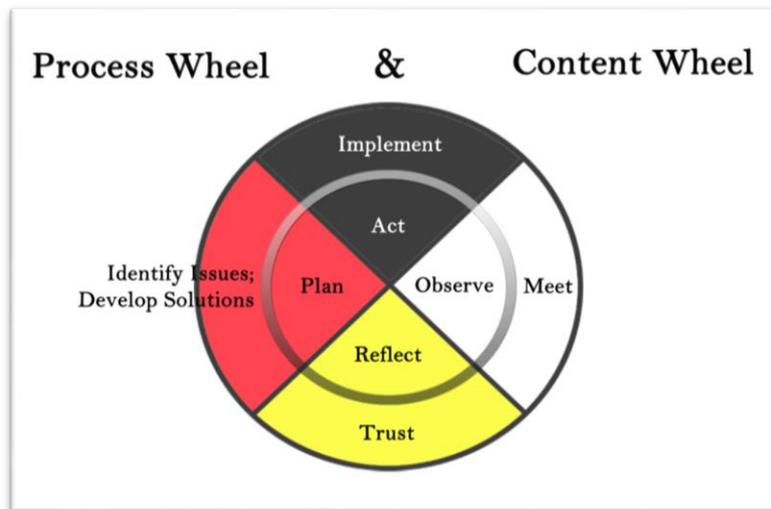


Figure 3: Community Development within a Medicine Wheel Framework

NORDIK’s model was further adapted based on research undertaken by CRSSM. As the Project Coordinator/Facilitator leading the research, I first overlaid community sectors—cultural, social, governance and the economy—onto the four directions. Next, I integrated CRSSM’s organizing framework of People, Organizations, Community Processes and Resources into the medicine wheel. Figure 4 illustrates community development content and CRSSM’s resilience framework conceptualized within a medicine wheel.

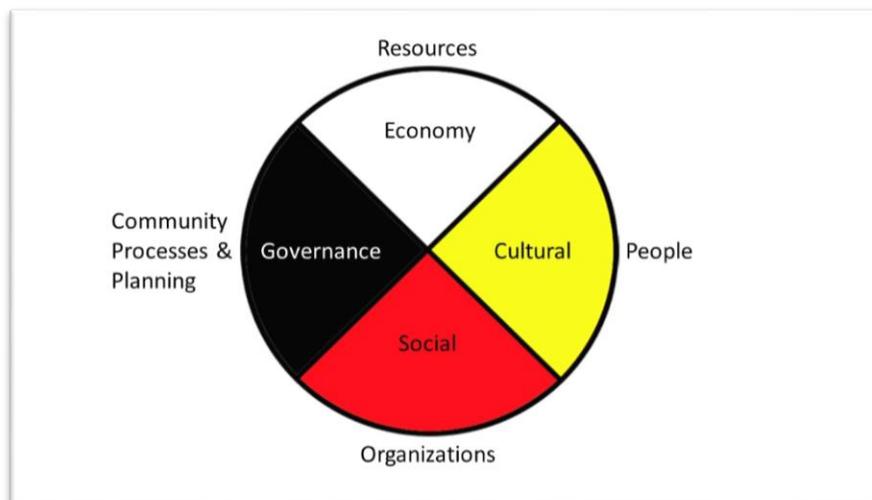


Figure 4: Community Resilience within a Medicine Wheel Framework

As mentioned, this model of the medicine wheel was intended to be the basis for analyzing the research findings; however, I developed a new framework based on the first cycle of research, The Socioeconomic Impact Study of the Arts on the Economy of Sault Ste. Marie. The new model

integrates the arts into a community development and resilience framework encompassing both disciplines within this study, and identifies key intersections between them. As the research findings accumulated they were analyzed within this new model depicted in Figure 6 (p.131). The new framework, images and concepts evolved over the course of the study. As the findings were gathered they were integrated into visual maps depicting linkages and relationships between the elements. Although not all the images of the evolving framework were presented within a circle, the model remained rooted in NORDIK's and CRSSM's approach to understanding individual and community transformation within the concept of a medicine wheel.

3.2 Methodological Demands and Selection of Action Research as a Methodology

The overarching goal of the research was to gain a deeper understanding of the arts' contribution to rural and Northern communities transitioning through significant change from a complex adaptive community system's perspective, i.e. which aspects of creative practice increases resilience and ways to sustain, build on or leverage existing activity in continuing this work. I expected that artists' lived experience would demonstrate a wealth of knowledge regarding the social and economic impact of art on themselves and the broader community, and how to increase its viability to create a competitive advantage, and thus, resilience. The arts sector, however, is not well understood or consulted in this regard. Thus, the research aimed to bring artists' knowledge forward, contextualized within community development to deepen understanding of the links between arts and resilience in peripheral areas. Large scale social change underpinned the research. It aimed to foster transformation of individual artists, the arts sector, and community development and policy processes and practices to create more equitable, healthier societies through assembling diverse people to share, co-produce meaning and mobilize understanding of the benefits of the arts to resilience.

To construct a systemic, pan-boundary understanding of the arts' contributions, three community dimensions—individuals, organizations, and informal and formal decision-makers (e.g. municipal staff and elected leaders, development and funding agencies) were engaged to provide their perspectives on what sustains artistic activity, ways of strengthening creative practice, and strategies to overcome challenges. Central to the model was the relevance of the research to Northern Ontario. It aimed to be of value to people living in the region and useful to other jurisdictions in understanding the North's context and realities—part of Ontario, yet distinctively different from the more urbanized south. Gathering 'grass roots', 'middle ground' and 'top down' views would assist in

contextualizing the sector within the landscape of community development policy, planning and practices in peripheral regions.

The societal perception of the arts and community development as separate sectors do not easily allow for knowledge transfer between them. They each have their own taxonomy and *seemingly* different objectives. Bringing artists' sector intelligence forward as the primary source of understanding, and engaging diverse people from within and across sectors and the North required connecting, linking and bridging several socioeconomic, sectoral, and geographical divides in ways supportive of inclusive co-production and knowledge mobilization. Four broad relational linkages and educational 'bridges' needed to be created to undertake this endeavour. It required establishing processes for gathering, networking and social capital development to link, co-produce, contextualize and mobilize knowledge between:

1. Diverse artists;
2. Arts sector; community development; other sectors and the broader public;
3. Northern Ontario within the region: geographical space; cultural heritage; locale size; and
4. Northern Ontario and other geographical areas.

Additionally, the methodology had to facilitate and support such:

- Within a vast region;
- Within a Ph.D. timeframe; and
- With limited financial and human resources.

Since the focus was to assemble diverse people across boundaries—particularly artists whose voices are often hidden—to co-produce understanding through interaction and learning communities, action research was selected as the methodology, utilizing a variety of methods within its scope, including inquiry groups, focus groups, workshops, symposium and presentations. The following section provides an overview of its suitability.

3.3 Action Research Methodology

Reason and Bradbury (2001a; 2001b) and Greenwood and Levin (1998) explain action research as a social science research method that has emerged as a field from various practices across academic disciplines. It includes a wide range of approaches and practices each with groundings in different traditions, different philosophical and psychological assumption and pursuing different political commitments. As such, action research is utilized to study complex phenomenon as it is conducive

to traversing sectors and fields. The methodology supports many forms of evidence including qualitative and quantitative data, and images.

The term action research is not easily defined but it is used to describe a whole family of approaches to inquiry that are participative, grounded in experience and action-orientated (Reason and Bradbury, 2001a, p.xxiv). There are a number of variations of action research including, participatory action research, collaborative inquiry, emancipatory research, action learning, and contextual action research. Stringer (1997, p.7) refers to it as community-based action research, and Burns (2007) as systemic action research, focusing on whole system change in complex social and organizational settings. Reason and Bradbury (2001b, pp.1-2) state:

It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concerns to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities ... the primary purpose ... is to liberate the human body, mind and spirit in the search for a better, freer world.

There is a longitudinal aspect to action research, with education and capacity building as integral parts of the process of learning for change. Greenwood and Levin (1998, p.18) argue for action research being understood as a continual and participative learning process with "... an open starting point and often no absolute final goal" rooted in the core idea of "... creating sustainable learning capacities that provide participants the option of increasing control over their own situation." Education, too, occurs continually through the stages and cycles increasing individual and collective level agency. Greenwood and Levin (1998, p.50) explain it is a "... way of producing tangible and desired results for the people involved, and it is a knowledge-generation process that produces insights both for researchers and participants."

To be considered action research methodology Greenwood and Levin (1998) state it must include a balance of the following three basic elements: i) research, ii) participation, and; iii) action. Research implies investigating a question that is of importance to the people who are the subject of the study (p.7). Participation is described as democratically engaging people who are the subject of the study in the knowledge creation and dissemination processes. The action aspect refers to dialogical practices that lead to further action. Processes for respectful, equitable dialogue are central to this methodology. Action research is particularly effective in bringing marginalized voices forward in ways that are educative and empowering (Burns, 2007; Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Greenwood and Levin, 1998; Stringer, 1997).

Stringer (1997, p.7) describes action research as “... a dialogic, hermeneutic approach to evaluation [and] implies a more democratic, empowering and humanizing approach to inquiry.” Similarly, Reason and Bradbury (2001, p.2) explain “In action research knowledge is a living and evolving process of coming to know rooted in everyday experience: it is a verb rather than a noun”. People co-generate sense making through inquiry, contributing to an insightful ‘whole’ of their lives created from individuals’ highly personalized and contextualized fragments of understanding in pursuit of practical knowledge that increases individual and community health and well-being including economic, political, psychological, and spiritual. Individuals act in the world based on their own sense making. Action research engages diverse citizens to create ‘community’ through collective sense making and action in a manner that fosters new forms of understanding and ways of being in the world, supporting emancipation through developing new knowledge and the abilities to continually transform. The underlying processes draw attention to the social construction of knowledge and considers how best to act in intelligent and informed ways. Reflection is an integral part of the process in making action meaningful and placing humanity within the world’s ecology (p.2).

Due to its focus on reflection, doing and being ‘in it’, many writers characterize action research as ‘learning by doing’. Burns (2007, p.11) states:

It combines inquiry with action as a means of stimulating and supporting change and as a way of assessing impact on that change ... It combines intellectual analysis with experiential knowing ... The process provides a picture of what is really happening by unraveling the consequence of action which in turn provides a foundation for new action.

The research enables learning from experiencing the process, thereby, increasing participant ownership of the knowledge and actions emerging from the collective. Noteworthy is the scalability of action research. It can be a means of enacting local, action-orientated approaches of investigation, applied to small-scale theorizing for specific problems in particular situations or for addressing large systems change (Burns, 2007).

Action research is underpinned by cyclical action, rooted in a sequence of plan, act, observe, reflect phases derived from Kolb’s process of experiential learning (Greenwood and Levin, 1998). The cycles are iterative in nature and the sequence is not necessarily linear; however, the process of continual revisiting of previous themes and integrating new knowledge as it emerges is one of the strengths of this methodology. It provides a robust process for deepening understanding and validating findings as the research unfolds (Burns, 2007; Reason and Bradbury, 2001; Greenwood and Levin, 1998).

Action research, therefore, is an appropriate methodology for this research aimed at assembling and co-producing meaning and knowledge with diverse people to deepen understanding of how creative practice contributes to resilience.

3.4 Overview of the Cycles of Action Research

The research engaged multiple and diverse collaborators, partners and stakeholders with few people participating in more than one activity, thereby enriching the study's depth and breadth of perspectives. There were seven cycles of action research including one cycle comprised solely of presentations that traversed and intersected the other six cycles, and extended beyond Northern Ontario. Figure 5 provides a visual overview of the study's cycles.

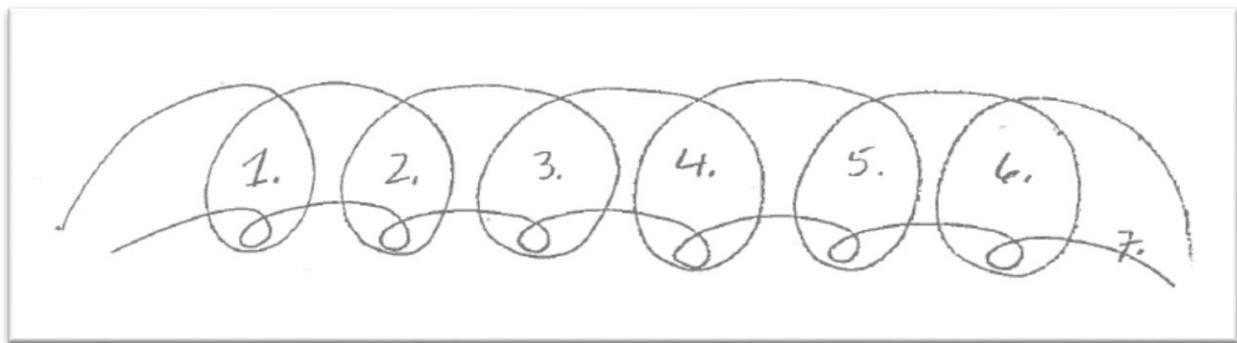


Figure 5: An Overview of the Cycles of Action Research

Cycle:

1. The Socioeconomic Impact of the Arts on the Economy of Sault Ste. Marie
2. The Role of Art in Community Development and Resilience
3. Innovation and Cultural Development
4. Network Development
5. Understanding Northern Artists' Context
6. Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations through Peer Networking
7. Presentations

The six cycles moved from the local (Sault Ste. Marie) to regional, employing a number of methods and tools that assembled people of various demographics to understand, construct, articulate and triangulate the findings. Each of the six cycles was marked by the formation of an action plan that included a recruitment process and participant engagement to collaboratively create meaning and knowledge, and concluded with a major summative analysis of the findings. The seventh cycle consisting of presentations did not have a summary document; however, feedback and learnings

were incorporated into the other six cycles as they occurred, thus were captured in the other concluding reports. Presentations were categorized as 'internal' or 'external' depending upon the circumstance. Internal presentations were considered an integral part of the six cycles, introducing recruited participants to new concepts and/or consolidating ideas and images directly related to the thesis' inquiry topics. External presentations were delivered at academic, community development, government-funded conferences and/or workshops that I was invited to attend. The latter presentations focused on concepts of community resilience, in general, although a few incorporated the doctoral findings and learnings to date. Learnings from feedback at both internal and external presentations informed the research.

Themes emerging from the study extended across cycles with subsequent findings deepening and/or adding subthemes as the study progressed. Research methods included inquiry groups, focus groups, consultations, workshops, conferences, a symposium, the creation of a video and presentations. Two advisory groups were also formed, both of which had more women representatives than men. A concerted effort was made to balance activities between Northeastern and Northwestern Ontario communities and size and locations within those two areas. The study assembled a diverse mix of people representative of citizens residing in Northern Ontario including those with Anglophone, Indigenous and Francophone heritages. Ages were "guestimated" as being between twenty to seventy years. Overall, more women participated in each of the study's cycles except in the inquiry groups and the annual Gathering event in Temagami during Cycle Four where gender was relatively equal.

3.4.0 Cycles and Locations of the Research

Table 2 provides an overview of the six cycles with the presentations (Cycle Seven) embedded in them, the locations of activities and advisory committees' members' home communities. Map 1 (p.97) indicates the location of communities that were engaged in the research, with the exception of two external presentations: Guelph west of Toronto and Fredericton, New Brunswick, east of Toronto. The map provides a visual sense of the geographical vastness of Northern Ontario. The southern boundary of the region is typically Parry Sound, which is approximately a two and half hour drive from Toronto. For this study, however, Huntsville was included in the North representing the most southern community to participate in the research.

Table 2: Cycles of Action Research, Activities and Locations

Cycles of Action Research	
Activity	Location
Cycle One: The Socioeconomic Impact of the Arts on the Economy of Sault Ste. Marie	
Socioeconomic Impact Study	Sault Ste. Marie
Presentations (5 internal)	Sault Ste. Marie
Presentations (4 external)	Sault Ste. Marie (3); Hearst
Cycle Two: The Role of Art in Community Development and Resilience	
Inquiry Groups (2)	Sault Ste. Marie
Presentations (3 external)	Thunder Bay; Sault Ste. Marie (2)
Cycle Three: Innovation and Cultural Development	
Focus Groups (5)	Sault Ste. Marie
Cycle Four: Network Development	
Advisory Circle Members' Home Community	Atikokan; Birch Island; Chapleau; Ft. Albany; Hearst; Manitoulin Island (2); North Bay; Moosonee; Sault Ste. Marie (2); Sioux Narrows; Sudbury; Summer Beaver; Temagami (2); Thunder Bay; Toronto
Consultations, workshops	Elliot Lake; 3 fly-in First Nation communities: Kingfisher Lake, Mishkeegogamang and Summer Beaver; Sioux Lookout; the Francophone community; Chapleau; Temagami; Sault Ste. Marie
Regional Forum	Sault Ste. Marie, with in-person and online participants from across the region
Presentations (7 internal)	Elliot Lake; Sioux Lookout; the Francophone community (3); Chapleau; Temagami
Presentations (6 external)	Sault Ste. Marie (3); Wawa; Temagami; Thunder Bay
Cycle Five: Understanding Northern Artists' Context	
Steering Committee Members' Home Community	Fort Frances; Kenora; Red Lake; Thunder Bay; Matheson; Elliot Lake; Hearst; North Bay; Sudbury, Toronto
<i>CraftSmarts</i> Workshops	Kenora; Manitoulin Island; Wawa; Fort Frances; Hearst
<i>CraftCurrents</i> Exhibition Tour locations	Fort Frances; Thunder Bay; Sault Ste. Marie; Huntsville; Elliot Lake; Hearst
Video of Northern artists, arts organizations and arts development	Thunder Bay; Sioux Lookout; Upsala; North Bay; Elliot Lake; Red Lake; Rosspoint; Pancake Bay; Huntsville; Sault Ste. Marie; Kenora; Moonbeam; Fauquier; Sudbury
Symposium	Sault Ste. Marie, with in-person and online participants from across the region
Presentations (6 internal)	Kenora; Thunder Bay; Manitoulin Island; Wawa; Fort Frances; Hearst
Presentations (8 external)	Elliot Lake; Guelph; Sault Ste. Marie (2); Thunder Bay (2); Fredericton; Toronto
Cycle Six: Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations through Peer Networking	
Consultations & presentations	Hearst; Sault Ste. Marie; Manitoulin Island
Presentations (3 internal)	Hearst; Sault Ste. Marie; Manitoulin Island

Map 1: Map of Communities Engaged in the Research



Although the study was conducted between January 2006 and October 2012 on a part-time basis, there were long periods of inactivity within this timeframe due to circumstances beyond this researcher's control; however, the study was never out of mind and these interludes provided invaluable reflection time.

3.4.1 Reflexive Practice

My reflexive practice included a written reflection of the inquiry groups and focus group sessions, notes and reports for subsequent cycles, and journaling. An ongoing literature review provided divergent perspectives and emerging theories and practices that broadened understanding of contexts' and/or answered questions arising from the study and reflection. Learnings were incorporated into the research and informed the analysis of the study's findings.

Journaling was comprised of text and images or 'concept mind maps'. The text portion of my journal followed a typical reflexive narrative format, reflecting on conversations, dialogues and insights and/or changes in knowledge, perceptions and attitudes. Image development was utilized as a tool to investigate new concepts, and analyze relationships in a visual format, providing space for teasing out new linkages and insights, consolidate thinking, ground concepts, spark new perspectives, and raise questions which initiated new cycles of critical reflection and action. The subsequent addition of written words supported the map's underlying meaning. My assumption of understanding is based on my capacity to materialize my thinking by producing a representation of the issue at a particular point in time, i.e. a snapshot of here and now that also serves to document my knowledge-creation process.

The process of map making was iterative, a creative, internal dialogue with reflection, ideation, and drawing interconnecting and integrating prior understanding with current realizations as they emerged from the findings and/or through the image development process itself. It required rendering the research findings to their essence, organizing and mapping key relationships into meaningful displays of conceptual threads to bring forth a synthesis of 'the message'. Throughout the project I searched for relationships and discordance within and between the themes and ways to organize the cycles of research findings into patterns that would make sense and convey meaning across boundaries. Frequently during these times, literature was reviewed to enhance understanding and link theory to practice in proposing new images of the relationships. When the maps had reached a point where I thought they were representative of my thinking at a moment in time, they were incorporated into the internal activities and other external dissemination opportunities. It was expected that visuals with supporting text would enable a broad spectrum of people with limited background in the arts and/or community development to engage with the material, i.e. to focus on the images—'the dots'—connecting them, redirecting them and/or adding more 'dots' of their own to make sense and meaning of the relationships being depicted.

3.5 Cycles of Action Research

This section outlines the cycles of action research and provides details regarding the location, timescale, and contributions to the research design as well as my role in the research.

3.5.0 Cycle One: The Socioeconomic Impact of the Arts on the Economy of Sault Ste. Marie

This initial investigation explored links between the arts and culture sector and Sault Ste. Marie’s economy aiming to raise awareness of its potential as an economic diversification strategy in response to the global restructuring of resource-extractive industries. I designed the research as an economic impact study, but later broadened it to include socioeconomic factors, and reframed it within the context of four urban economies and resilience. This cycle engaged 196 people. It included five internal presentations and four external presentations: a regional government-funded conference; an environmental conference with Dr. David Suzuki as the keynote speaker; and two CRSSM Community Leaders’ Forums. It began in January of 2006 and ended in February 2008. Table 3 indicates the activities I undertook in this cycle.

Table 3: Cycle One Activities

Conducted a literature review (ongoing)
Attended conferences throughout the cycle
Initial development of an economic impact survey tool
Revised methodology, expanding study to a socioeconomic impact study; survey tool revised and distributed
Compiled and analyzed data
Revised methodology (2 nd time), contextualizing data within four urban economies and community resilience
Prepared draft report <i>Culture, Creativity and the Arts: Achieving Community Resilience and Sustainability through the Arts in Sault Ste. Marie</i> (Ortiz and Broad, 2007)
Organized stakeholder engagement sessions reviewing draft report, identifying organizations’ role within culture development
Presented final report to City Council, resulting in the study’s recommendations being adopted
4 External Presentations: Ministry of Northern Mines and Development Regional Economic Development Conference, Sault Ste. Marie; Community Bio, Eco, Socio (BES) Conference, Hearst; CRSSM Leaders’ Forums, Sault Ste. Marie (2)

This first cycle was conducted in Sault Ste. Marie. It aimed to provide evidence of the links between arts and culture and the economy to highlight its potential as an economic diversification strategy in transitioning to a more sustainable economy. It was conducted in partnership with the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District, and was the first time research of this nature had been undertaken in the city of Sault Ste. Marie. The timing of this research seemed prudent as culture was beginning to be viewed in a new economic development light based on Florida's (2002) research identifying it as an economic driver in the global information and knowledge-based economy, providing insight into the centrality of place and the role of culture and creativity in this regard. Additionally, the Ontario Ministry of Culture had recently identified Municipal Cultural Planning (MCP) as a priority area, outlining new perspectives around the municipality's role in cultivating development at a local level (Baeker, 2005, 2002a, 2002b).

I utilized both a literature review and a survey to establish first, what should be measured and how to measure it, and second, to collect data on Sault Ste. Marie's current arts community and assess its contribution to the local economy. In consultation with an Algoma University faculty member with expertise in this area, the survey tool was designed to collect data within the 'arts and culture' sector as defined by the *Cultural Policy for the Corporation of the City of Sault Ste. Marie* (Cultural Advisory Board, 2003). The first page of the survey was separate from the rest and a unique code number was assigned to each survey. The unique code number, page one of the survey, and the remaining portion of the survey were kept separate to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The results were aggregated to protect the anonymity of the participants. The raw data was maintained in a secure file in NORDIK's office for a period of two years, and then destroyed. Each survey included a detachable project summary including contact information where participants may acquire a copy of the report.

The surveys were mailed with self-addressed stamped return envelopes to members of the arts community. Mailing lists were compiled from the Arts Council's recently updated Arts Directory, other arts organization's membership lists (respecting privacy laws) and the City's Department of Culture and Recreation's Leisure Services Information Directory. The phone book was also used to locate some arts sector businesses. The surveys, in addition to being mailed were distributed at a number of arts businesses, gathering places and public spaces. Notices announcing the study were placed in the Arts Council's monthly magazine *ARTiculations* and an article appeared in Sault Ste. Marie's daily newspaper *The Sault Star*. After the mail-out the Arts Council followed up with phone calls encouraging members to return their surveys. As the surveys were returned, I recorded them in a password secure file, tracking outstanding survey and the response rate. The data was compiled

using SPSS, a statistical management software program. The survey's qualitative data was recorded using a series of numbered excel spreadsheets corresponding to the questions. The empirical data collected in this research was then placed within the context of the literature review to develop a set of recommendations for planning and decision-making for formally elected officials, organizational and business leaders and informal community member leaders within Sault Ste. Marie. Due to an initially low response rate, I organized follow up phone calls to be made to many organizations, businesses and individuals. These follow ups resulted in an excellent response rate of 24% or 92 artists/hobbyists; 42% or 26 organizations; and 17% or 12 businesses reporting. The study was based on the most recent data available.

The original focus of the study was to be economic, to build a case for investment in the arts as a viable diversification strategy; however, the literature I reviewed underscored many limitations to quantifying the impact on a particular sector such as arts and culture on the economy of any given community. As a result, I revised the methodology, broadening the survey and scope to become a socioeconomic study. Once the data was collected, the financial information from the survey tool suggested a limited economic impact, underscoring the challenge of using traditional frameworks. I revised the methodology a second time contextualizing the research within the new arts-culture-economy-resilience model I developed, based primarily on the literature, and NORDIK researchers' discussions, and Cycle Two's Inquiry Groups sessions. The new framework refocused the original economic impact study to a broader, more holistic perspective on arts and culture's contribution to resilience in context to developing four urban economies. The framework I developed in this cycle (Figure 6, p.131) was utilized as the conceptual analysis for subsequent research cycles' findings.

Once I had drafted the culminating report *Culture, Creativity and the Arts: Achieving Community Resilience and Sustainability through the Arts in Sault Ste. Marie* (Ortiz and Broad, 2007) I developed a community engagement strategy to build awareness of the study's findings to garner support for the research, in general, and the endorsement of organizations cited as playing a development role, in particular. The study was presented to City Council who endorsed the study's recommendations February 11, 2008. The research was widely disseminated through community presentations and NORDIK's website and continues to build awareness, capacity and interest in sector investment.

The report was intended to be the action aspect of this cycle, i.e. generate discussion regarding the arts and culture sector's contribution to resilience that contributes to revisioning, and community identity and place making, leading to implementation of the recommendations. In the end the study generated very little immediate action. The internal presentations I delivered, however, created

considerable dialogue and interest particularly within the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation. It encouraged them to take a closer look at the sector and has subsequently led to a focus on the film industry.

3.5.1 Cycle Two: The Role of Art in Community Development and Resilience

For the second cycle I established two inquiry groups, one comprised of community developers and the other of artists with the aim of understanding both sectors' perspectives regarding the arts contributions to resilience, and challenges to advancing the field. This cycle engaged nine participants and ran from January 2007 to July 2008 with a number of sessions overlapping the latter part of Cycle One enabling sharing learnings between the two interventions. Cycle Two also included three external presentations: a women's economic development conference in Thunder Bay; and two community quality of life conferences in Sault Ste. Marie.

I had anticipated the research would provide Inquiry Group members an opportunity to strengthen existing relationships, build new ones, and increase collective capacity through peer mentoring, with each participant mobilizing learnings within their respective organizations and networks. Member selection utilized Purposive Sampling (Berg, 2004) considering sex, age, profession, history and duration of residency in Sault Ste. Marie. The recruitment matrix aimed to enrich the discussion with the latter factor important to ensuring participants understood the Northern context. Recruitment began with the familiar, inviting people I knew through having worked directly with them or work associated acquaintances. Participants were sought who were considered to be able to commit to engaging in the research over a period of one year, and who did not necessarily share my perspective on community development approaches, in general, and/or the importance of the arts, specifically.

Five community developers who were also artists and/or had an interest in the arts participated in the Developers' Inquiry Group. The other, the Artists' Inquiry Group was somewhat the reverse. It was comprised of three artists whose practice included community development. A few participants of the Developers' Inquiry Group knew each other well as friends, others collegially and some not at all. Two artist members of the Artists' Inquiry Group were colleagues but neither was acquainted with the third member of the group. All participants in the Developers' Inquiry Group were experienced practitioners with members having been engaged in development for a period of eight to 40 years in Northern Ontario and/or had a combination of local and large urban centre experience. The Artists' Inquiry Group's experience spanned from five to 30 years.

There were marked differences between the two Inquiry Groups from the onset that underscored the challenges of engaging marginalized people in action research; specifically, availability and meeting space. The Developers' Inquiry Group members were able to participate as part of their paid employment. Each of the five invitations to join the study were accepted, meetings were scheduled on a monthly basis with ease, attendance was consistently high and formal meeting space was arranged by one of the members. In contrast, artists' recruitment was more difficult, with two people employed outside of the arts sector withdrawing prior to the group's commencement resulting in three rather than five participants. Two participants were full-time, self-employed visual artists and the third was employed full-time outside the sector. Attendance was on a volunteer basis, scheduling was challenging due to erratic work demands and meeting space was difficult to secure. In the end the group met in a small room owned by a participant. The two full-time artists attended each session while the third participated as frequently as possible but had to withdraw midway through the research cycle to meet outside work commitments. Despite these obstacles, the dialogue of each session was very rich.

I played a facilitating role beginning each sessions with a question formulated from my reflection on previous session(s) in relation to the research goals. The Developers' Inquiry Group' topics included: community culture, governance and processes in effecting change; economic diversification, relationships between localized and global economies; significance of place, ways art reflects culture and place; connections between art and a sense of community and identity; and successful culture development elsewhere. The Artists' Inquiry Group's topics included: the significance of creative process within community development; benefits and challenges of creative practice; art as engagement; art as community development; community culture and challenges in shifting perceptions to advance the arts; the role of art in creating a sense of community and place making. The Inquiry Groups were to run concurrently to facilitate comparing perspectives, emerging themes and reseeded (Burns, 2007) ideas between the two; however, challenges in recruiting artists delayed the launch of the Artists' group and work demands expedited its conclusion resulting in a fewer number of overlapping sessions and less cross-seeding.

The final session in each Inquiry Group utilized an art making activity to consolidate and highlight key learnings. The Developers' Group focused on each participants' understanding of the role their organization plays in community development in Sault Ste. Marie providing participants space for creating a visual image illustrating the broader context of their work, i.e. relationships between the people they served as well other organizations. The Artists' Inquiry Group conceptualized Sault Ste.

Marie's resilience. The images generated considerable dialogue that brought forth more salient points regarding the significance of community culture to health and well-being.

Each discussion was approximately one and a half hours long and audio recorded in part or in its entirety and transcribed. Participants agreed to keep a journal to track reflections that also served as an evaluation tool during the exit interview. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity each member was assigned a number replacing their name throughout the research. The number system, audio tapes of the session and session transcriptions were password protected and kept separately in a locked office at NORDIK Institute.

After each session, I first organized the findings into themes, noting where responses deepened, confirmed or contrasted previous findings and then compared them to the other group in seeking similarities, discrepancies and/or divergences. Following themes and research threads across sessions deepened my understanding by hearing new perspectives or variations on the same theme at different points in the research. This process validated the findings and satisfied the groups' curiosity as to what the other was discussing. Once themes began to emerge, I created images to capture the essence of the dialogue and the relational underpinnings. Several key areas of arts' contribution to community development and resilience were identified, some of which were noted in the literature; however, the Inquiry Groups provided a much deeper understanding of many. Four broad, overlapping themes emerged providing the initial organization and reflexive lens for subsequent cycles.

3.5.2 Cycle Three: Innovation and Cultural Development

Five focus groups were organized, as action from the Inquiry Groups, to explore why unique arts sector activities had emerged in Sault Ste. Marie. It engaged 15 local artists. This cycle began in June 2008 and ended in September 2008, and did not include opportunities for dissemination.

The Inquiry Groups identified a number of successful cultural developments located in southern Ontario and elsewhere that had become major destination attractions. Discussions centred on community values and the North's geography both as a hindrance (i.e. distance from major cities; sparse population; focus on American hunting and fishing tourists), and an advantage (e.g. pristine, world-class natural environment) affecting development. I organized and facilitated five focus groups, comprised of members who were involved in the development of each activity, to uncover *why* these particular local events took root—what was the context, mitigating factors and processes—in constructing an understanding of the relationships between community culture, place

and a vibrant arts community. I posed the following three questions to each of the five groups: i) How and why did the initiative develop, i.e. what was the community context at the time; ii) How did the initiative's development impact on the community; and iii) How did the initiative impact on them. The latter two questions were aimed at understanding community and individual level resilience benefits resulting from the arts activities. Four of the five groups were asked to draw the perceived contribution to the community, conceptualizing the impact, to access deeper knowledge and nuances. The collective sharing through imagery added another dimension to the meaning making process that enriched dialogue. As each participant shared their drawing it sparked other members' memories of the context and increased understanding of one another's experience of the events, creating additional levels of meaning and connection between members. The fifth group was conducted in a small space that was not conducive to artistic activities. Dialogue deepened understanding of the two Inquiry Groups' themes, particularly around the significance of a sense of an arts community with one focus group highlighting that the success of the project was entirely dependent upon finding and connecting with others who were interested in undertaking such an initiative. Opportunity for and the necessity of networks in rural areas—to locate other artists, share and learn together to achieve creative goals—became a central theme in the following cycles.

Reflection on this cycle, as a whole, refocused my attention from a more abstract level of community resilience to an individual level, to the people, i.e. the artists within the system who, with varying degrees of awareness and/or agency orchestrate resilience, or not, through their actions. It foregrounds artists' roles in creating innovative responses to community needs, the impact on their own capacity, and the fostering of a sense of community. The nature of participation in the arts at different scales raised questions: Does individual engagement reap different rewards than an arts community or a broader community level? If so, how do the benefits differ, and what are the relationships between the two? These queries eventually became part of the investigative threads, organization of the findings and the analysis of creative practice's contributions to resilience.

3.5.3 Cycle Four: Network Development

The fourth cycle aimed to foster relationships between artists within and across sectors at the local level within six smaller centres and remote locales, and between communities and sectors at the regional level. It served to construct a pan-Northern perspective of the arts' contribution to resilience through assembling diverse visual artists, arts organizations, and informal and formally elected civic, organizational and business leaders, engaging them in artist-led sector planning sessions. The process was intended to build relationships and networks across boundaries through

collectively identifying local cultural assets, sharing and co-producing meaning, and strategizing ways creative practice could be supported and utilized to develop a sense of place and localized economies. This cycle engaged 118 diverse people from across the region. It was marked by the beginning of the one-year Breathing Northwinds initiative in October 2008 and ended with the launch of the fifth cycle in February 2010. It included seven internal and six external presentations. Table 4 lists Cycle Four’s activities that I organized and led.

Table 4: Cycle Four Activities

Established an Advisory Circle
Organized 6 community consultations
Prepared 6 community reports
Organized a regional forum: <i>Northern Ontario Regional Arts Network Development Forum: Building Resilience through the Arts</i>
Prepared a final report: <i>Breathing Northwinds Project</i> (Ortiz, Meades and Broad, 2010)
6 External Presentations: Algoma University’s Teach-In, Sault Ste. Marie (2); Ministry of Northern Mines and Development and the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, Rural Economy Technical Working Session for Places to Grow the Ontario Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, Wawa; Ministry of Northern Mines and Development, Regional Economic Development Branch Conference, Sault Ste. Marie; Community Arts Ontario Gathering, Temagami; Sustainable Communities in the North Conference, Thunder Bay

This cycle facilitated exploring themes, questions and concerns that emerged from the first three Sault Ste. Marie-based cycles, within different geographical and cultural contexts across the North. Working in smaller and more isolated communities in the region greatly increased the range of voices captured in the study. It also afforded me the opportunity to cross-seed, ideas, issues and learnings from previous sessions and compare differences in constructing a regional perspective of the contribution of the arts to resilience, and ways the sector can be strengthened to create more vibrant and sustainable rural communities.

The Breathing Northwinds initiative, upon which this cycle of research is based, developed out of Community Arts Ontario’s (CAO) annual Gathering in 2007 that identified the need for Northern Ontario artists to develop the arts sector as a region. My role was to organize, coordinate and facilitate six regional consultations to support local arts communities in leading community planning sessions, and build networks within and between locales to enable sharing learnings, and advance sector development. I began the project by rejuvenating the Community of Artists of Northern Ontario (CANO) committee that formed during the original Gathering and was intended to oversee

the research. Since I was unable to reach many of the original members, snowballing sampling was utilized to eventually recruit eighteen people representing a mix of communities, i.e. geographical, cultural, size; ages; duration of practice; and arts disciplines including visual, theatre and dance. The committee chose to operate with unlimited membership that proved to be extremely challenging in finding a common meeting time across two time zones. This resulted in low attendance rates and me spending additional time gathering individual input and providing updates between meetings. Telephone conferencing was the communication link; however, those in isolated communities had difficulty accessing the service and/or lost connection due to poor quality land lines or intermittent cell phone service. The meetings were one and a half hour long, and minutes were taken and distributed to members.

There were many challenges to finalizing the locations of the six consultations, primarily centred on timing; specifically, the short timeframe of project funding. Many communities I contacted had already set their programs and did not have the capacity (human and financial resources) to accommodate another event. There was an emphasis to include second-tier communities, those that serviced more rural and isolated areas, to provide new opportunities to spark and support engagement and development in the surrounding vicinity. I consulted a prominent arts organization or Band Council in each community to develop a program that would best serve local needs, with each locale responsible for recruiting participants. Due to the challenge of travelling to three isolated First Nation communities, they were consulted collectively via a technology link provided through KNet's²⁰ Thunder Bay office that facilitated audiovisual communication between the geographical locations. The consultations with Northern Francophone communities took the shape of a series of interviews with Francophone artists and key players in Francophone arts organizations or institutions. A video-conference was held linking individuals active in different aspects of the arts sector and each conducting their work primarily in French. Participating locations were Hearst, Opasatika and Sudbury. Subsequently, a focus group was held at the Centre Francophone de Sault-Ste-Marie with individuals that work with the Centre Francophone as well as Francophone individuals engaged in the local arts and culture sector.

Although consultations for each community session varied it brought forth information that was organized into the following categories: i) Historical timeline; ii) Vision; iii) Community strengths; and iv) Priorities to support the vision. The sessions were audio recorded (in their entirety or portions of the session) and notes were taken. The composition of the consultations varied between the sessions with a combination of artists, economic development and/or tourism staff, councillors and

²⁰ KNet (www.knet.ca).

citizens. The number of participants ranged from six to ten people with the exception of the Temagami session that subsequently became part of CAO's annual Gathering, necessitating me to change the methodology. In Temagami a formal community consultation was replaced with information provided through an interview with the chair of the local organizing committee prior to the Gathering, as well as my participation in the event itself. In this cycle I facilitated and developed four arts community strategic plans with priorities and actions items. In Sioux Lookout, a community-university exchange of knowledge and resources took place that led to new relationships, particularly with the Sioux Lookout Anti-Racism Committee (SLARC)²¹. SLARC became the focus of another piece of research that was presented by Sean Meades of NORDIK Institute at a national conference in Montreal. An overview of this cycle's research was presented at CAO's Gathering session focused on network development and Northern resources. I prepared a draft report for each of the six communities, and once finalized, provided hard and electronic copies. At the conclusion of the research I wrote a summary report *Breathing Northwinds Project Final Report: Artist-led sector planning and network development in Northern Ontario* (Ortiz, Meades and Broad, 2010).

The closing activity was a regional forum titled *Northern Ontario Regional Arts Network Development Forum: Building Resilience through the Arts*. I presented an overview of the Breathing Northwinds research contextualized within the broader doctoral study of arts and resilience in Northern Ontario, followed by research participants' sharing learnings from their engagement in this cycle of the study. It was technology assisted with people connecting via WebEx, Algoma University's virtual audiovisual classroom and/or the telephone, with approximately thirty attending in person.

Themes and learnings from this cycle were prevalent in the Inquiry Groups and to some extent in the focus groups; however, inclusion of First Nation and Francophone artists, in particular, led to new subthemes. The participation of non-artists, municipal leaders, business people and the public provided divergent perspectives regarding the challenges to advancing the sector while also raising residents' awareness of their local cultural assets, potential linkages and leveraging opportunities.

²¹ Sioux Lookout Anti-Racism Committee (SLARC) (<http://www.slarc.ca>).

3.5.4 Cycle Five: Understanding Northern Artists' Context

The fifth cycle investigated building individual and collective capacity and cross-sectoral understanding of the Northern context and identity to further sustainability of the region's artists and arts organizations. It ran for one year from February 2010 to 2011 and engaged 790 people across Northern Ontario. Fourteen presentations were delivered; six internal and eight external including a provincial community economic development conference, two national academic conferences, and a CRSSM Leaders' forum with Buzz Holling, considered by many to be the founder of the concept of resilience.

Funded by the Ontario Crafts Council (now Craft Ontario) this cycle aimed to grow the craft community by sharing artistic, technical and business skills, developing networks and conveying the sector's context and needs to decision-makers and the community at large. The research was designed to build relational linkages and educational bridges between artists, cultural institutions, business and development and funding agencies within locales across Northern Ontario and southern regions of the province. Table 5 indicates the activities I organized and led to achieve these goals.

Table 5: Cycle Five Activities

Established a Northern Steering Committee
Organized professional development workshops, <i>CraftSmarts</i>
Organized informal meet and greet events accompanying <i>CraftSmarts</i> workshops
Organized a curated travelling craft exhibition, <i>CraftCurrents: Contemporary Craft in Northern Ontario</i>
Organized a regional symposium: <i>Reflecting the North: Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture</i> (livestreamed)
Developed a symposium blog: (www.reflectingthenorth.wordpress.com)
Created a video highlighting Northern artists, arts organizations and arts development
Prepared a final report: <i>Growing Ontario Craft Community North</i> (Ortiz and Broad, 2012)
8 External Presentations: i) Northeastern Ontario Recreation Association Conference, Elliot Lake; ii) University Art Assoc. of Canada Conference, Guelph; iii & iv) CRSSM Leaders' Forums, Sault Ste. Marie; v) Work in Culture Conference, Thunder Bay; vi) Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Congress, Canadian Association for Studies in Cooperation Conference, Fredericton, New Brunswick; vii) Canadian Community Economic Development Network, Ontario conference, Toronto; viii) The Green Economy Forum for Northern Ontario, Thunder Bay

Although the activities focused on craft the sessions were open to artists in any discipline, with the exception of the exhibition. My role included: the development of a Northern Steering Committee, an advisory group to oversee the initiative; organizing and coordinating all of the events; working collaboratively with local artists to identify professional development programming needs and supporting their delivery; facilitating and/or presenting at the workshops; organizing and coordinating the exhibition; organizing the symposium; producing the video; and promoting the activities across the region.

I designed the research materials to encourage the participation of Northern Ontario's three dominant cultural groups, Anglophone, Indigenous and Francophone. Communities are most often a mix of the three cultures which lends to the complexity of Northern Ontario's identity and development issues and concerns. Although Craft Ontario welcomes the participation of all cultures, this research was the first time that the Francophone and Indigenous communities were actively sought to participate. Their engagement strengthened the project and its success by bringing different perspectives to the table, and bridging networks between Northern Ontario's diverse populations. I first organized and analyzed learnings within each of the five activities (workshops; meet and greets; exhibition; symposium; video) and then contextualized them within previous cycles' themes. Information about the project was hosted on NORDIK's and Craft Ontario's websites on an ongoing basis. Technology played a significant role in developing networks of artists, linking them locally and regionally.

A Northern Steering Committee comprised of artists from across region was established to oversee the research, particularly the development of the symposium. As with previous recruitment strategies I utilized snowball sampling. A number of invitations to artists and arts organizations were declined due to limited time. Eventually nine artists from across the region joined, representing a matrix of the three dominant cultural ancestries (Anglophone, Indigenous and Francophone), a variety of disciplines, length of time practicing and locales. The Executive Director of Craft Ontario was also a member of the Steering Committee. The committee met monthly via telephone conferencing. None of the participants knew the others, although two had heard of each other, they had never conversed; however, many were able to meet in person toward the end of the study during the regional symposium. Similarly, I had met one member many years ago, had heard of one other, but the other members were new to me.

I proposed locations for the professional development workshops, *CraftSmarts*, with an eye to build capacity within smaller, second-tier regional centres, providing resources where opportunities for cultural development were limited. Many communities were very interested in participating but, again, due to timing, were unable to take advantage of the opportunity. A total of five events were held. I developed the topic for each workshop in consultation with a local arts organization or key artists in community, evolving from discussions regarding identified needs. As the workshop series progressed, I cross-seeded dialogues emerging from the sessions to other ones, and resources in one location were offered to others. The agendas were designed to connect artists to Northern resource people within their communities, or from across the region who had specific skills and had addressed similar issues. The exception was the inclusion of the Saskatchewan co-operative as a resource during Wawa's workshop because of its Indigenous and remote location representing many challenges that Northern Ontario artists face.

Each location was responsible for organizational logistics including, advertising, registering, and space. I provided support and resources to local organizers to deliver the workshops, i.e. locating workshop instructors, creating posters and media releases for local distribution. The events were also broadly advertised through NORDIK's Mailchimp (e-newsletter) campaigns targeting cultural organizations. *CraftSmarts* workshops generated considerable social capital within communities locally and regionally with a number of artists meeting one another for the first time in person and/or via technology. The events were approximately a day and a half: some began one evening followed by a full day; others all day and into the evening; and Hearst's was conducted over two days. The sessions began with me providing an overview of the arts and resilience research. During each intervention, artists had opportunities to share their work, exchange ideas and business development skills. They could note who had which skills that they might need in the future, identify how operating a business impacts on being an artist, and the challenges one faces in earning a livelihood. Attendance ranged from eight to fifteen people, comprised of a mix of ages, disciplines and length of time engaged in arts and culture.

For the Manitoulin Island and Fort Frances workshops, due to time demands, I relied on telephone conferencing to provide the contextualizing commentary to the participants as they watched the PowerPoint presentation of the research; and in Hearst, to respect the integrity of the unilingual Francophone workshop the material was translated into French and delivered by a member of the Steering Committee participating in the workshop. The meet and greet happenings were informational networking events that I ran in conjunction with the *CraftSmarts* workshops to take advantage of the gathering and reduce programming costs. Important information about Craft

Ontario's programs, services and grants—as well as CARFAC Ontario's²² and the Ontario Arts Council's²³ programs—were discussed and support materials distributed. Such information is often difficult to access in the North and these events provided a range of resources for further follow-up. Craft Ontario was also able to gain input into their services through the facilitated discussions. I encouraged the artists take work to the event to share with others as an introduction, to connect through their art, and enable others to see what is being created locally.

The curated travelling craft exhibition, *CraftCurrents*, I organized provided artists, communities and tourists the opportunity to see firsthand the quality and diversity of craft being created across the region. Each of the six tour stops celebrated the opening with a well-attended reception of artists and dignitaries, and media, facilitating an important informal meeting space that raised the profile of craft with decision-makers, the arts community and the community at large. Due to distances and time and cost restraints, I was present at the Sault Ste. Marie opening only. Of the thirty-four pieces in the exhibition, thirteen pieces sold, with all but two of the purchases being made by buyers who purchased work produced outside their home community. The exhibition met the goal of raising awareness of the quality of work created in Northern Ontario and increased the demand for regionally produced goods.

I prepared the Exhibition Call for Artists, ensuring it was carefully worded to encourage wide participation from diverse backgrounds, disciplines and duration of creative practice. The Call was distributed through NORDIK's various networks and channels including MailChimp campaigns and a number of media releases were prepared for smaller newspapers in the region. There were many challenges to organizing such an event, including getting the word out across the vast region within the tight timeline and orchestrating logistical details from afar. The curating process was dependent upon artists submitting digital images of their work. This in itself presented significant barriers with few artists having good quality photos of their work and/or the capacity to send them in the designated format. I offered image reformatting; however, it did not mitigate other factors including artists' not perceiving their work to be of a quality to enter into a show and/or those who did not consider entering because they had never done it before and were unsure of the process.

Relying on my networks, I sent a call out for curators. Three curators, one from each of the regions' dominant cultural heritages with significant experience in their field were selected by Craft Ontario to view the slides independently and then collectively. Craft Ontario created a full colour exhibition

²² CARFAC Ontario (<http://www.carfaontario.ca>).

²³ Ontario Arts Council (<http://www.arts.on.ca/index.html>).

book (Craft Ontario, 2011) based on participants' slides that accompanied the show. I sought exhibition venues across the North, with the region's lack of suitable built infrastructure posing a significant problem. There are few spaces to host such an exhibition, and the majority of the formal spaces routinely book at least a year in advance leaving very limited opportunity to schedule a show on short notice. Eventually, six locations were booked—five galleries and one banquet hall in Sault Ste. Marie that was temporarily converted to an exhibition space to accommodate the show.

The topic for the symposium I organized evolved from Steering Committee members, drawn from their experience as artists, coupled with the themes emerging from *CraftSmarts* workshops and the *CraftCurrents* exhibition dialogues. The goal of the symposium was to increase understanding of Northern artists' identity and development needs necessary in creating sustainable cultural sector employment and building healthy communities. The symposium *Reflecting the North: Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture* assembled more than fifty artists, funders, economic development officers and representatives from locations across the region and a few southern Ontario centres, who contributed to ideas for immediate action and longer term approaches. I established a blog²⁴ to promote the event and be a repository of information for others access in generating further discussion. The event was livestreamed through Algoma University's WebEx system and people from across the province joined in. It had a strong educational component, opening with a keynote address from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC)²⁵ providing an overview of supports available to the arts with examples of past funding, followed by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture²⁶ and other important provincial arts organizations and funders. Different cultural perspectives, including my PowerPoint presentation of the ongoing research, and a video of a number of Northern artists, arts organizations and arts development were delivered in the morning. Three presenting artists were unable to attend in person due to scheduling difficulties related to the time required to travel to Sault Ste. Marie. Two created a video that was played during the symposium and the third, Sophie Edwards, joined live through technology (Skype). The afternoon was comprised of participant-driven discussion workshops reconvening later in the day to share with the larger group. The summary of findings and policy recommendations I prepared, the keynote address, and a number of the presentations were posted on the dedicated blog²⁷.

²⁴ Symposium blog: Reflecting the North: *Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture* (www.reflectingthenorth.wordpress.com)

²⁵ Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corp. (<http://nohfc.ca/en>).

²⁶ Ministry of Tourism and Culture (<http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/home.shtml>).

²⁷ Symposium: Reflecting the North: *Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture* (www.reflectingthenorth.wordpress.com).

An important educative and promotional tool I created and launched at the symposium was a video collage highlighting artists, organizations and arts development from across the North in one minute segments. The idea emerged from Steering Committee discussions when searching for a powerful narrative to increase understanding of the Northern context with a particular focus on funders and decision-makers. It was challenging to organize and create due to a short timeline, varying skills of the submitting artists and limited technical equipment, but it was extremely well received. Many commented that it was amazing to see the quality and diversity of goods, and to hear artists speak of what inspires and supports them, and a few of the issues they face. After its launch, a number of artists commented that they were planning to connect with other artists in the video. I spent considerable time post-event trying to improve the quality of sound and splitting it into three segments to facilitate uploading it to You Tube via the symposium blog site. The video was the first time Craft Ontario had a promotional tool of this nature. At the conclusion of the research I prepared a final report, *Growing Ontario Craft Community North* (Ortiz and Broad, 2012) identifying the outcomes, challenges and next steps.

The five data collection methods comprising the Craft Ontario research, as a whole, reinforced the previous cycles' themes and added more depth as new subthemes detailing challenges that individuals, organizations and art-related businesses face in the North, and the precariousness of the entire sector. It contributed to foregrounding artists' perseverance in maintaining a practice, the impact of the collective role they play in community development, and brought forth new policy recommendations to simultaneously increase individual, organizational and community level resilience.

3.5.5 Cycle Six: Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations through Peer Networking

Emerging from Cycle Four and Five was the recognition of the crucial role arts organizations play in resilience. Cycle Six focused on this theme thus significantly deepening understanding regarding their contributions, challenges within the current policy and planning environment, and ways of becoming more sustainable. This cycle ran from July 2012 to October 2012, engaged 27 people within Northeastern Ontario, and resulted in the report *Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations through Peer Networking* (Ortiz, Ableson and Broad, 2013). Three internal presentations were made, one to each of the participating arts organizations. No external presentations were delivered. Table 6 lists the research activities in this cycle that I undertook.

Table 6: Cycle Six Activities

Developed an organizational sustainability framework based on a literature review
Facilitated a series of 3 Skype discussions with the peer network to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide an overview of the project, establish mentoring goals and a timeline, and discuss the consultation process • discuss pre and post-project questions that would guide community consultations and the final peer networking session • discuss tracking and reflection documentation on the mentoring process and its implementation
Facilitated on-site community engagement focus groups and consultations in each of the 3 communities
Prepared draft community consultation report for each location
Facilitated a series of 3 Skype dialogues with the peer network, each focusing on one organization's report
Facilitated a Skype dialogue on post-project questions and learning outcomes
Finalized each community's consultation report
Prepared final research report <i>Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations through Peer Networks</i> (Ortiz, Ableson and Broad, 2013)

In the sixth cycle of the research I facilitated the establishment of a peer network between three arts organizations located in Northeastern Ontario that committed to assist each other in transitioning through the region's significant social and economic challenges. The need for such a network was identified during the previous cycle, specifically during Sophie Edwards' presentation at the *Reflecting the North* symposium I had organized. It also built on themes emerging from previous research cycles, particularly Cycle Three, regarding the role peer mentoring played in strengthening individual and organizational capacity.

Sophie Edwards' symposium presentation in Cycle Five focused on arts organizations' sustainability given the challenges the entire region faces, the sector's current structure, funding models and the attitude toward investment being akin to a subsidy. She is the Executive Director of 4element Living Arts²⁸ located on Manitoulin Island. When I approached two other arts organizations, the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District²⁹ and the Conseil des Arts de Hearst³⁰ they expressed an interest in the development of a geographical network to increase sustainability. The research proceeded upon approval of the ethics board submission I prepared for Algoma University.

²⁸ 4elements Living Arts (<http://4elementslivingarts.org>).

²⁹ Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District (<http://www.ssmarts.org>).

³⁰ Conseil des Arts de Hearst (<http://www.conseildesartsdehearst.ca>).

I conducted a literature review around key topic areas of non-profit organizational change and sustainability and peer mentoring in the cultural sector, with a particular focus on rural areas and distance delivery. Arts organizations illustrating sustainable practices were explored with representatives of the Ontario Arts Council. Based on the literature I developed an organizational sustainability framework comprising of five components: i) Organizational awareness of environment and context; ii) Community relations and social capital development; iii) Governance; iv) Financing, and; v) Human resources. A variety of research collection tools were utilized including: i) a set of pre- and post-project questions for the organizations to complete to guide discussions during the community consultations and the final peer networking session; ii) tracking and reflection documentation forms designed to capture organizations' learnings as the project progressed; iii) on-site community focus group consultations; and iv) technology delivered peer networking sessions. The organizations were brought together utilizing technology (Skype) to: i) provide a general overview of the project; ii) establish mentoring goals and a timeline; and iii) discuss the consultation process and the activities to be conducted in each community. The consultations were composed of three engagement activities:

- Presentation of the organization's strategic plan (by the organization)
- Creation of the organization's historical timeline
- Mapping affiliations, connections and partnerships

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 consultation activities and the technology delivered mentoring sessions.

Participants ranged from two in Hearst, five in Sault Ste. Marie and twenty on Manitoulin Island. The findings were compiled and analysed within the aforementioned sustainability framework. 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, learn from each other, and discuss ways of becoming more sustainable. One final mentoring session was held on October 3, 2012 to discuss project outcomes and recommendations. The three organizational profiles were incorporated into a final report identifying overall project goals, findings and learning outcomes. Each group received a draft of said report and once finalized, each received

both print and electronic copies. The project report was disseminated through a dedicated page on NORDIK's website. Each organization has begun to address the issues outlined in their individual reports.

3.3.6 Cycle Seven: Presentations

The presentations, as a whole, formed an iterative cycle of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting on the articulation and dissemination of the study's findings that traversed the scope of the research and intersected and informed each of the six other cycles. They were a key educational component throughout the research process and served several roles: consolidation and sharing of current learnings, ideas and/or concepts; a concretized starting point to collectively construct and/or deconstruct meaning and sense making; gain feedback and input on the findings; disseminate the research findings to date; test the effectiveness of the visuals to articulate the findings; and make the learning more accessible for diverse people to grasp. Learnings collected through the numerous presentations informed my analysis and reflection on the research and provided direction for future sessions and visual illustrations. Preparation for each presentation consolidated thinking, provided opportunity to test out new relationships and ways of depicting them. The process centred on re-contextualizing the research in an effort to 'translate' or convey key concepts to people within and beyond the art sector in ways that were intended to be meaningful to them. To facilitate bridging diverse disciplines findings targeted narratives were developed to accompany each presentation to increase understanding of creative practice's contribution within the concept of the community as a complex adaptive system.

Over the course of the research there were a total of 42 presentations: 21 presentations were 'internal' considered part of the six cycles, with two delivered in French via colleagues; and 21 'external' academic, community development, and government-funded conferences and/or workshops, two of which were based on the doctoral arts research, specifically, while the other 19 provided a broader understanding of resilience, notwithstanding the central role culture plays in such. The presentations were primarily PowerPoint comprised of hand drawn images, supporting visuals and text. A few of the internal presentations utilized hand drawn images as stand-alone maps.

Three of the external presentations catapulted the research forward: i) Algoma University's Teach-In; ii) the University Art Association of Canada conference; and iii) NORDIK's resilience forum with Buzz Holling, whom many consider to be the founder of the concept of resilience. The first two presentations were delivered to audiences less familiar with resilience and community development,

thus requiring further rendering the concepts into manageable learnings, linking and concretizing them in ways that were fluid and coherent. The Teach-In was the first opportunity to present the doctoral arts-resilience research to an outside audience. My reflection on the study's dialogues and place-related literature culminated in a deep realization of the relationship between culture, place and resilience: *culture is the only thing that can change; it is the only malleable element*. Place is stationary and unmovable, history is the past, and time is beyond control. People, however, come and go and societies' values change over time, therefore, culture is the nexus of community change. It was a milestone in my ability to concisely articulate my long-held artistic 'knowing' and thus increased my understanding of community development theory. Preparatory map making processes crystallized one image particular, capturing the dynamic nature of culture, place and peoples' embeddedness in their own system. The new material was integrated into a PowerPoint with commentary supporting the images. Feedback indicated the visual maps had a significant and immediate impact and conveyed meaning expediently to diverse audiences, enabling them to follow the links. Further consolidation and evolution of my thinking resulted from the University Art Association of Canada's³¹ presentation in October 2010 that led to the publication of an article (Ortiz, 2012) in *Cahiers métiers d'art - Craft Journal*³². A literature review of the study's overarching theme of identity and place factored strongly in contextualizing the research learnings and the article greatly concretizing my thoughts through the written word. Both dissemination tools provided further grounding for the themes that were taken forward to the next cycle. NORDIK's resilience forum with guest speaker Buzz Holling increased my grounding in complex adaptive community systems through a literature review of his work in the field.

3.6 Reflection on the Research Methodology, Practice and Learnings

The research provided the space, the reason and the resources to gather people together to investigate a common interest. The action research methodology was very effective, assembling diverse artists, arts organizations, and community developers and funding agencies in a variety of formats that created relational linkages and educational bridges between and among participants locally and regionally, to share, co-produce meaning and knowledge in understanding the arts' contribution to resilience.

³¹ University Art Association of Canada (<http://www.uaac-aauc.com/en>).

³² *Cahiers métiers d'art - Craft Journal* (<http://www.craftjournal.ca>).

Many artists engaged in the research met other creative people for the first time, fostering new relations and laying the groundwork to reconnect through peer networks long after the study concluded. Consultations, workshops and the symposium brought together people from a variety of sectors and locations to share and learn about issues facing the sector, identify ways to support Northern artists, and leverage creative capacity and cultural assets to strengthen and/or diversify economies. In many communities, champions, artists and decision-makers were interested in continuing the dialogue and collaboration. Thus, the research process built social capital (bonding, bridging and linking) for immediate and future action.

The events were democratically participatory and community based. For the *Breathing Northwinds* and *CraftSmarts* workshops artists identified local needs and the consultation was designed accordingly. The research empowered participants by directing their own learning, bringing what was important to them to the foreground, and created space for co-producing meaning and identifying opportunities for collective action. Agendas for regional events evolved through artists from a number of locations dialoguing on shared issues and ways these could best be addressed given the limitations of time and resources. I played a supportive role, providing mentorship and resources, and in many cases, facilitating the event utilizing tools that provided space for equitable dialogue, bringing forth participants' voices, different ways of knowing and local knowledge that reconstructed meaning, fostered agency and solidarity.

The variety of research methods within the methodology served the study's purpose well. The Developers' and Artists' Inquiry Groups met over a period of time, enlarging members' understanding of the broader context in which they practiced and the role of the arts in effecting change, evidenced through their journals and exit interviews. The focus groups and other community organizing events initiated interaction and sparked dialogue, increasing agency and collaboration. The transformative educational aspect of action research was fostered through discursive and reflexive practices embedded in event processes and more formalized presentations of the research findings and learnings. Presentations to participants, other researchers at the broader local, regional and national communities of interest were a significant part of the methodology. It created space to co-create meaning, gain input and feedback and disseminate knowledge within and between artists and other sectors. It raised questions regarding the arts and community development processes, practices and priorities and generated new perspectives that influenced attendees and the researcher alike, thus informing my analysis and further inquiry directions of the research.

Central to the dissemination was the use of images aimed to capture complex concepts, portraying them in ways that could be grasped more easily, making them and accessible. They were utilized as a tool for dialogue, reflection and analysis and to initiate discourse and action in others. The ongoing iterative process of mapping, reviewing findings, contextualizing it within relevant literature, and reflecting on my own dual practice experience advanced my critical understanding of the research as new ideas emerged. When the maps had reached a point where I thought they were representative of my thinking at that moment, they were incorporated into the activities and other dissemination opportunities. The little text they contained enabled a broad spectrum of people with limited background in the arts and/or community development to engage with the material more easily.

The cyclical nature of action research methodology (plan, act, observe, reflect) requires researchers to be engaged and reflexive throughout the study. Reason and Bradbury (2001a, p.xxvii) concisely capture the centrality of awareness in effective research stating “One might say that the primary ‘rule’ of action research practice is to be aware of the choices one is making and their consequences ...”. Incorporating an evaluative aspect into reflection on learning provides insight into self as ‘the primary agent of the process; it grounds transformation for future learning and action’ (Fletcher *et al.*, 2010, p.490).

Three broad pathways for action research practice—first, second and third person—outlined by Reason and Bradbury (2001) provides a useful framework for assessing the study’s methodology and my action research practice. First-person research refers to the researcher’s ability to foster an inquiring approach in the moment of action that carries on beyond the boundaries of the study, second-person research speaks to the capacity for interpersonal dialogue, including learning communities, while third-person research aims to extend small scale projects to create wider inquiry and change including the utilization of writing and other reporting on inquiry (pp.xxv). With regard to first-person practice, I began the research immersed in a long-standing, artistic practice that is an integral part of my life and which included investigating a range of disciplines: planning, intentional action, mindfulness and reflection. Transferring this model to a research framework required developing new and/or strengthening research-related skills, i.e. critical analysis and action research methodology, that will now support my both studio and community development practice. Such is the nature of a system.

My second-person research practice was developed over the course of the study and evidenced in three ways: i) increased capacity to articulate one’s artistic practice; ii) development of peer networks and cross-sector social relations; and iii) participation in a learning community. Conducting the study significantly increased my capacity to express studio practice, i.e. processes and products,

and thus, its value, within a contemporary art framework as well as one based on resilience. The gathering and interaction of participants fostered peer mentoring networks that enable continued learning.

Although critical reflection is an essential part of action research it is often challenging to move beyond the descriptive to the critical when reflecting on one's own practice. NORDIK's role as a 'learning commons' significantly supported me in incorporating meta-action research into my practice defined by Fletcher *et al.* (2010, p.491) as:

... action research on or about action research. It is based on reflection, self-reflection, conceptualization and theorization of the activities, processes, methods and results of the action research program(s) or project(s), denoting systemic change, transformation, awareness and understanding of one's own learning, and arriving at higher-order concepts, principles, theories or models of action research.

This higher order cognitive task was a foundational and integral aspect of my practice. It included reflection on: planning; implementation, including intuitive reactions and decision-making during the event; and post-action, the critical incidents after the event (Fletcher *et al.*, 2010, p.503). The dialogical nature of NORDIK's bi-weekly research meetings provided crucial grounding, critical analysis and feedback on my practice on an ongoing basis. I had scheduled opportunities to present my research, and reflect on learnings, successes and challenges with peers and mentors within an interdisciplinary framework and praxis. It required synthesizing and articulating my experiences as the research unfolded. This was challenging at different stages of the project particularly when I was in the midst of the messiness of gathering, reflecting, and sorting ideas which I routinely processed through map-based journaling with limited text. My thoughts were tied to images, unburdened by words or sentences. Having to discuss the project on a regular basis forced the artist in me to structure my thoughts within the realm of the spoken and written word, expediting my processing cycle. The NORDIK team environment provided the opportunity to engage other researchers in the study, thereby generating knowledge and building individual and collective capacity across disciplines. Hearing colleagues' experiences of when their research went awry or became derailed greatly increased my understanding of a number of challenges action researchers encounter as well as potential ways of addressing them.

A large component of the research falls within third-person practice, extending the scale for broader inquiry by engaging people from many geographical locations in Northern and southern Ontario and other provinces; across boundaries, cultural, art and academic disciplines; and those new to the arts and long-time practitioners. This was achieved through linking artists to resources in other

communities across the region and the province, hosting regional events including the travelling craft exhibition, presentations to a wide spectrum of audiences, and research reports and journal articles that further disseminated the learnings.

From a personal perspective conducting the research was transformational. Community development research was a relatively new practice for me, thus the study provided the opportunity to hone my skills and expand my capacity in this field. It greatly contributed to my ability to articulate artistic practice within an arts-culture-economy-community resilience framework making it visible for others to understand. The preparation of the thesis was very challenging: first, finding ways to externalize my internal and tacit knowledge and contextualize it within other artists' and researchers' perspectives and understanding; and second, expressing it in a written text rather than visual format reflective of my studio practice. Undertaking this work has given me another voice, an authorship, a different means for exploring pressing issues.

The longitudinal aspect of this study provided the opportunity to observe and reflect on the action research process over time and in different contexts. Assembling different people to interact and discuss issues prevalent in their lives foregrounds the critical role discourse plays in shifting attitudes and identities, enlarging perspectives and initiating novel ideas, underscoring and reinforcing the parallels between my studio practice and community development practice. The evolving nature of action research, the learning in action and embedded education are transformative—as are the creative processes underpinning artistic practice. I now have a theoretical base and evidence to locate my studio practice within a community development/resilience framework and vice versa, my research practice with an artistic, emergent and innovative complex adaptive community system, with each supporting the other. They are different expressions of the same practice.

The ongoing iterative, creative process of map making contributed to ideation and conceptualization, linking literature, theory and practice to the findings while the physicality of drawing and redrawing images embodied the learnings. Weaving map making into the research process not only facilitated meeting the goal of making the study accessible through concretizing concepts, it visually documented the research journey. Only a few images are incorporated into the thesis; however, all the drawings have been retained, thereby supporting further investigation and future inquiry threads of the research that were beyond the focus of this study. The maps and my journal are now part of my 'resource library' to draw on as needed.

Presenting in diverse environments also strengthened my capacity to perceive the material from different perspectives. For example, the Canadian Association for Studies in Cooperation presentation during the Social Sciences Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Congress required conceptualizing artists' collaborations to deliver exhibitions, workshops and programming as cooperative practices. The ability to reframe research will greatly advantage me in future work.

Equally beneficial are the relationships fostered from gathering people from across the North and engaging a number of representatives of provincial organizations based in southern Ontario. The research has greatly expanded my network providing key local contacts and insight into many communities that can be drawn on to advance the arts sector and increase resilience and sustainability as my PhD research journey ends and another phase of my cultural research begins.

I had anticipated the study to co-produce meaning and knowledge, providing a strong educational component for artists, leaders, policy makers, and the broader public regarding creative practice's contribution to resilience. What really struck a chord with me is the necessity and urgency of this work—communities are in social and economic upheaval and seeking ways to adapt to survive. A community culture and environment that supports the arts is paramount. Connecting creative people, raising their visibility and accessibility within and across sectors locally and regionally, fosters relationship building, retains cultural diversity and sparks social and economic innovation. In a number of locales, artists and their collaborative interventions are creating wider resilience through networking, developing social capital and linking to consumers, leading to place-based economies; however, without more opportunities to gather, and investment in governance, development and management, the sector remains precarious, under-resourced, underdeveloped and undervalued in charting new pathways toward healthy, resilient people and places.

PART TWO: Building Resilience

It's a microcosm, forget about community resiliency, focus on individual resiliency, how you respond to external pressures and forces, take that personal experience and how art impacts and influences that, and expand that to the broader community (IG2.6, #4, p.3).

Resilience depends upon the ability to adapt, transition and prosper while retaining core values, with community culture a key factor underpinning success (Lewis and Lockhart, 2002; Centre for Community Enterprise, 2000). Hawkes' (2001, p.23) four pillar model of sustainability (cultural vitality, social equity, environmental responsibility, economic viability) places culture—the basis of social production and transmission of values—at the centre of the schema recognizing it as the bedrock of society and the foundation of community development. The arts, as the manifestation of cultural values and "... the paramount symbolic language through which shifting meanings are presented" facilitate adaptation by reconstructing societal values, impacting on identity and what is important and meaningful in life. The arts, however, have been typically contextualized, and thus valued, within economic frameworks focusing on the economic return of the product and job creation. They have also long been tasked with doing the heavy lifting of community development work in addressing social and economic goals that has little if anything to do with the making of art per se (McCarthy *et al.*, 2004, p.xi). More recently, they have been heralded as a driver of the creative economy with many jurisdictions identifying cultural assets to revision place in furthering diversification efforts. Culture situated as the last pillar (economic, social, environmental, cultural) within models of four pillar sustainability frameworks, rather than the first and central pillar informing the other three, relegates it's role to a primarily economic function (i.e. culture-led regeneration, the creative economy and cultural tourism) with its value assessed according to these benchmarks, missing and/or minimizing *how* engaging in the sector generates resilience and ways these significant benefits contribute broad-based healthy, resilient people and places.

In Northern Ontario the arts remain largely understood within traditional economic frameworks that see the sector in terms of tangible outputs of cultural products with limited viability to generate individual and/or community wealth, leading many to perceive the arts to be subject to subsidy, rather than an investment in people, place making and competitive advantage. As a result, few resources are allocated to the sector, underutilizing the arts' potential for regenerating and building resilience. Assessment models that focus on monetizing the end product are based on the industrial age and are of little utility in capturing its value within a complex, adaptive community system (Sharpe, 2010).

The study engaged diverse artists, community developers, municipal leaders and professionals, provincial organizations, funding agencies and citizens interested in the arts to gain their understanding of the relationships between creative practice and resilience. The visual artists represented a variety of disciplines, genres and geographic locations who participate in the arts for a number of socioeconomic reasons. Across the spectrum there did not appear to be a significant difference between the artists' culture, practice, and/or home communities and their perspectives on the sector's contribution to resilience. The responses were somewhat similar in nature. There were variances, however, in understanding the impact on and/or benefit of engagement and ways the arts facilitated development, largely divided between cultural heritages. For example, Indigenous and Francophone artists highly value practice as a means of retaining cultural values and traditions as part of identity and belonging. Other such distinctions shall be noted within the context of the findings.

The largely consistent views of artists from a wide range of backgrounds suggest the intent of their art work, e.g. as resistance art aiming to spur social change; as conceptual-based work; as production; as fashion or lifestyle; and/or for pleasure, is less a determining factor in the perceived benefits of engagement. As result, the analysis of the research findings focuses on the individual, as the foundational element of the community system, and their creative practice, regardless of the genre or purpose of the work. Content does have a significant impact on the artist and others, but it is the *engagement in creative processes* underpinning production, and peoples' *interaction* with the art, rather than the product's genre or use that is of greater relevance in this study. This approach contrasts with most cultural research that tends to aggregate individuals' engagement to a sectoral level of 'the arts', frequently discipline specific and/or generally presented within an economic context.

Four broad interconnected themes emerged from the study. Although each cycle of the research had different goals for assembling people, themes brought forth in the Inquiry Groups in Cycle Two, early in the study, were reiterated and deepened into subthemes as the investigation progressed.

The identified themes are:

1. The role of the arts in identity reformation and belonging;
2. The role of the arts in community development;
3. The significance of place in cultural development; and
4. Community development as a creative process.

Each of these themes reflect an essential component of resilience with some research findings focusing more on the role of the creative process and others on the cultural goods in increasing agency and adaptive capacity. In complex, adaptive community systems resilience is dependent upon relationships and networks within and between other sectors and levels or scales. The findings are, therefore, collectively organized and analyzed in terms of the arts' contribution to individual, arts sector and community level resilience—how it generates synergy, fosters linkages and leverages assets across these three scales, the locale and beyond. Systems with multiple and diverse relationships and intersections enable linking and connecting people, strengthening the community system as a whole, facilitating sharing, co-producing knowledge, and the circulation and consumption of goods that underpin large scale adaptability and change. Thus, the three findings chapters (Chapters Four, Five and Six) are organized to present the relationships between individual, arts sector and community level resilience respectively, illustrating how the various components of the study contributed to my learnings, rather than reflecting on each of the research cycles or actions separately.

Chapter Four: Building Individual Resilience

This chapter begins with the research that led to the development of a new culture-arts-economy-resilience model providing the framework for understanding the relationships and linkages between the disciplines. It then unpacks creative practice, depicting how artists view creative processes, products and the business of art, foregrounding the transformative role processes and products play in building resilience. Subsequent sections further investigate the first three themes emerging from the study within the context of characteristics, qualities and skills identified in resilience-related literature as building individual adaptive capacity including, increased creativity, health and well-being, and the ability to revision and shift cultural values and identity when experiencing change. The fourth identified theme (community development as a creative process) is taken up in the following two chapters, Chapter Five, building arts sector resilience, and Chapter Six, building local and regional resilience.

Drawing heavily from the learnings in Cycle One, Two and Five, this chapter focuses on artists' perspectives on engagement, a number of inherent challenges in understanding the arts and the benefits participation accrue. Artist participants were a mix of heritages (Anglophone, Indigenous and Francophone) from various visual arts disciplines. A few were living in Sault Ste. Marie, however, the vast majority were from smaller communities across the region. A number of participants had been engaged in the arts for one or two decades, while others had begun their creative practice rather recently. The data was gathered through surveys (artist, arts organizations, business) and organizational consultations in Sault Ste. Marie (Cycle One); two inquiry groups located in the Sault with one comprised of artists, the other community developers (Cycle Two); and regional artist professional development workshops, informal meet and greets, a curated travelling craft exhibition, a symposium and a video (Cycle Five).

4.0 The Development of an Interdisciplinary Framework

The development of a new interdisciplinary framework for understanding the arts' contribution to resilience evolved from the first cycle of research (The Socioeconomic Impact of the Arts on the Economy of Sault Ste. Marie) becoming the model for the thesis' conceptual analysis. The ineffectiveness of traditional economic frameworks for measuring the impact of the arts and culture sector, my reflection on the cycle's findings within the context of emerging literature, and attendance at key culture-led regeneration conferences spurred the development of the new model.

Initially the research methodology for the first cycle included a literature review and the development of a traditional economic survey designed to capture the number and types of current and forecasted jobs, education and salary levels, and revenue sources; however, a review of literature regarding evaluation frameworks indicates such models are of limited utility in quantifying the economic contributions of the arts. Challenges centre on: economic multipliers that are standard economic practice used to calculate impact are a statistical construct that rely upon averages and do not take into account technological change, economies of scale or surplus capacity; statistical classifications do not easily capture market-driven cultural industries that cross over to different sectors or may exist only in small pockets; cultural activity may be a secondary business activity and not calculated in standard statistical tabulations; much of sector is supported by volunteers who are not normally assessed a value and therefore not included in calculated formulas; non-ticketed events are uncounted; and local data may not be available (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009; Gordon and Beilby-Orrin, 2006; Johnson, 2006). To address this issue I revised the methodology, broadening the research to a socioeconomic impact study and enlarging the engagement strategy to include key community partners involved in sector development. The survey was redesigned to gather additional data including: affiliations; current services; opportunities and barriers for growth; infrastructure space needs; challenges to maintaining a practice; and participants' sociocultural perspective on the impact of culture beyond its economic value.

It was the first time cultural research of this nature had been undertaken in Sault Ste. Marie. The survey provides previously inaccessible data regarding the local sector's workforce, duration of activity, and the arts' economic contribution to family income, substantiating the community's considerable artistic activity, as well as the importance of secondary and/or supplemental arts-generated income to household sustainability. Analysis of the data indicate the sector is primarily comprised of: part-time, self-employed artists; a nominal number of administrators and/or qualified teachers; young peoples' entry level positions; summer students; and a large and diverse pool of volunteers. The majority of Sault Ste. Marie artists, approximately 78% (representing 72 people) indicate they work year-round on a part-time basis dedicating 11 to 40 hours per week to the arts (Ortiz and Broad, 2007, p.58). Of the participants 25% state that arts-related income contributes up to 50% of their family income. Although the average contribution is 7% percent, the higher contributions are sizeable, i.e. 15%, 20%, 25%, and 50% (Ortiz and Broad, 2007, p.62). The study indicates that the arts are a significant means of generating secondary and/or supplemental income within subsistence economies.

The enhanced survey successfully captured important data establishing the sector's profile and identified areas for development; however, the economic data did not reflect a large monetary contribution posing a significant barrier to advocating for investing in the arts as an economic diversification strategy and challenging the completion of the study. Traditional economic frameworks—the prevalent tool for assessing community prosperity in the North—captures people's primary source of income, thus supplemental income gained through arts-related income frequently remains unrecorded and invisible regardless of the amount of activity, missing important economic contributions that are particularly relevant to the region's context and sustainability. There is very little research regarding the role supplemental arts income plays in resilience within subsistence economies and is, therefore, an area for further investigation.

Reflection on the ineffectiveness of traditional frameworks to quantify the value of cultural products and activity brought forth additional concerns. Many goods are retained by the artist, given to family and friends, gifted for social purposes and/or bartered, thus the producer is not attributed any economic value. Art as a fundraiser is a well-established and profitable practice utilized by every sector to raise revenue for a multitude of capital projects (e.g. hospitals, hospices) and programs and services that support community organizations and institutions in carrying out their work, resulting in broad-based community benefits including increased quality of life and competitive advantage. Revenues, however, are credited to the benefactors' economic balance sheet. The vast majority of the art work is donated by the artists rather than purchased by the fundraising organization. Some artists may receive a tax donation receipt for the work although for many a receipt is of little value as their income levels are very low, and thus, further reduction is meaningless. There is also significant ongoing revenue generated through product merchandise based on logos designed by artists. In the vast majority of cases organizations hold the reproduction rights and profit immensely from the sales, whereas the artist is paid a one-time relatively small payment for their work. Over time, the artist tends to be forgotten, while logos and merchandise, etcetera, take on a life of their own.

The disconnection between traditional economic models, unrecognized revenue, the important socioeconomic contribution of artistic activity in rural locales, and the significant resilience benefits prevalent in the community development literature identified the need for a new framework that integrated culture, the arts, the economy and resilience. I developed the new model over the course of a few months through iterative cycles of reviewing literature, attending conferences, developing conceptual maps, sharing emerging ideas with NORDIK researchers at meetings to gain an interdisciplinary perspective of the relationships, incorporating feedback, revising the depiction

and representing the model at subsequent meetings. Central to the re-conceptualization process was map making. Concretizing the proposed relationships facilitated discourse serving as a tool for quickly re-engaging researchers in the issue at the next meeting. The ongoing evolution of the model built a common understanding of linkages between disciplines within NORDIK Institute's researchers.

The development of the model was informed by the explosion in the literature heralding the arts as an economic driver in the knowledge economy. Florida's (2002) research foregrounding the role of place and culture to regional economic prosperity and growth was gaining attention even within a few economic development circles in Northern Ontario. *The Rise of the Creative Class* (Florida, 2002) posits that wealth is generated through attracting the creative class, those paid to think with their minds, and who tend to relocate to cities where talent, technology and tolerant community values exist. With extractive industries becoming increasingly unstable Florida's (2002) concepts provides planners new insights into the role cultural-based amenities play in retaining populations and enticing mobile people and financial resources to relocate, facilitating transitioning to a global economy. During this time the provincial Ministry of Tourism and Culture was hosting Municipal Cultural Planning forums offering a significantly different approach to cultural development through the integration of culture into planning and community development documents, thereby changing cultural silos into cultural systems. The forums aimed to shift perceptions of the cultural sector from being considered in need of subsidy to one where investment realized broader community gains (Baeker, 2002, 2005). As well, Hawkes' (2001) re-conceptualization of sustainability was gaining ground, inserting culture as the 'fourth pillar', reframing it from being founded on the 'three pillars' of economic, social and environmental resilience to one of understanding people's cultural-based perspectives as a primary force influencing decision-making processes and development choices (Franklin and Bylton, 2011, p.5).

Conferences I attended also influenced the development of the model. Artscape's³³ Creative Places and Spaces ², Creative Community Building Workshops and Creative Hub Development workshop assembled leading edge thinkers such as Charles Landry (Comedia, UK), Colin Mercer (Cultural Policy, Planning and Research, UK), Glen Murray and Greg Baeker (AuthentiCity) and other prominent Canadian policy makers. These leaders were advocating for, and establishing, artist live/ work space and arts-based industry clusters by linking cultural capital to policy, thereby shepherding new directions for cultural development around the globe. Additionally, CRSSM was conducting research assessing the community's resilience, presenting findings to elected civic leaders, heads of

³³ Artscape (<http://www.torontoartscape.org>).

organizations and business, and informal community leaders in a series of educational forums, and setting action and priorities based on resilience principles.

The analysis of the current arts literature and examples of its application in Canada and abroad coupled with local resilience research and resilience-related articles demanded a considerable amount of boundary crossing, fore and back, to build linkages and integrate different concepts from a number of disciplines. As new versions I created were solidified they were vetted by NORDIK Institute colleagues, contributing to its evolution. Finally, I constructed an interdisciplinary image (Figure 6) representing the relationships between the arts and the development of urban knowledge economies within the context of resilience, becoming the model for this thesis' conceptual analysis.



Figure 6: An Integrated Framework of Culture, the Arts, the Economy and Resilience

The framework is founded on CRSSM's resilience research incorporating culture as the fourth and central pillar of sustainability, depicted in a medicine wheel format (Figure 4, p.89). Figure 6 represents relationships between the four directions or quadrants illustrating how one supports the development and transformation of others. The concentric circles convey ways each sector builds on the previous one to generate resilience. At the core is culture—community culture—recognizing the pivotal role values play in a community's capacity to adapt and respond to change (Centre for Community Renewal, 2000). The arts, as the expression of culture, is situated next to it with each

informing the other. Creativity, an essential element of innovation and an integral part of the arts, rests next to the arts. These three components comprise the basis of, and the environment for, resilience within the context of place.

Forming the next concentric circle is People, Organizations, Community Processes and Resources, representing the Centre for Community Renewal's (2000) organization of its resilience model. Within these four community dimensions there are twenty-three characteristics or indicators of resilience, i.e. what is needed, and how well one is doing. When I viewed the individual characteristics in each of these four community dimensions within CRSSM's resilience framework, the micro perspective or indicator level assessment shifted to a macro perspective, i.e. the collective impact of the characteristics—the resilience outcome. Perceived this way, the community dimensions (People, Organizations, Community Processes and Resources) respectively build community engagement, and foster the development of social capital, holistic community plans and capacity building. These four foundational components of community development connect to the four variations of culture-based knowledge economies summarized by Murray and Baeker (2006). The four economies and their respective researchers are: i) The Creative Economy (Florida, 2002); ii) Industry Clusters (Porter, 1989), iii) Place Marketing (Kotler, 1993); and iv) Home Grown Economies (Latimer, 1995). Within CRSSM's framework each of these economies fosters resilience as outlined below:

1. Providing opportunities for engagement in the arts leads to creative development and a competitive advantage in attracting and retaining younger people, skilled workers and investment;
2. Social capital leads to organizational infrastructure laying the groundwork for developing industry clusters around the arts;
3. Holistic community plans create a planned approach to Place Marketing of arts activities including festivals and events, that would provide community identity; and
4. Investment in the arts builds local capacity leading to a Home Grown Economy based on the arts (Ortiz and Broad, 2007, p.18).

Once the framework was in place I re-conceptualized the impact study from being a primarily economic argument for investment and diversification to one based on a resilience approach, a broader more holistic perspective on the arts' contribution within the context of transitioning to localized economies.

The culminating report *Culture, Creativity and the Arts: Achieving Community Resilience and Sustainability through the Arts in Sault Ste. Marie* (Ortiz and Broad, 2007) aimed to be an educative document to raise awareness and understanding of concepts of resilience across sectoral boundaries. It provides an assessment framework to assist formally elected civic leaders, organizational and business leaders and informal community leaders to make informed investment decisions, and policy makers with a broader context for viewing the role and value of the arts as a sector, in and of itself. The research indicates a holistic approach to planning and development creates an environment that provides the City with a number of socioeconomic and resilience benefits including: a culture of engagement that fosters creativity and innovation; networks and organizations that encourage more artistic activity and industry clusters; a branding and place marketing strategy; and a continual supply of creative talent forming the basis of a local economy (p.6). The study identifies existing cultural assets, challenges to growth, priority areas for development, and includes a set of recommendations suggesting ways the study could be advanced through strategic partnerships. A main recommendation is that the City, in partnership with the Arts Council, takes a lead role in creating a strategic development plan for culture and the arts using a community-based consultative process. This would promote the Arts Council's inclusion in high level planning, engage the sector from the 'bottom up' to ensure inclusive, broad-based community participation in sector development, and encourage views beyond seeing the sector within a predominantly economic light.

Once the report was drafted I developed an engagement strategy targeting those organizations cited in the recommendations to: gain input and feedback on the study's framework regarding the relationships between the arts, the economy and resilience; identify and analyze what development role aligned with each organization; collaboratively create understanding and awareness of study's findings; and gather support for the research. A number of individuals and organizational representatives immediately grasped the underlying concepts and framework and endorsed it, while others were less enthusiastic. Challenges included: i) unfamiliar community development and resilience terminology; and ii) difficulty in grasping resilience's conceptual and cultural orientated approach to development in comparison to traditional outcome driven frameworks that focus on job creation. A few people had anticipated the study would more directly request investment in the arts and were initially disappointed, however, over time came to regard the research as an important component to advocate for development of the arts sector.

Following the stakeholder meetings, the report was presented to Sault Ste. Marie's City Council where the recommendations were endorsed in February 2008. Shortly thereafter an implementation strategy was developed in consultation with the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation; however, the global financial crisis related to the collapse of the real estate market and financial institutions redirected their attention. The advancement of the local arts sector has moved forward on different fronts through various individual and group actions including this doctoral research. Requests for the report have facilitated its dissemination to many communities in Northern Ontario as well as other jurisdictions.

The model and its visual depictions continued to evolve over the course of subsequent cycles of research as findings were collected and analyzed, deepening understanding of the relationships between the three disciplines (culture, economy, resilience) and the mechanics, or processes, of *how* the arts contribute to resilience contextualized within the literature. Numerous presentations, workshops and external consultations facilitated gaining broader feedback and input, as well as serving to incorporate the integral educational aspect of action research and disseminating understanding of the sector's value beyond traditional economic frameworks.

4.1 Unpacking 'The Arts': The Intertwined Role of Creative Processes and Products

In the North the arts are frequently seen as tangible outputs of cultural products with limited economic viability. Artists perceive the focus on the finished goods to be a very narrow perspective given the range of resilience-related benefits they credit to engagement. A critical first step in broadening understanding beyond traditional economic frameworks is unpacking creative practice, typically aggregated in the literature as 'the arts'. This section begins with artists' perspective of their practice framework, identifying categories of engagement and attitudes toward the business of art. It then delves deeper into the components of practice providing important insight into the relationships between intangible action-based creative processes, and tangible commodity-based products. These two aspects underpin artists' perception of their contribution to resilience, as well as their reasons for engaging in the sector.

The artist framework is based on my reflection on findings gathered from the Artists' Inquiry Group (Cycle Two), supported through targeted questions during Kenora's professional development workshop (Cycle Five), and dialogues with artist colleagues. Data for the latter part of this section focusing on creative process and products was collected through the Artists' Inquiry Group, artist-led

sector planning consultations, the focus groups, and the professional development workshops, and then collectively analyzed and reflected upon.

Artist participants indicate that there are three broad categories of engagement: i) creative expression; ii) aesthetic art; and iii) creative and culture-based economies. Activity is not necessarily limited to one area, and all artists heavily rely upon networks and social capital to maintain practice. Each aspect of creative practice requires different skill sets and provides a range of benefits and rewards. Following is a brief taxonomy of creative practice based on the research findings.

- i) Creative practice: is a broad term that captures ‘all that artists do’, i.e. engagement in creative process and the production of goods; meeting, gathering, sharing skills and dialoguing with other artists; and participating in and/or attending arts-related events. As a whole, practice is largely dependent upon social relations for its maintenance and advancement.
- ii) Creative processes: is ‘the doing’, referring to the ‘action’ of making. It is an investigative dialogue involving the manipulation of materials. Participating artists indicate, in the North, it is primarily an individual activity, working on projects alone or in shared space alongside others, rather than engaging collaboratively.
- iii) Products: are outcomes from undertaking creative processes, the tangible result of the investigative journey containing the discovery and learnings; and
- iv) Business of art: includes the operational aspects of earning an income from one’s work, i.e. marketing, selling, accounting and reporting practices. It may or may not be considered part of creative practice.

Creative practice, ‘the arts’, therefore, is a composite of a number of elements that support the creation and production of goods and is founded on engagement with oneself and interaction with others. The business of art may or may not be part of one’s reason for engagement and may or may not be considered part of practice. Thus, the economic aspects of practice—the products and business transactions—that traditional frameworks focus on is only part of, or tangential, to practice. To tease out the implications of the division between practice and business, targeted questions regarding why it is or is not part of creative practice elicited a range of reasons from artists in the Kenora professional development workshops, a number of individual artists during the symposium, and artist colleagues. Responses were organized largely between social and economic drivers. Those interested in engaging solely for pleasure generally place business outside of creative practice, retaining or gifting products to family, friends, and/or for social purposes. A number of

artists who participate for primarily social reasons indicate they are keenly interested in generating an income to support their continued participation. Therefore, there does not appear to be a direct correlation between motivation of engagement (social) and the desire for a revenue stream (economic). Furthermore, artists operating a business either place it within or outside of practice. Those who position it within practice consider it to be encompassed under ‘all that artists do’. Those who consider it outside of creative practice acknowledge it is part of ‘all artists do’ but think it is separate because it requires different skills and mind set. Regardless of where business is located, artists concur selling work is a very different practice from creating it—one that is extremely challenging, noting the necessity of strong networks, marketing mechanisms and entrepreneurial skills that take a considerable amount of time and resources to acquire, particularly in Northern Ontario. A number of artists who currently sell their work see the business aspect as a necessary task in financing their practice rather than any desire to operate one. This theme shall be further taken up in Chapter Six.

Artist participants, in particular, voiced concerns regarding the perceived prioritization and overemphasis of the economic impact of the cultural product—in contrast to the creative *process* which generated them—to be a very limiting valuation, negatively impacting on the ability to maintain a practice and livelihood³⁴. Reflection on these perspectives brought forth two important differences. First, economic models focus on the tangible goods; specifically, the benefit of goods sold, which typically represent a portion of one’s inventory. The *potential* sales are significantly larger but are currently unrealized due to challenges related to accessing markets. Second, artists’ hone in on what engages people in practice, i.e. the creative process, with the product seen as a separate outcome and often perceived to be secondary. Thus, traditional economic frameworks appear to value the product, the tangible item, whereas, the personal experience of practice, the intangible, is undervalued. Dialogue and symposium discussion indicated artists’ view confer with a resilience approach that values engagement and creativity to generate synergy and innovation within multiple economies leading to more sustainable communities (Sharpe, 2010; Centre for Community Renewal, 2000).

Although there are different ways creative practice is conceptualized, some with the economic component seen as a vital part nested within practice, and others not, what appears to be quite consistent is the distinction between creative process and products and the role each serves. While artists’ creative practice framework clearly delineates between processes and products, there is little

³⁴ Artists’ Inquiry Group; Artist-led sector planning: all sessions; Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa; Symposium

resilience-related literature investigating this significant division. The separate, yet intertwined roles process and products play in developing individual, sectoral and community resilience emerged early in the research, becoming a central organizing principle.

The Artists' and Developers' Inquiry Groups (Cycle Two) were tasked with investigating the role of art in community development; specifically, how the arts contribute to resilience. The Groups brought forth responses that resonated with each others' understanding of the arts' significant role in shifting cultural values toward those more supportive of resilience; however, the content of the discussions differed. The Artists' Inquiry Groups' dialogue focused more on the importance of creative processes inherent in art making, and the necessity of engaging citizens in creative community development processes as key aspects of building resilience. In comparison, the Developers' Inquiry Group more frequently discussed the role of the product (e.g. murals, cultural activities and events) and the need for inclusive community development processes that support resilience, rarely referencing creative processes that underpin the emergence of the activities and/or the impact of participation on individuals. Reflection on the two Groups' differing perspectives illuminates the delineation between creative processes and products, their separate roles and contributions to resilience. While this section focuses on understanding creative processes in relation to the product, dialogue focusing on engaging citizens in community development processes is presented in Chapter Six, and the role of cultural activities in fostering resilience is more thoroughly detailed in Chapters Five and Six.

The investigation of relationships between creative processes and products cut across cycles and artists' disciplines, genres, reasons for engagement, cultural boundaries and geographical locations. Collective analysis of the research findings indicates understanding to be quite similar across the region; there does not appear to be a co-relation between demographics and perspectives on delineation. When probed regarding peoples' participation in the arts the majority of Anglophone, Indigenous, and Francophone artists indicate the lure is the creative process, rather than the product itself, which is seen as a very important, yet a separate outcome, and frequently considered to be a secondary part of the artistic journey (McCarthy *et al.*, 2004).

The creative process is the foundation of practice: it is implicit in, and undergirds artistic endeavors in the production of the product. When the topic of art arises, however, the majority of people focus on the product, significantly limiting the *value of engagement* in the arts. The following exchange between two participants in the Artists' Inquiry Group arose when discussing art's role in community

development, foregrounding differences between the two aspects (the process and product) and the importance of understanding both:

#6: I think it also needs to be defined or stated that art isn't always a physical thing—not commodity based all the time—but it is actions as well ...

#10 ... And that the creative process is more the ...

#6: The journey it takes ... (IG2.3, p.16)

The above quote underscores the division between processes and products—one is intangible and action-based, and the other is a tangible commodity. Understanding each component's contribution to resilience enables utilizing the arts to creatively and strategically build healthy and sustainable communities.

When prompted to explore differences between art as a creative process and the art work, a participant in the Artists' Inquiry Group underscored that a critical distinction is the social inequity associated products:

As soon as we start talking 'art as a specific product' then we're engaging in a commodity based structure, and as soon as it's commodity based then we have to deal with elitism, class and everything that goes with it. Because if it's a commodity, some people can have it, some people can't. That's how a commodity works (IG2.3, #10, p.3).

Later in the same session one member of the Artists' Inquiry Group focused on the experience of engaging in creative processes in comparison to the product:

Art making is a creative outlet for the family or the person. It's not necessarily producing art in the sense that art is often a commodity. There's an experience that's gained from it. A person may make a memory box or something in a therapeutic setting. It's not something that they'll ever want to sell. It's a product that has symbolic meaning for them. It's a concrete item. But the thing that's most important is not that they have this item afterward, but that they have all this time and intention that they put behind making it. So that's the part—the creative part—the thinking and the planning and the figuring and making and the allowing yourself to make it work (IG2.3, # 6, p.4).

Consultations with Indigenous participants highlight the interconnected roles creative process and products play in cultural continuity and social cohesion. These artists underscore the significant role the intangible benefits, embedded in creation processes, play in retaining, preserving and promoting traditional arts and culture³⁵. Art making is essential to the survival of their communities; it is the means of transferring knowledge and maintaining traditions. Stories and language are shared when making cultural products, keeping legends alive while strengthening individual and collective identity

³⁵ Artist-led sector planning: Sioux Lookout, the three fly-in First Nation communities.

and belonging and intergenerational cohesion. Artifacts are imbued with cultural meaning that serve to support cultural ways through daily use and/or ceremonies. The products also expose others to Indigenous cultural perspectives and traditions.

Artist colleagues were consulted to gain deeper insight into the process/product division as it began to surface during the Inquiry Groups. They indicate the delineation is essential to understanding creative practice and the arts, in general, and its role in society, in particular. Practice is fundamentally about 'problem solving', personal or otherwise, within the context of the world; and the material expression of it. Unpacked, their depiction closely aligns with Carter's (2004) and Malpas' (1999) articulation of the arts as 'a vehicle', i.e. an exploratory tool to understand and individualize oneself in relation to, yet separate from, place. Artist colleagues contend creative processes are personal experiences that explore one's interior world. The processes are intangible, internal, time-sensitive and spatial, comprised of 'conversations' between oneself and the materials. They refer to the inquiring and reflexive nature of creative practice as a 'messy' process of investigation, reflection and learning that facilitates sorting out and finding meaning through deconstructing one's own and/or current societal values and perceptions, leading to new and/or deeper knowledge of situations and circumstances. Most importantly they note, creative processes are transformational, fostering the capacity to envision alternative responses, ways of being and understanding of the world. The process is experienced through the manipulation of materials—an integral part of the dialogical journey through which meaning is manifested. The outcome, the material product, captures the creative process experience, enabling sharing learnings, thereby sparking and/or challenging others' perspective or values, in addition to being a cultural product in and of itself that serves a number of social and economic roles.

Artists participating in the professional development workshops, particularly Kenora's consultation, verified and further deepened this theme. They describe creative processes as: an inner dialogue; a journey that connects to one's creative forces, or higher self; and meditative work involving intuition, and unconscious and conscious decision-making processes. They are emergent and transformative, enabling one to step back from daily life and see the bigger picture, fostering the ability to address, process and find meaning in life's changing contexts.

Artist participants across the research cycles refer to a point during the creative processes when awareness or deeper understanding breaks through, 'bubbles up' or 'the light suddenly dawns' revealing new perspectives about relationships and/or materials. Sometimes it leads to incremental perceptual shifts in attitudes, expectations and/or beliefs that may or may not be immediately

obvious. Other times transformation is monumental and rocks one's foundation.³⁶ Descriptions of this nature—transformative, experiential learning and deepening understanding of oneself—resonate with Dirkx, Mezirow and Cranton (2006), Taylor (2000) and Imel (1998), confirming the important link between transformative learning and increased awareness of one's frames of reference, autonomy and resilience is also applicable in rural locales.

Reflection on artists' dialogues regarding the roles and contributions of creative processes and products underscore their separate yet intertwined role. Creative processes make sense and meaning, producing understanding and knowledge that underpin innovation and change. They give voice to one's inner world, build capacity to discern oneself and cultural values, and bring forth new ideas that facilitate reshaping and/or strengthening cultural identity and continuity. The products are part of the dialogical journey through which meaning is manifested and disseminated. Summarized, creative processes generate meaning and products communicate such. Collectively, creative processes and products facilitate bonding relationships with oneself, essential in developing healthy connections to others (Malpas, 1999) through sharing perspectives, learnings, and inquiry, increasing the quality of life and contributing to the economy.

Dialogue focused on the lure of artistic endeavors—why people are increasingly choosing the arts as their preferred means of engagement in the life of the community—indicate creative processes, i.e. experiential learning, is the key driver of *continued* engagement. One artist (FG.5, F2, p.13) states “[Art] it's a kind of wisdom machine” referring to its ability to continually illuminate and generate rewarding experiences, encouraging further participation. This iconic quote captures the essence of practice variously expressed by many artists engaged in the research. Insights, knowledge and investigative, design, and technical skills are accrued through exploration of the materials. Working through a ‘problem’ often leads to many new ideas worth following up in future sessions, thus, there is always ‘unfinished work’, and further inquiry drawing people back to the studio (Carter, 2004). Moreover, the sheer satisfaction of making things, the process of conceptualizing and finding solutions leading to the creation of a tangible object is often challenging, but extremely rewarding³⁷. These aforementioned resilience characteristics, i.e. insight, perseverance, problem-solving, excreta, are cited by participants regardless of the intended use of the art work—whether it is for themselves, for gifting, for bartering and/or for the marketplace—and do not appear to influence peoples' desire, passion, necessity and/or pleasure in the production of goods.

³⁶ Professional development workshops: Kenora; Manitoulin Island; Wawa.

³⁷ Focus Groups: 4, 5; Artist-led sector planning: Elliot Lake; the three fly-in First Nation communities; Sioux Lookout, Chapleau; Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa; Artist colleagues.

Furthermore, the collective responses of artists hailing from a variety of backgrounds, practices and cultures suggest these resilience benefits are *inherent in engagement* regardless of: skill level; discipline; genre of work; the number of years involved in the arts; the volume of production; and/or the amount of income generated from the arts. The findings underscore the efficacy of the arts as a broad-based community development strategy—it fosters peoples’ capacity and agency to adapt to challenges even with limited and/or entry level engagement.

Moreover, many artists note that skill sets acquired from engaging in the arts build capacity in other areas of the life, spilling over into social and work spheres (Schein, 2004; Savory-Gordon, 2003). Transferable skills gleaned from individual creative practice are numerous, including increased curiosity, the ability to conceptualize and articulate ideas, critical reflection, better organizational capacity, more self-confidence and pride in tackling new tasks, honed interpersonal communication and presentation skills, capacity for self-directed learning and leadership roles, and greater business sense³⁸. In the North, given the part-time nature of practice there is a potentially large spillover effect into ‘day jobs’ further generating resilience as artists carry on their daily routines and businesses (Ortiz and Broad, 2007). Within the context of the region’s subsistence economies, acquiring skill sets that are transferable to work in other fields significantly contributes to maintaining a livelihood, enabling people to remain in the area. The findings, therefore, bolster research indicating the arts’ spillover to other domains, and thus, their value, extends well beyond economic benchmarks and models tied to perceiving the sector as providing primarily private gains (Sacco, 2011). Recognizing the significant role spillover plays in rural, subsistence economies further substantiates arguments for valuing the contributions of the arts within the broader community context. The sector not only builds individual adaptive capacity but impacts on community level transitioning.

Engaging in artistic endeavours significantly contributes to resilience in a multitude of ways. It opens the door to a wealth of immediate individual benefits, building intangible characteristics associated with resilience while simultaneously creating products that contribute to the quality of life and household income, and fosters the development of localized creative and culture-based economies. Creative practice, therefore, creates the *space and means*, the transitioning space—the intersections, the junctures—for transformation that underpins resilience, and the processes that facilitate such. It provides the psychological room, the time, and the physical place to engage with oneself and others through emergent, experiential and transformational learning processes that

³⁸ Artists’ Inquiry Group; Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa, Manitoulin Island; Artist colleagues.

facilitate managing change, discerning and illuminating relationships, providing new, deeper and/or different perspectives while sorting out values, and building creative capacity. Thus, transformation lies at the core of creative practice: i) transformation of people, through generating ideas and new perceptions that shift cultural values and identity; and ii) transformation of materials into objects. Figure 7 depicts the relationship between creative practice, processes and products and the transformation of artists and materials, through individual creative practice that increase agency and resilience.

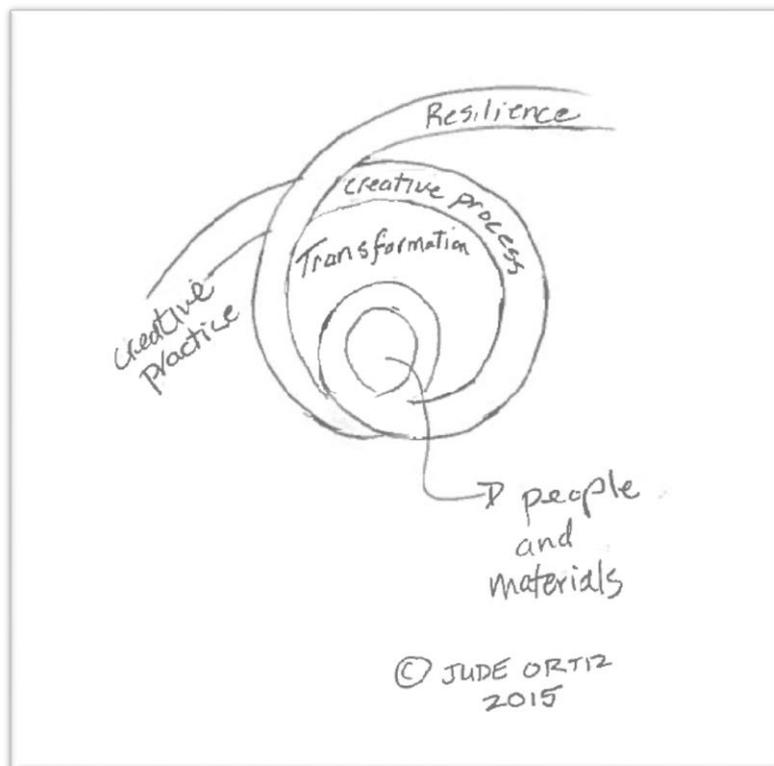


Figure 7: The Transformative Process of Creative Practice

The study deepened participants' understanding of the impact core aspects of creative practice has on resilience from a system's perspective, particularly the separate, yet intertwined role creative processes and products play in the sector's dynamic value chain, and their influence on artists and the broader community. Reflection on the contribution of creative processes and products to individual resilience and their spillover effect sparked the realization that there are four elements embedded in *two concurrent and intertwined development streams* that contribute to resilience and are critical to understanding the benefits of the arts to community development, in general, and transitioning capacity in particular. They are: i) creative process and products; and ii) individual and community resilience. Creative processes or products alone do not build individual or community resilience, but rather, the *interaction of these four aspects*. Creative processes and products each

have a role to play providing important yet *different* benefits to *both* individual and community level resilience. The 'two stream' development concept (process/product; individual/ community) and their interrelationships underpin the organization and analysis of the research findings, revealing the value of creative practice at different scales within and across the community system.

4.2 Challenges in Understanding Creative Practice

Diverse participants engaged in the research, overall, perceive the arts sector not to be well understood as a profession and/or an expression of creative endeavour, negatively impacting on artists' identity and belonging, limiting opportunities for broad-based engagement in the life of the community and the development of localized economies. Challenges to recognizing and appreciating the contribution of creative practice to resilience are organized into five broad categories: i) the internal nature of creative processes; ii) the enduring perception of the arts as an elitist activity; iii) the education system's rather nominal commitment to arts education, resulting in a dearth of qualified teachers; iv) the pervasiveness of art in daily life; and v) capacity to articulate the value of arts engagement. The majority of barriers are seen as outcomes of cultural values reflected in government policy and community development priorities that frame the arts primarily as an economic product, rather than an integral part of life, of which one part is the economic sphere.

The Artists' Inquiry Group underscored a primary challenge to understanding creative practice, specifically, the creative process, in contrast to the product, is the location where the activity occurs. A significant portion of the creative process is internal, and thus, remains hidden making it extremely difficult for others to grasp the full nature, depth of experience and/or value of the inquiry. Moreover, these artists state there is a cavernous difference between understanding creative processes and viewing the end product. Those not engaged in the arts may have little or no connection to and/or knowledge of the creative journey undertaken to arrive at the finished goods, and may not relate to the finished products, particularly when the goods bear nominal, if any, resemblance to the experience. One artist conjuring up a comparison between creative processes and sports illustrating the challenge people may face states:

To me that's the problem with art. Art with the equivalency to sport is like going out to the hockey game and you get there and you see the billboard with the end score. And you don't get to see the game. You just get to see the end score, and that's it and that's all we're going to get to see. And that doesn't work because, why would you bother? There's no interest in that. Where, if you were to engage them in the process, then something else happens (IG.2.4, #10, p.18).

This passage encapsulates one of the most significant challenges underlying this research—how to convey the sector’s value beyond the product. As outcomes of internal processes, products lie juxtaposed between the artist and others. People are presented with a tangible outcome representative of a largely internal creative process. They are looking at a concretized process, a past tense, often initiated with a purpose they are not privy to, and developed in a context and place they cannot access. The products may be layered in meaning, or a ‘language’ that the artist understands but may appear to be in code, leading others to state they do not understand art, and thus, do not value it, and by extension, do not consume it. Undoubtedly many people, regardless of their engagement or not, understand and appreciate art.

An Artists’ Inquiry Group member (IG2.3, #6, p.3) raised the pointed question “In this model [community development] ... do you have to be an artist to be making the art?” The portrayal of the arts as an elitist notion, i.e. that only ‘artists’ make art, framing creation as something few people are capable of undertaking and restricted to certain social classes is another factor hindering understanding creative practice. This perspective fosters social division, undervalues and marginalizes the importance of art as an activity, therapeutic, recreational or otherwise, negatively impacting on peoples’ inclination to engage in what members of the Artists’ Inquiry Group consider to be an integral part of life. One member states:

... for how many decades have they been told that it’s an elitist pursuit? I try to advocate that it’s un-education that needs to occur and not education. They need to let go of things they’ve been taught and perceive things for themselves. The sad thing is, because it was so based in elitism there was never recognition of the fact that—oh yes, you can [make art] (IG2.4, #10, pp.12-13).

When revisiting this theme in the following session another artist suggests everyone has the ability to make art. Focusing primarily on the production of art as a commodity, however, leads to class divisions:

If everybody’s engaged in that creative process, everybody’s engaged in the art and it has very little to do with class structure. I really think is more interesting than this high end art, because then you’re just making more commodity. It’s really funny because in a sense you’re creating an [high end] object to make yourself poorer because they attribute value to it, and then it’s going up the chain to someone who’s attributing more value to it and gaining more capital off of it and you’re getting nothing. And the more that you do that, the less you’re getting for your work, the less your labour and everything else are worth and the more they’ve got (IG2.4, #10, p.5).

The speaker also underscores challenges artists face earning a living creating aesthetic work within the current market structure. Although artists that create elite objects represent a very narrow field of production within creative and culture-based economies they, however, play an important societal role (Gielen *et al.*, 2014).

These professional artists acknowledge their field does require standards and is replete with gatekeepers and structures that serve to create an economy. As community developers, however, they advocate for everyone to engage in art as an activity, recognizing the important role it plays, first, in health and well-being, social capital development and innovation, and second, in the outputs, the products that, for those who wish to participate in the marketplace, provide the foundation for localized economies that define a sense of place (Duxbury, 2014; Hawkes, 2001).

The school system is seen as greatly shaping peoples' attitudes toward creativity and the arts including whether or not people perceived themselves to understand art and/or be good at it. The education system, its constraints, teacher qualifications and perceived limited understanding of art is a significant concern. Over the course of the study artists, developers, and art advocates alike spoke of negative personal experiences deterring engagement³⁹. In the current context of school art making appears to have unwritten rules that should be followed to be successful without explicitly being told what the rules are. The Artists' Inquiry Group members' argue the current school climate stifles creativity and generates a fear of 'getting it wrong' within the context of a graded activity. One artist states:

... it's public school. I don't know how many times I've heard it said "Well Billy, clouds aren't orange." That's the problem right there. We've all seen orange clouds because we've all seen a sunset. So how can you tell a kid what they see and what they don't see and what is right and what is wrong? That's inevitably where you're getting "I don't get it" because we've instigated these 'standards' within art. I understand standards are required in certain things, but when it comes to creative process, those things can't be imposed because starting from there you end up with adults who aren't willing to cross those barriers as freely as they should be allowed to. "I'm not allowed to cross this barrier so therefore I can't understand it" (IG2.4, #10, p.14).

The inherent, emergent and unstructured nature of creative processes and subjective bent is flagged as an additional challenge in understanding art and the risk factor associated with engagement. The Artists' Inquiry Group explains:

³⁹Developers' Inquiry Group; Artists' Inquiry Group; Artist-led sector planning: Elliot Lake; the three fly-in First Nation communities; Sioux Lookout; Chappleau; Temagami.

#10: [Sports] engages a structure that we're comfortable with. Whether you're good at what you're doing ... you're engaging in a group of people ... and everybody for the most part is willing to do that. Why?

#6: But that's the thing, right, why is that everyone can deal with a sports function, but you can't deal with an art function?

#10: Because it's the difference between physical and mental injury, I think (IG2.4, p.17).

'Mental injury' is a considerable risk artists take when portraying one's personal perspectives in the public realm. Art is subjective and may not align with others' perspectives and feedback is not always constructive.

School structure and diminishing class time are also factors contributing to people being less familiar with creative endeavours:

#6: ... art is a big thing in kindergarten ... then slowly sport starts to take over, right? And art becomes marginalized ...

#10: And what do sports do? They build communities. They're a great community building structure. Whereas the creative process gets minimized, basically, because you might have a half an hour of art once a week as a class when you're in grade school, but you have recess every day, you have games that you play every day—you have organized sporting things after school ... (IG2.4, p.17).

Three fly-in First Nation communities (Cycle Four) strongly recommend arts inclusion in school curricula as a means of cultural survival. Figure 8 depicts material cultural goods cited as important to Indigenous cultural continuance. They are moose hide mitts trimmed with rabbit fur, a muskrat hat, and a talking stick used in sharing circles, providing space for each participant to have a voice.



Figure 8: Traditional Cultural Goods, Kingfisher Lake

Dialogue centring on reintegrating and/or expanding existing art curricula, first emerging during the Artists' Inquiry Group, was reiterated in subsequent consultations that extended beyond the arts sector. Many municipal professionals, developers and art advocates participating in the artist-led sector planning (Cycle Four) reinforced the calls. Formal education is an integral part of an arts ecology that supports the development creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship, sustainable livelihoods and resilient communities. Young children are a priority age group for instilling appreciation of and skills in the arts for three key reasons: i) increased creative thinking and the capacity to transcend mental barriers contributes to health and well-being; ii) parents and other family members will engage via children's activities; and iii) they serve as pathways for intergenerational and cross-cultural learning and sharing contributing to diversity, social cohesion and continuance (McCarthy *et al.*, 2004).

A further factor hindering valuing the sector identified in the Developers' and Artists' Inquiry Groups, is the pervasiveness of art in daily life. Members argue people are engaging in art continuously and unconsciously because it is society's very nature. Culture is built on communicating with each other—people are embedded in it. One artist states:

In a way [art] it's the root of language. Think about when we talk. Language is like a dance—the intonation is singing. If we start writing we're just drawing. So inevitably, we're participating in art no matter what we're doing when we communicate. It's the way we carry ourselves; it's theatrical. And all of these aspects of the arts, it's used every day by every person all the time. And we're very adept at them or we wouldn't be able to be doing what we're doing right now. How do you get people to realize that? (IG2.3, #10, p.20).

Seeding this theme to a few members of the Indigenous community during the symposium reinforced this perspective. There is no comparable word for 'art' in their language—it is inseparable from life. A couple of participants referenced the residential schools' prohibition of children speaking their own language, essentially removing them from their culture, cutting them off from 'being and belonging' as an example of an assimilation strategy.

Language limitation and the capacity to articulate the arts is another critical factor hindering understanding the sector. The Artists' Inquiry Group explains 'Art' is used to describe various types of art-making and levels of expertise, with each person bringing their own meaning to the word. Practice encompasses a wide range of activities, and a large body of information and knowledge that is hard to pin down. Art as a practice can be very confusing with its various categories and genres. People refer to high art, low art and mass art and there are now many interdisciplinary practices that

are emerging and demanding dialogue and new descriptors⁴⁰. Generally, when people hear the generic word 'art' it conjures up personal meaning and associated experiences which may differ greatly from what artists are referring to, undergirding the necessity of articulating practice to foster broader cultural literacy (Wood, Landry and Bloomfield, 2006).

The necessity to express oneself through art, visually and verbally, resurfaced in various dialogues, becoming a key aspect of the research. The ability to articulate one's inner thoughts, the ideas underpinning the work, the experience of making, and the importance of the arts to those less engaged is a significant challenge. The lack of opportunity to develop these communication skills, many Artists' Inquiry Group and professional development workshops note, leaves them grappling with how to convey meaning to others, particularly across sectors. Participants representing arts organizations are equally concerned regarding their ability to advocate, and thus, compete for limited resources within the economic arena. A number of community developers concur that while they may be supportive of culture, dedicating resources to the arts within the current economic climate would require substantive arguments that currently do not exist and/or are not being presented⁴¹. Identifying, naming and translating the value of the arts' contribution to resilience in ways that are meaningful to other sectors are aims of this research.

In summary, many research participants grasp the challenges of understanding the arts and in its contribution to community development. Diverse people strongly advocate for increased understanding of the value of artistic endeavours in and of itself, autonomously, outside of economic frameworks in which the arts are typically perceived (Gielen, *et al.*, 2014). Participants argue broad-based engagement in the arts, embedded in the school system, and in life in general, would lead to greater understanding of creation processes and products, and their respective roles in building resilience. This in turn, would generate a significantly larger population of creative people, and a well-educated audience fuelling demand for local cultural products.

4.3 Increasing Agency and Adaptive Capacity

The following section analyzes research participants' understanding of individual creative practice in context to characteristics identified in resilience-related literature as supporting agency, adaptation and transitioning through change. The benefits of engagement are many and diverse. Three broad categories where the arts contribute to resilience are: i) building creative capacity for ongoing micro

⁴⁰ Artists' Inquiry Group: #4.

⁴¹ Artist-led sector planning; Symposium.

and macro level problem-solving; ii) maintaining health and well-being, particularly during times of stress; and iii) fostering identity reformation and belonging that underpin managing and navigating changing contexts.

4.3.0 Building Adaptive Capacity

A lot of this [art making] is creative problem solving. Every moment there's a problem and you're always trying to make it work. And that's what the struggle is—whether it's your own fears or a technical thing. How do you get such and such to work in such and such a manner? You have to get it done and make it worthwhile (IG2.3, #6, p.12).

Implicit in adapting is the necessity for, and the capacity to, respond differently. This ability is fostered by increased awareness and consequently agency that triggers a series of decisions, leading to new pathways and opportunities for taking alternative action. This section outlines participants' understanding of ways artistic practice, specifically, unstructured, emergent processes, support continual adaptation through: self-directed learning; adapting in real-time; building critical reflection skills; increasing empowerment, perseverance and pride through the creation of objects; overcoming the fear of change; and diversifying sources of income through spillover to other domains and spheres.

The Artists' Inquiry Group provides insight into the resilience-related benefits accrued to creative practice. It involves decision-making processes that demand generating alternative actions in seeking solutions, thus increasing one's sense of agency. These artists underscore there is no one pre-determined creative process 'rule book'—it is self-directed learning. Each person is immersed in a dynamic engagement following an intuitive and/or conscious decision-making path that leads to the emergence of self-discovery and a product (Carter, 2004). Artist colleagues concur that creation processes are individualistic, imbued with a desire, a need, or a compulsion to reach a goal. The end goal is not necessarily defined in rigid terms, and the original aim may be discarded or put on hold as new ideas emerge; however, there is an emotional involvement, and a level of commitment to work through a 'problem':

#6: We usually start from a really basic fundamental—these are the formalistic aspects that you have to work with—and then from there things evolve and change and become more creative.

#10: ... it's always got a goal. The whole process has a goal... [we are] striving to deliver something. if you start engaging on all those emotional and creative levels then you end up with something really interesting that's going to engage people (IG2.3, p.6-7).

The capacity for continual adaptation to changing situations is a particularly significant resilience benefit fostered and strengthened through the arts. Practice is founded on emergence—creation and innovation are not pipelines, i.e. there is no one ‘rule book’ to follow. Creativity and revelation, integral to the process, occurs at different points or intersections along the journey, inspiring changing courses of action, and impacting on the product’s outcome. Thus, the inherent nature of creative processes necessitates *continued* engagement and adaptation, in real time, as the object unfolds. Summarizing, artists’ dialogues reveal it demands the ability to simultaneously: follow multiple inquiry threads and forecast where divergent solutions may lead; revisit questions or concerns at numerous junctures; incorporate insights as they emerge; adapt responses and/or change directions; and review and assess the impact of one’s decisions on the emerging art work—while maintaining one’s underlying values and the integrity of the materials. Creative practice, therefore, develops the capacity for independent learning, micro and macro conceptualization skills, the ability to be flexible yet retain values when solving complex problems, and builds perseverance and skill sets for managing and processing change while working through unknowns and rapidly shifting contexts—all characteristics recognized as increasing one’s resilience. Furthermore, practice is both self-developing and self-reinforcing. Artists in the professional development workshops and artist colleagues purport engagement strengthens resilience characteristics and agency, and thus, increases the capacity for more sustainable livelihoods through building artistic sensibility and production capacity; specifically, more clarity and speed in sorting out ideas and foreseeing where decisions may lead, and the ability to skillfully make things in less time.

Engagement in the arts builds critical reflection and strong dialogical skills underpinning the *quality* of engagement that directly impact on the goods produced. Artist colleagues emphasize one’s creative capacity—creative thinking, critical analysis and technical skills—shape the ability to envision ideas, push the envelope and create products that capture the intended outcome resulting in ‘good art or good Art’ regardless of whether the products are for personal expression, for gifting and/or for the marketplace. Such competencies increase the positive experiences and resilience-related benefits associated with making. Although engagement supports the development of these skills access to informal and formal education, at all levels and in all disciplines, furthers creative capacity and critical reflection which are foundational components of artistic practice and innovation. Diverse participants lament there are far too few educational opportunities in the North citing it as a ‘missing link’, a limiting factor, negatively impacting on engagement and sustaining a

practice⁴². A few artists in the professional development workshops have completed formal skills training outside their home communities and are leveraging it by learning ‘on the job’, or ‘learning from doing’. A number of artists indicate they are self-taught out of necessity, honing their craft through trial and error and the occasional YouTube video or blog posting. Perseverance is a term these artists closely associate with creative practice⁴³.

There is little arts and resilience literature investigating engagement in creative activity as a means of overcoming fear associated with change. This theme, however, emerged in the Artists’ Inquiry Group (IG2.3, #6, p.12) and is captured in this section’s opening passage: “*whether it’s your own fears or a technical thing*”. Fear is embedded in the situation one finds oneself, i.e. the issue one wants to address, and the concern of having the skills or the ability to succeed. Fear also emerged in a later Artists’ Inquiry Group session when discussing challenges arising from the organic nature of art making, connecting back to concept of there being no ‘rule book’:

6: ... with golf there are rules and a format that you follow, there are finite combinations, whereas, art doesn’t have the same rule base. You can have risk within the rule base of sport ... [but] within art it’s all risk, with very few rules, so that can be really scary and intimidating to most people. Whereas sport, everyone has engaged in some kind of physical activity at some point. That’s why it’s so successful. There’s rules—structure.

10: That’s the nice thing with something like hockey, there’s that structure—you know what you’re going to see, you can engage with the structure before you even engage with the game (IG2.4, p.22).

The above passage suggests the unstructured nature of creative practice—the fear, risk and uncertainty, provides insight into why people may not choose to engage in the arts. Artists, however, readily delve into and experience the unknown each time they engage, relying upon themselves to solve social and/or material-based concerns, thereby increasing resilience. The research, therefore, indicates creative practice fosters the ability to overcome the fear of change, building trust in oneself to work through and respond to emerging contexts, and reach a favourable resolution. Change is inherent in life and critical in transitioning, thus engaging in the arts fosters these foundational skills.

Empowerment garnered through manifesting ideas into tangible products is another important resilience building characteristic credited to the inherent nature of creative practice. Many artists participating in the professional development workshops describe the processes of bringing

⁴² Artist-led sector planning sessions: every session, Advisory Group; Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa, Steering Committee; Symposium; Organizational peer networking: Sault Ste. Marie, Conseil des Arts de Hearst, 4elements Living Arts.

⁴³ Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa; Manitoulin Island; Symposium.

concepts into reality as extremely powerful. Furthermore, engagement feeds and satisfies one's natural instinct to challenge and improve oneself⁴⁴. Moreover, persevering through challenging creative processes increases pride and a sense of success by overcoming adversity, positively impacting on self-worth, agency, and a sense of control over one's life. Practice is also seen as a crucial outlet for creativity particularly when there is limited opportunity for it, for example, when employment is less than satisfying and/or one is not working at all. These situations are reflective of Northern Ontario's context. Artistic practice, therefore, validates artists' creative identity, an important aspect of individuality, sense of self, and health and well-being conferring with Brault (2005) and Cooley (2003) regarding the important role the arts play in daily life.

In rural and subsistence economies, having a variety of skills and/or transferable ones is advantageous to maintaining a livelihood, particularly when employment is becoming scarcer and short-term contract work more prevalent. Artist colleagues suggest a number of ways creative capacity may be utilized to leverage more equitable or different employment, and/or generate community wealth in other realms, echoing Markusen and King's (2003) *The Artistic Dividend: The Arts' Hidden Contributions to Regional Development*. For example, competencies underpinning manufacturing are prevalent in those who create craft, i.e. artists know how to conceptualize, design and make three-dimensional (3D) objects. Certain art making skills may be suitable for larger scale projects, and thus, could assist other sectors' design and production needs. Furniture might be one given the availability of suitable wood types in Northern Ontario. Value-added products are in need of development. They foster creativity, leading to distinctive place-based economies, thereby increasing control over the community's resources and destiny (Stark and Robinson, 2010).

In summary, the research findings indicate that in the North the arts are primarily a self-educating process that builds resilience-related characteristics for creative capacity and continual adaptation, and thus, resilience. Engagement increases observational, reflective and/or deconstruction skills that stimulate the imagination, transcending rigid intellectual and physical behaviours through divergent, lateral thinking and analysis that are materialized through innovative solutions (Brault, 2005). It increases one's self-reliance and agency by persevering through the constant demand of problem-solving within the context of uncertainty and evolving landscapes, contributing to overcoming the fear of change. The impact of creative capacity building and continual adaptation on organizations and the community garnered through engaging in artistic endeavours will be presented in Chapter Five and Chapter Six respectively.

⁴⁴ Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa.

4.3.1 Maintaining Health and Well-being

But it's the pleasure you get out of it—you can't let that go (FG.3, #1, p.18).

Fostering self-reliance and developing strategies for maintaining health and well-being is particularly crucial in rural contexts and the underserved, subsistence economies of Northern Ontario where there are considerable fewer resources upon which to draw on in times of need, in comparison to larger urban centres and metropolitan areas. Prevalent throughout the study is artists' passion for creative practice as a core aspect of the quality of life, reaping a wide range of health-related benefits revolving around joy and pleasure, maintaining balance, relationships and mental acuity, and enriching others' lives.

Dialogue centering on *how* individual creative practice impacts on resilience elicited many references throughout the research to the arts' well-recognized ability to transcend language barriers, facilitating communication across diverse groups. The following Artists' Inquiry Group quote provides deeper insight into the critical role it plays as a vehicle for expression:

The most important thing about art is not being able to pin it down as a linguistic term, in that, there's a reason that we're participating in these processes—is that language fails. We need art. If language was so successful we wouldn't require this or require that, because we'd be able to express it linguistically. But I can't, so I'm going to engage in a physical process that will stand in for something I could never express linguistically. I think that's a really important distinction for the arts. Overbearingly, language fails, so we're going to do this, and communicate this way (IG2.3, #10, p. 9).

This perspective foregrounds the significant value of creative practice, i.e. *experience transcends language*. Art provides a direct human to human conduit—*expressing and communicating, sharing, my world with your world without the limitations of language*. Thus, creative practice provides the space and the means for concretizing emergent thoughts, reflection and/or deeper understanding, and sharing insights through an expressive medium. The ability to formulate concepts and translate them into physical objects that enable sharing with others is a significant component of one's sense of self and connectedness to others, critically impacting on health and well-being and resilience.

Learning through inquiry and friendship, (learning circles and learning communities) is another significant component in the matrix of benefits and value credited to creative practice. Artists in the Kenora professional development workshop and in a few symposium discussions groups, in particular, underscore the importance of inquiry to keeping investigate curiosity and creative juices flowing over one's lifetime. Artistic activity also provides the opportunity for new friendships with diverse people that often hold different values, enlarging one's perspective, and expanding social

relations and networks that are critical to a sense of belonging (Anwar McHenry, 2011; Cooley, 2003; Tajfel and Turner, 1986). The relatively low engagement barriers (e.g. the cost, entry level skills) enable a wide spectrum of people particularly, younger and older citizens, to remain mentally and socially active, contributing to individual and community level health (Anwar McHenry, 2011; Cooley, 2003).

Artistic practice also increases the quality of life by providing precious time away from daily routines, for example, as a retreat, removing oneself from the stresses and concerns of daily life, particularly during times of uncertainty. It is time for oneself, on one's own terms—without judgement—compared to employment or team-based and/or competitive activities⁴⁵. A few of the professional development workshop participants indicate creative practice is an individual activity that can be taken up, conceivably, on the spur of the moment. One participant 'squeezes it in' between growing responsibilities of job demands, caring for children and aging parents. Another participant suggests that just knowing the arts is there, simply looking at one's studio and/or thinking about future practice, is extremely beneficial to maintaining a deeper connection to oneself in between practice times. The ability to engage, relatively spontaneously, even if only for a very short time, is a significant benefit of the arts in comparison to many other activities⁴⁶. Furthermore, the variety of disciplines and its interconnectedness with daily life contribute to growth and development over one's lifetime. A focus group participant acclaims:

It's always nice to know you don't have to stay in the one mode. You might end up being a photographer or a painter... I think that is the most important thing of all [is that] the arts flow in and out and around. It's all part of the river of life. It's that kind of flow that should always be there (FG.3, F1, p.17).

Engagement in the arts provides a sense of centredness, contributing to maintaining balance particularly during stressful times when fear of the unknown and/or uncertainty tends to consume one's thoughts. Observation of the professional development workshop dialogues suggest that when there is a sense of life being messy, confusing and/or challenging, creative practice helps to connect to one's higher self or consciousness, instilling calmness and increasing confidence that things will become clearer, there is light at the end of the tunnel, understanding will emerge if one lets go of the controlling part of one's mind. When faced with life's many challenges the benefits associated with creative practice that Kenora artists cite include feeding, nurturing, reviving and invigorating oneself and one's soul. They are grounding and/or serve as a touchstone, for example, when

⁴⁵ Focus Groups: 1, 2, 3, 5.

⁴⁶ Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa.

employment is less than satisfying, when unemployed, and/or experiencing a loss, which is particularly relevant to Northern Ontario's context.

During dialogue centred on the impact of arts engagement on health and well-being one focus group participant (FG.3, #1, p.9) offers "I attended one event where I was part of a workshop and tried something and that gave me a little spark and with many other sparks, it's kept me going." A further example of the positive benefits of practice is tied to teaching, specifically, the personal motivation and the satisfaction of assisting others. A focus group participant (FG.3, #3, p.18) states "I think it's the feedback from people that keeps me going. That's why I keep teaching." For others creative practice is a life line. A focus group artist (FG.3, #3, p.18) explains her friend's story "She said her mother had died the past year and she was a mess. She said she will be back next year [to exhibit] ... art's what keeps me going." A few Indigenous participants claim the arts grounds them during times of stress, uncertainty and change by knowing support is nearby, referencing drawing on the wisdom of elders and the strength of tradition as coping mechanisms⁴⁷.

Creative practice assists people to manage the isolation of living in the North, in general, and time apart from families and friends, in particular. For participants in the Wawa professional development workshops and the symposium creating reconnects them to their mother, relative or friend who passed on traditional arts, heritage craft and/or home-making related skills regardless of where the teacher may live now and/or if the person has passed on. Artistic activity generates a sense of a continued meaningful relationship with the mentor over time, and as the learnings become more integrated into the maker's identity, the memories and time spent together and the knowledge remain a vital part of their own practice. A couple of artists deepened this theme commenting that while home life was difficult, the 'good times' revolved around the arts; specifically, learning to draw or sew with family members⁴⁸. Artistic activity also contributes to maintaining health and well-being by passing time with 'busy hands and active minds'⁴⁹. People draw on the arts to fill time productively in a number of circumstances including when waiting for family to return from working in distant communities or provinces; when travelling between locales for work and/or personal reasons; and when attending to care in homes, hospitals and/ doctor's waiting room, referencing the shortage of medical services, including doctors and nurses in the North, thus requiring long waits and/or having to leave the area.

⁴⁷ Artist-led sector planning: the three fly-in First Nation communities; Professional development workshop: Wawa.

⁴⁸ Wawa and Manitoulin professional development workshops.

⁴⁹ Wawa professional development workshop and Symposium.

Furthermore, for many artists the goods or ‘treasures’ they produce greatly contribute to making new places bearable for loved ones or friends during short and/or longer times away. One participant in a symposium discussion group spoke of making quilts utilizing fabric collected over a lifetime and/or reminiscent of a particular location that instils meaning and a sense of connectedness for, and between, the maker and the receiver. In this way, blankets and wall hangings conjure up and become memory-keepers and testaments to relationships⁵⁰ (Hushka, 2012). This sparked comments by other artists expressing the important gift-giving aspects of their practice, i.e. the pleasure of being able to enrich someone’s life by making them something special. The Developers’ Inquiry Group brought forth another important connection between art and memory—the role art plays in providing hope in the lives of the homeless or families living in poverty:

There was a homeless person that we visited that had a Group of Seven painting, no not a painting, but I mean you know, cut it out of magazine, put it in a cheap dollar store frame and then we asked, wow that’s a Group of Seven. ‘I wouldn’t know’. I just like it. What does it do for you? ‘It makes me think of home’. There you go (IG1.11, # 1, p.24).

A critical component of health and well-being is the ability to retain a sense of oneself garnered through cultural identity and heritage. Cultural continuance is a key reason for engagement and a benefit of practice most prevalently cited during the artist-led sector planning sessions and in the Wawa and Manitoulin Island professional development workshops. The significant role creative practice plays in preserving and transferring traditional knowledge, in particular, and building artistic, technical and business skills, in general, will be further discussed in Chapter Five.

The links between the arts and individual and community health and well-being were depended during the Developers’ Inquiry Group dialogues. The following quote captures one member’s comments when discussing ways to engage people in the community, speaking at length about art’s crucial role of fostering a healthy place, and the necessity of taking action to address barriers:

So why isn’t this community healthy? And a lot of it seems to come back to these cultural barriers within the community. It is an individual’s health and a community’s health and art does all the things we talked about. It can inspire. It can calm. It can make you laugh and it can also make you very angry and challenge your thinking about the world. Up to the last year, I’d never really seen it. But now it’s as plain as the nose on my face – the similarity between the individual human being’s physical and mental health and a community’s health and vibrancy. The same things are affected; stresses and things like that. And when you’re not listening to certain pains, it will get worse and worse. It does not just go away (IG1.12, #4, p.13-14).

⁵⁰ Developers’ Inquiry Group; Artists’ Inquiry Groups; Symposium.

During the same session another member indicated engaging people in the arts is a means to bridge divides and help the community move forward, suggesting rallying points could be public cultural statements, e.g. a community totem, flags or bagpipes. Research findings relating to the use of art in this capacity shall be presented in the following chapter.

Notably, irrespective of the socioeconomic reason for engaging in the arts the study indicates creative practice is an invaluable oasis that significantly increases health and well-being, in general, and during hectic and demanding times, in particular. Within Northern Ontario's context of escalating uncertainty, finding 'solid ground' and ways to maintain health becomes paramount. The arts play a critical role in this regard when other people may not be nearby and/or able to offer support perhaps due to situations they may be experiencing in their own worlds. The ability to find inner resolve and maintain a sense of oneself is key when families, friends and neighbours are experiencing shifting employment patterns or job loss necessitates relocating, thus breaking important ties. Moreover, a resounding factor driving engagement is joy and satisfaction—it is rewarding, self-validating, therapeutic and rejuvenating⁵¹. The aforementioned resilience-building attributes in this section are all invaluable aspects of health and well-being derived from internal, rather than external sources that significantly contribute to increased agency, particularly in rural locales. The arts, therefore, are an efficacious and valuable means of building resilience and contributing to others' health and well being in the process.

4.3.2 Fostering Identity and Belonging

Art is not just a product; it's a creative expression of the way people live (IG2.3, #6, p.1).

One of the many challenges people face when navigating times of social and economic upheaval is finding ways to retain a sense of identity. Historically, the arts have played an important role in the region's identity and research participants indicate they continue to significantly contribute to one's 'Northern Identity' and a sense of belonging and attachment to place during these challenging times.

The North has many archaeological sites of value which demonstrates a lengthy history of artists in this area and the strong relationship the region's Indigenous people have to creative practice. The sites are land-based visual histories that share stories. They mark time and events, noting places of significance for future generations, passing on important cultural knowledge. The record provides a

⁵¹ Artists' Inquiry Group; Focus Groups: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5; Artist-led sector planning: Elliot Lake; the three fly-in First Nation communities; Sioux Lookout; the Francophone community; Chapleau; Temagami; Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa; Symposium.

connection to ‘the land’ within the context of identity, a sense of history and belonging to locale. The Indigenous concept of the land includes the spiritual, physical, social and cultural aspects and connections to being⁵². It reflects the interconnectedness of Indigenous world views, and thus, is far more robust than the concept of ‘place’.

The Northern context is an integral part of the research. Reflection on the study’s dialogues indicate there is a strong sense that participants are particularly contextualized within the region’s geography—the vastness, ecological diversity and area’s beauty on the one hand, and the distance between communities, relationships with decision-making centred in the urban southern part of the province and the long and complex history between Anglophone, Indigenous and Francophone communities, on the other. Each cycle of research brought forth various aspects of the ‘Northern Identity’.

The video of regional artists, organizations and/or arts development created in Cycle Five provides insight into a number of ways identity is expressed through art and how location impacts on practice⁵³. Below are images and comments of three artists from the 30 people who participated in the video.



Figure 9: Stills from Video of Northern Artists

In Figure 9 the left image is a detail of one of Eric and Lisa Hanson’s guitars. The couple is based in Thunder Bay where they collaborate to make guitars under the name the Wild Honey Guitar Company. He builds the instruments and she designs, paints and applies beadwork to them. Eric states “We do things differently here. We’re not afraid to try new things” (Part One, 1:13 min).

⁵² NORDIK Institute Indigenous researchers.

⁵³ Symposium, Reflecting the North: *Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture* blog: <https://reflectingthenorth.wordpress.com>

The couple speaks of the reality of living in the North, such as the closest opportunity to purchase materials being a three-day wait via Canada Post.

The centre image in Figure 9 is a moose hide purse created by Yvonne Meawasige of Elliot Lake. She works with deer hide, moose hide, and animal fur to make mitts, jackets and handbags. After living in Toronto for 35 years she returned home, and within one week was put up on a sacred mountain for a fast during which she received a gift for working with hide (Part two, 4:12 min).

Figure 9 (right image) is a fused glass vessel made by Carson Merrifield of Pancake Bay, near Sault Ste. Marie. She moved back North because she really missed the trees, the rocks, and the bush which provides her inspiration. She and others in the area face a number of challenges advancing their businesses, seeking hands-on workshops due to many peoples' limited access to the internet and/or to computers (Part Two, 6:39).

Artist participants expressed a collective sense of the perceived role and contribution of the arts to community development, and challenges to raising the sector's profile and validity as a viable means of increasing individual and community resilience. Throughout the research, when discussing the significance of creative practice to building resilience, artists stated in numerous ways that engagement contributes to a foundational and fundamental sense of being human. It is expressed as 'I belong'—having a sense of where one fits into place—a sense of belonging to and feeling included in a larger collective, and therefore, one is not alone. Individual practice is sometimes presented as engendering a deep connection to oneself and others that is frequently associated with increased bonding, caring, mutual respect, reciprocity and attachment to place⁵⁴. Indigenous and Francophone participants in the artist-led sector planning consultations (Cycle Four) deepened the theme of art's role in identity formation, bringing forth a number of comments such as 'It is part of our culture; It is who we are'⁵⁵. For these two communities, in particular, the arts define them within their cultural heritage providing a strong sense of community and identity and belonging within a framework of tradition. Participants underscore that despite Canada having two official languages the Francophone community faces challenges to retaining cultural vibrancy and recognition of a 'founding nation' within a dominant Anglophone country⁵⁶. Indigenous culture has been continually challenged by colonization. It remains strong; however, it is in flux intergenerationally and across

⁵⁴ Developers' and Artists' Inquiry Groups; Focus Groups: 1, 5; Artist-led sector planning: the three fly-in First Nation communities, Sioux Lookout; Professional development workshop: Wawa; Symposium.

⁵⁵ Artist-led sector planning sessions: the three fly-in First Nation communities, Sioux Lookout and the Francophone community; Symposium discussions.

⁵⁶ Artist-led sector planning: Advisory Group.

cultures, i.e. settler communities. A number of Indigenous artists engaged in the research commented on a growing resurgence of pride to identify as Indigenous, and to reconnect to their culture. In terms of cultural identity and expression, they spoke of the value of creative processes to forging connections to their culture and the land through the manifestation of material objects that retell oral history and capture and transmit stories and legends⁵⁷. An example of the increasing trend of introducing younger people and the broader public to traditional knowledge respectful of the land is evidenced at the Queen Elizabeth District High School in Sioux Lookout where educators are teaching traditional values and skills to all students as part of the curricula. Figure 10, photographs taken during my visit, depict the school's classroom with canoe and snowshoe construction underway.



Figure 10: Birch Bark Canoe and Cedar-Strip, Canvas Covered Canoes and Snowshoes

A number of Indigenous artist participating in the study paint in the Woodlands style developed in the 1960s by Norval Morrisseau, a member of the Cree nation based in Northwestern Ontario that has significantly impacted on Indigenous artists and the broader art world for generations⁵⁸. The style typically outlines shapes of people, animals and plant life and frequently depicts relationships between them. A member of the Developers' Inquiry Group referenced a well-known Sault Ste. Marie-based Indigenous artist's work, Zoey Wood-Salomon, explaining the Woodlands style illustrates concepts of resilience, the interconnectedness of the world:

... [she] thinks that way—schematically—when you look at some of her work it comes together... the Odawa, Woodland style is already half-way there ... and there are messages in all of that [shapes, cells, and inner divisions] (IG1.2, #1, p.4).

⁵⁷ Artist-led sector planning: the three fly-in First Nation communities; Sioux Lookout.

⁵⁸ Norval Morrisseau (<http://www.norvalmorrisseau.com>).

The Developers' Inquiry Group (quoted above) contributes to understanding Indigenous peoples' holistic approach to understanding the world through conceptual themes that raise the visibility of order and values and/or poses questions about relationships. Two examples of Zoey Wood-Salomon's work appear in Figure 11. The left image displays the 'cells within cells' conceptualization referred to during the Developer's Inquiry Group quote (above) and speaks to Indigenous cultural teachings, in general, whereas the image on the right represents a legend and refers to copper resources specific to the Lake Superior region. During our conversation Zoey says she draws inspiration from everyday experiences and combines them with traditional legends. Over her long career she has developed her own signature style of the Woodlands tradition reflecting her Odawa-Ojibway heritage.

Zoey shared the meaning behind her artwork with me. Summarizing, the *Gifts of Mother Earth* depict the seven people in the Sacred Circle representing the seven teachings of our grandmother which are love, honesty, respect, bravery, humility, wisdom and truth. The white bear symbolizes strength and good medicines for the people. The hummingbird teaches us of bravery while the eagle symbolizes truth. The butterfly and caterpillar teaches us to have patience with oneself, honesty with others and real freedom to be free. The water is all around us. It flows through us. It unifies us all as one. The sun sets in the west. It is the direction of our travel journey and we give thanks that someday we will be in the presence of our Creator in the land of perpetual sunshine and to be accountable for all we have done and said.



Figure 11: *The Gifts of Mother Earth and Mishibizhew*, Zoey Wood-Salomon

Zoey's second image in Figure 11 (above, right) depicts male and female versions of Mishibizhew, the underwater panther, or serpent, residing in Lake Superior. The male is painted silver to attract the female, and she is painted in the colour of copper representing her role as protector of copper

deposits in the area. Mishibizhew is legendary for creating the unpredictable weather by whipping up the water with its tail. The waves spiking up the back of Mishibizhew signal a storm is coming. To encourage a safe journey Indigenous peoples used to offer tobacco to the lake before setting out.

Zoey has won numerous awards for her paintings, been commissioned to design logos and has illustrated books in Northern Ontario, other Canadian provinces and in the United States. She participated in an exhibition depicting the culture and daily life of African people through native Canadian eyes that toured many countries. Additionally, she has produced her own book *Healing through Art* (Wood-Salomon, 2006) focusing on the relationship between painting and healing. Zoey is a self-taught artist who travels the international pow-wow circuit defying a grade school report card that stated “Zoey has no idea of what art is”⁵⁹, harkening back to the limiting structures of the education system.

Other Indigenous artists participating in the study create a wide range of craft, some draw on traditional ways, others use contemporary imagery and/or combine materials in new ways.



Figure 12: *Poppy Brooch*, Bernadine Boissoneau

Bernadine Boissoneau’s Remembrance Day Poppy brooch (Figure 12) is crafted from local sweetgrass, a sacred medicine used in ceremonies that she has picked, and cotton crocheted into a poppy shape. When explaining her work, she states the poppy references the significant role Indigenous peoples have played internationally by representing Canada in war beginning with the War of 1812. She laments that although multiple requests have been made for official recognition of Indigenous peoples’ wartime efforts the federal government has not yet acknowledged their role.

⁵⁹ <http://www.algomaartsociety.ca/component/k2/item/21-zoey-wood-salomon>

Her brooches raise awareness of one of many historical and current contributions Indigenous peoples make to Canada and to other nations.

The research findings indicate that many Northern artists maintain deep connections to the land, manifesting work illustrative of Malpas' (1999), i.e. processing outer experiences inwardly that result in outward expressions in the form of objects, in relation to the external place. One way this is evidenced is through the utilization of local natural materials such as birch twigs, clay, antler and stone in traditional and contemporary ways. The conceptual work of artist participant Kathleen Baleja of Thunder Bay who uses natural materials to express her experience of place is an excellent example of this practice⁶⁰. Baleja builds relationships between communities and the environment to raise awareness of societal tensions. Figure 13 depicts one piece in a series of work. Using her hand-made wasp nest paper as 'fabric', one line of inquiry led her to create a series of women's torsos drawing parallels between women, the wasp queen and the nests.



Figure 13: *Wasp Nest Paper Torso*, Kathleen Baleja

Kathleen explains this work celebrates the critical role women play in building homes, a safe gathering and nurturing place, and the vulnerability and strength women provide to creating community. Local snake skins collaged into the torsos add yet another dimension to the work. She states "... the skins of the snake will become, in part, the skins of the female torso. We, as women, often take the "dead skin" of society—the issues that perhaps do not yet interest politicians—and we find a way to integrate and transform that "skin" into social action" (Baleja, 2010). Her distinctive

⁶⁰ Kathleen Baleja (<http://www.kathleenbaleja.com>).

work speaks to local invention, understanding place and one's location within it (Carter, 2004). Reflection on Baleja's art foregrounds women's often unrecognized and undervalued role in resilience, creating space for dialogue around issues of inclusivity and equity, and the opportunity to shift cultural values toward more respectful relationships, thereby increasing adaptive capacity.

Within the theme of identity and belonging, Laurent Vaillancourt (based in Hearst, a predominately Francophone town along Highway 11 in Northeastern Ontario) investigates the concept of territory and place⁶¹. He sometimes uses found objects, developing relationships amongst disparate pieces to generate contextualized meaning of place, or selects other materials to portray his ideas. When speaking about his work he explains it explores the creation of building relationship between communities stressing "... the urgent need to break down geographic barriers through all possible means, including artistic, in order to lift small communities out of their isolation" (Spheres: World Tour in Ontario, n.d.).



Figure 14: *Sphere*, Laurent Vaillancourt

In one body of work, Laurent informed me, he transferred his early macramé skills to steel cable to create spheres representative of the world. Figure 14 is an image of one of the spheres. Film documents the creation process of him physically utilizing one long length of steel cable, weaving and shaping it into a unified, round, organized globe—an interconnected space, or place. By performing the sphere creation in communities in southern Ontario that had names similar to large international cities, such as Paris, London, Moscow, Delhi and Cairo, his art creates links between each locale and Hearst.

⁶¹ Laurent Vaillancourt (http://www.atelierstopaz.ca/votre_hote.html).

Conversations with Laurent reveal he is a very active professional artist who has won a number of awards. He is a founding member of BRAVO, an art service organization for Franco-Ontarians, as well as Galerie du Nouvel-Ontario (GNO)⁶², an artist-run centre in Sudbury, a Northeastern regional urban centre. Both venues provide crucial opportunities for other Francophone artists to maintain their cultural identity within the dominate Anglophone setting, thereby retaining the North's diversity. His advocacy extends beyond the region, having served on a number of provincial committees in a variety of capacities, providing insight into Northern artists' context, in general, and Francophone artists in particular, in advancing the arts as a viable and meaningful profession.

A number of artist participants spoke of the pleasure and joy of connecting to the land through their artistic practice, increasing appreciation of nature and attachment to place. Many frequently work in the surrounding area gathering natural materials that are transformed directly into objects, or work 'en plein' (outdoors, on site) drawing inspiration directly from the environment⁶³. Several describe time spent in nature as being very powerful, playing a valuable role in their lives and identities, explaining that the experience bonds them to the land and locale and reconnects them to their higher creative selves and humanity⁶⁴. In this way, the experience of engaging, the particulars of wilderness—the geography, rocks, lake, trees, atmosphere and history—the dialogue between the artist, the land and the materials is captured and expressed through cultural products that represent local knowledge of place, echoing Carter (2004) and Malpas (1999).

For a number of artist participants an important component of creative practice and artistic identity is making meaningful objects (e.g. paintings, pottery, baskets, sculpture) for others to take home, transforming their "houses" into personalized "homes", impacting on the quality of life⁶⁵. Artists' awareness of the impact of their practice, and desire to contribute to others' well-being through the production of meaningful goods, once again, implicates creative engagement extends beyond the individual's benefits, to others' health and well-being through gifting products and/or the consumption of goods.

⁶²Galerie du Nouvel-Ontario (<http://gn-o.org>).

⁶³ Artist-led sector planning: Kenora; Elliot Lake; Professional development workshops: Wawa; Symposium.

⁶⁴ Artist-led sector planning: Sioux Lookout, Chapleau; Professional development workshops: Wawa; Symposium.

⁶⁵ Professional development workshops: Wawa; Symposium.

In contrast to the strong cultural identity of Indigenous and Francophone participants that the arts provide, a number of Anglophone artist participants see engagement in creative practice as a core aspect of *individual* identity rather than a *collective* aspect of heritage, even though some were taught and/or produce goods based on, for example, Finnish culture. This suggests differences in perspectives between the heritage or tribal focus of Indigenous cultures and the minority Francophone identity compared to a more ‘western’ sense of individualism. Based on the culturally diverse artists that gathered together over the course of the research, there appears to be considerable respect for various perspectives of identity and how it is constituted. Regardless of cultural heritage, artists have a sense of connection to other artists, a collective identity that is of significant value. The sense of the arts community’s connectedness to other sectors, however, varies between cultures with the Indigenous and Francophone participants expressing a stronger connection than Anglophones. The implications of a sense of community within and across the community system shall be discussed in the following chapters.

4.4 Mapping the Contribution of Individual Creative Practice to Resilience

Despite the challenges of understanding creative processes and the difficulties of quantifying the arts in traditional economic frameworks, from the perspective of the community as a system, a complex web of interconnected and interdependent relationships, the study indicates considerable resilience-related benefits are attributed to artistic activity regardless of the reasons driving engagement. Creative practice is transformative, impacting on people and materials. It is largely divided between two intertwined aspects—intangible, action-based creative processes, and tangible commodity-based products. Both facets reap benefits that increase adaptive capacity. Emergent creative processes are underpinned by experiential learning that develop a number of characteristics associated with resilience including: a deeper relationship with oneself; increased creativity and complex problem-solving capacity; and the ability to revisit cultural values. Each is deemed critical to managing change and reshaping identity and belonging. These intangible traits—understanding oneself, flexibility, bouncing back and persevering—are key to responding to adversity and developing agency (Metzl and Morrell, 2008; Taylor, 2007; Torjman, 2007).

The outcome of the creative journey, the tangible cultural product captures one’s learnings, one’s local innovation, facilitating sharing, co-producing knowledge, thus, contributing to others’ transformation through understanding oneself within the web of social relations between and among people and the locale. The products enrich peoples’ lives in numerous ways: they may be kept for personal use, enhancing family homes; gifted for social purposes (e.g. fundraising) that

support large or small community projects, increasing the quality of life; bartered, e.g. for services or goods beyond financial reach and/or sold in the marketplace providing important revenue within subsistence economies. A number of participants perceive the products to contribute to quality of life wherever the goods reside, initiating transformation through further encounter. Dialogue over the scope of the study indicates peoples' views regarding the arts' contribution to resilience are quite similar irrespective of cultural heritage, geographic location and/or whether or not the goods are retained or intended for sale.

Artists contend the attributes gained through engagement in creative activities are personal; however, they underscore many are transferable to other spheres, spilling over into work and home life, thus impacting on broader community resilience. The findings bolster research indicating the spillover effect of the arts, and thus their value, extends well beyond traditional economic benchmarks and models that perceive the sector as providing primarily individual gains with limited capacity to generate community wealth (Sacco, 2011; Savory-Gordon, 2003).

The culture-arts-economy-resilience framework developed in the first cycle of research (Figure 6, p.131) illustrates engagement in the arts leads to the development of a creative economy. Situating the research learnings from this chapter within a complex adaptive community system reveals the linkages, the mechanics, of how creative practice fosters such. The attributes and skills gained through the interaction of creative processes and products, and artists and the public—the two intertwined and concurrent development streams—simultaneously build individual and collective resilience. *The non-linear, dynamic value chain begins with individual engagement in the arts leading to the emergence of agency in the context of place, with the products providing the basis of creative and culture-based economies.* Figure 15 maps how artistic endeavours build individual resilience that spillover into public realm sparking transformation and large scale capacity to adapt and continually respond to change while maintaining core values.

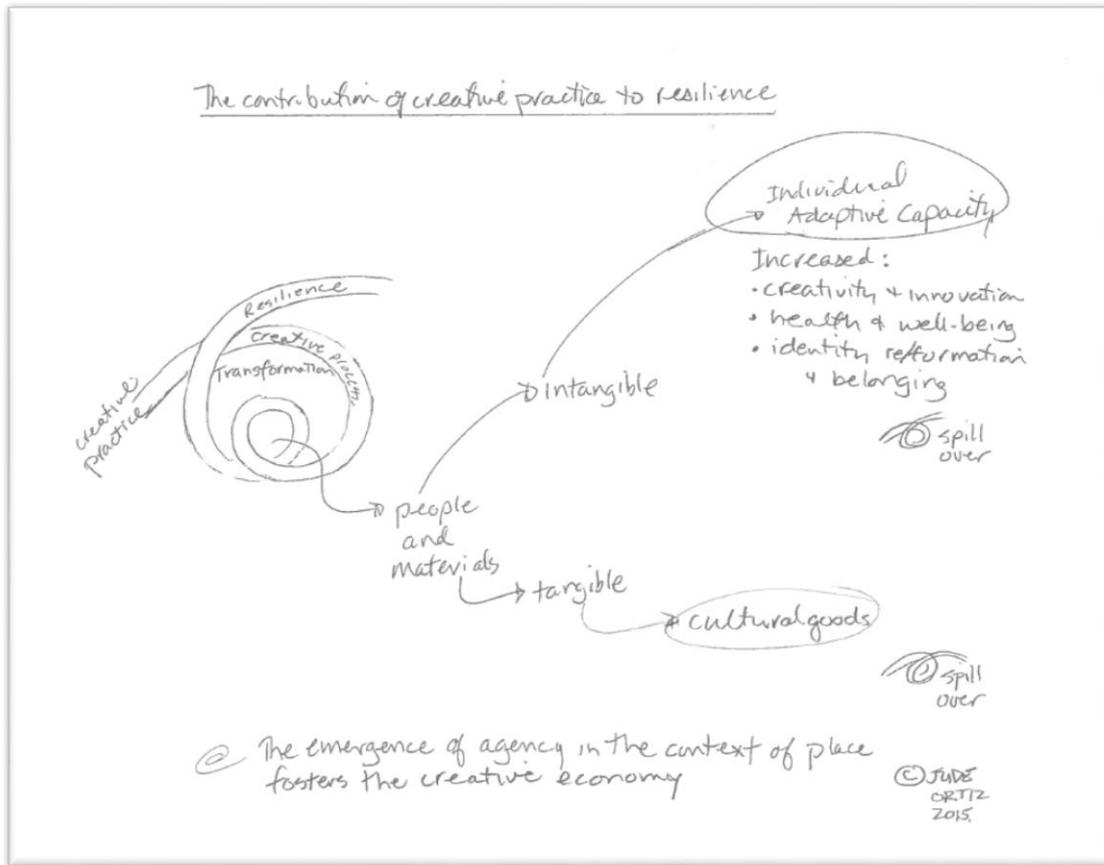


Figure 15: The Contribution of Creative Practice to Resilience

The process of contextualizing artistic activity within a systems framework brought forth a deeper understanding regarding the role creative processes play in community transformation. When artists speak about creative processes they typically refer to the time spent engaged with materials, i.e. the investigative, dialogical processes underpinning the manifestation of tangible objects. Upon reflection there are, however, a number of critical intersections along the production, circulation and consumption chain where creative processes play a similar transformative role; specifically, when engaging others. These discursive intersections serve as transformational spaces, opportunities for direct interaction and as such, they impact on peoples’ understanding of oneself, cultural values and place while informing artists’ next cycle of product development. Chapter Five and Chapter Six present the research findings regarding the efficacy of arts’ intersections and junctures for strengthening resilience across the arts community and broader community system respectively.

Chapter Five: Building Arts Sector Resilience

This chapter analyzes the pivotal role artists—as a community—play in sector vitality and community change. Currid (2007a, 2007b) identifies the social milieu as the arts and culture sector’s operating system that links producers, intermediaries and consumers in large urban centres. Symbiotic relationships form and function through social networking at galleries, institutions, cafés, clubs and restaurants that result in generating a continual supply of unique cultural goods, defining artists and place. As such, the sector’s vitality rests on connectivity, i.e. a combination of arts development networks, and private and public infrastructure that facilitates participation, education, innovation and commercial activity. The research findings indicate that the arts industry in the North, as in densely populated regions, is also reliant upon the concept of the social milieu and its underpinning infrastructure. In Northern Ontario, however, artists, community developers and cultural sector organizations engaged in the study identify a dearth of critical components, ‘missing links’, hindering the sector’s functioning, growth and formation of the social milieu. These limitations are negatively impacting on: maintaining a creative practice; developing a sustainable livelihood; sector and public engagement; and utilizing the arts for community economic and social development⁶⁶. Deficits include governance (policy and planning, human resources, research capacity), networks and organizations, sustainable funding models, education and business development supports (marketing mechanisms, and affordable operating space and live/work accommodations). Reflection on the implications of such highlights a significant difference between urban and rural contexts; specifically, the community infrastructure already exists in metropolitan places and is typically provided by public and/or private investment, whereas in less populated areas, it is very limited. The study illuminates the critical contribution artists’ collaborative practices are playing in provisioning the region’s community infrastructure deficits, leading to the creation of the ‘rural social milieu’—a broader more inclusive version than urban industry-centric milieus—that fosters more public participation, and thus, resilience.

Unpacked, this chapter first illustrates the value of an arts community, focusing on the dynamic value chain of *how* artists’ connectivity and social capital leverage benefits gleaned from individual creative practice to an arts community level of resilience, thereby increasing sector capacity and adaptability, particularly with regard to identity and belonging and educational opportunities. Next, it identifies ways Northern artists are leading the creation of micro industry clusters by provisioning three types of community infrastructure: i) events, workshops and programming; ii) networks and

⁶⁶ Artist-led sector planning: every session, Advisory Group; Professional development workshop: every session; Symposium; Organizational peer networking.

organizations; and iii) creative places. Examples of each and their associated resilience benefits are provided. These initiatives assist in mitigating sector needs while simultaneously creating transitioning space for broader community engagement and transformation through direct interaction, enabling exchanging ideas and perspectives and co-producing new meaning.

Research findings for this chapter were gathered primarily from Cycles Three to Six and collectively organized to illustrate the significant individual, arts sector and broader community value accrued through fostering a sense of an arts community, enabling connectivity within and beyond the sector. Participants in these cycles were diverse in terms of: heritage (Anglophone, Indigenous and Francophone); geographic locations (isolated, fly-in, Northeastern, Northwestern Ontario); community size (small urban, second tier, regional centres, larger urban centres); professions; and sectors. Data was gathered through five focus groups comprised of artists (Cycle Three); artist-led community planning consultations and network development that included community developers, elected leaders and the public interested in the arts (Cycle Four); artist professional development workshops and informal meet and greets, a regional symposium attended by artists, arts organizations, developers, and funding agencies, and a video created to highlight artists, arts organizations and arts development from across the North (Cycle Five); and community consultations and peer mentioning with arts organizations (Cycle Six).

5.0 The Value of a Sense of an Arts Community

An important aspect of resilience is having a sense of community, of belonging and attachment to others, and to place. In rural locales the sense of belonging to a larger group is identified as a critical factor impacting on artists' creative identity, and for mobile artists in particular, the desire and/or feasibility of remaining in their home communities. This section identifies ways connectivity, underpinning a sense of an arts community, scales up the value and benefits of individual creative practice to a sector level, thereby further increasing adaptive capacity and resilience.

Artist participants attribute significant value to belonging to an arts community citing many of the same benefits derived from individual creative practice identified in Chapter Four, i.e. increased creative capacity, health and well-being and identity and belonging. A 'community' creates a sense of camaraderie by connecting with others interested in creative expression. It reinforces the aforementioned individual benefits, scaling them up an arts community level by providing opportunity for: emotional and creative support; a safe place to explore and express oneself; build new and diverse relationships; retain cultural heritage and intergenerational sharing, teaching and

learning; acquiring new skills; sharing information and resources; and different ways to participate in the community. Similar to individual creative practice that carves out time to be human, time for oneself, artist participants portray a sense of community as creating space—the psychological ‘room to be’ who you are at a community level, significantly impacting on the sector’s individual and collective health and well-being. Thus, in rural areas as well as urban centres, embeddedness in meaningful relationships increases one’s quality of life (Sarason, 1976).

Artists engaged in the research indicated in rural communities the need to connect with others to sustain creative practice shapes the inclusiveness of the arts community. In summary, there is considerably less delineation and divide between Northern Ontario artists based on the type of cultural production compared to southern Ontario, and this is seen as positive. For example, in the south an ‘artist’ is generally defined as a person who makes two dimensional objects and a craftsperson someone who produces three dimensional goods, which is further compartmentalized by each having a number of dedicated organizations and marketing arms. Participants also note that in the North there appears to be an increased willingness to work across disciplines. Some people and/or organizations are open to collaboration with all producers while others prefer to work with artists who create a particular type of genre. Artists suggest Northerners’ broad use of the term ‘artist’ and the generally close working relationships between artists and craftspeople is due, in part, to three factors: i) the need for a united voice to raise awareness of, and advocate for, the sector, ii) artists’ orientation toward community development as typically found in rural areas, rather than the perhaps more individualized goals of urban artists, and iii) fewer people, thus fewer organizations and mechanisms to belong, share and connect to other creative people, and consumers⁶⁷. Thus, the study provides insight into the composition of—and the need for—an arts community in rural locales to bring together a diversity of creative people with artistic practice being the common denominator.

Validation of one’s creative identity garnered through connecting with other artists is another significant way engagement contributes to resilience at the individual and community of interest scale. Artists participating in the professional development and symposium consultations, in particular, spoke strongly about the centrality of their creative identity as their primary sense of oneself. At a fundamental level, seeing one’s creative self reflected in a broader group indicates one is not alone; there is a certain level of understanding and mutuality between other creative people

⁶⁷ Artists’ Inquiry Group; Focus Groups: 1, 3, 5; Artist-led sector planning: Elliot Lake, Sioux Lookout, Chapleau, Advisory Group; Professional Development workshops: Kenora, Wawa; Manitoulin Island, Fort Frances, Steering Committee; Symposium.

that leads to belonging and connectedness (Sarason, 1976). Relationships with others whose creativity is a significant part of their being, artists repeatedly stated, sparks an arts community level of recognition, validating and reinforcing one's sense of self including cultural heritage, which may not be as valued, understood and/or appreciated in other spheres and networks, and the larger community, which is found to be quite isolating. Specifically, the primary sense of location—where one fits into the community—typically revolves around the work sphere. In Northern Ontario, however, many artists are employed outside of the sector, thus connecting with other artists is extremely important in mitigating social isolation when a significant part of one's creative identity is not necessarily associated with one's main source of income (Ortiz and Broad, 2007). Furthermore, there is perception within the general public that being an artist is not a valid profession, exacerbating a sense of individual and sector marginalization that was raised during the Artists' Inquiry Group, three of the five focus groups and a number of artists participating in the professional development workshops⁶⁸.

In terms of attachment to place, mobile artists underscore an important factor impacting on their decision to leave rural areas for larger urban centres is contingent upon their sense of belonging to an arts community and the professional development opportunities that such might provide⁶⁹ (Thompson and Date, 2011; Gosselin and West, 2004). For younger artists experiencing social exclusion an arts community provides them the opportunity to engage with others who value their creativity. Summarizing, young and mobile artists highlight they can either become part of the creative energy of their own community or someone else's community. Many prefer to stay, but refuse to give up who they are to do so. They want to feel welcome with opportunities for participating in the life of the community that an arts community provides⁷⁰. Younger artists, in particular, express a sense of being undervalued in terms of their potential—creative or otherwise—underscoring a theme threading through the research regarding the imperative for communities to retain younger people and/or attract them back to their home communities to strengthen resilience. A strong, younger demographic underpins creative renewal by providing 'new blood' in the form of leadership, ideas and energy; however, many communities in the region have difficulty connecting to them (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009). Due to the challenge in maintaining a creative practice in the North, participants from across sectors (community, economic and tourism development organizations, business and citizens in general) lament younger people may choose to live elsewhere

⁶⁸ Artists' Inquiry Group; Focus Groups: 1, 2, 3, 5; Professional development workshops: Kenora; Manitoulin Island, Steering Committee; Symposium.

⁶⁹ Focus Groups: 4, 5; Professional development workshops: Wawa, Fort Frances.

⁷⁰ Focus Group: 5; Professional development workshops: Fort Frances; Symposium.

for a time when seeking employment or arts education then simply not return⁷¹. Participants in the focus groups and artist-led sector planning sessions concur there is a trend for young adults, up to approximately 40 years of age, to return home, but finding employment and/or a place to ‘fit’ into the broader community remains a challenge.⁷² The findings underscore the important contribution a sense of an arts community has to resilience—it supports the retention of creative people, i.e. the spark and fuel for community regeneration, particularly in the periphery (Duxbury and Campbell, 2009).

In research locations where there is a sense of an arts community participants stated connectivity provides essential relationships and embeddedness, but express concern regarding the few meaningful art-based relationships with the broader community. A number of artists in the professional development workshops and those in the Artists’ Inquiry Group express feeling as though they ‘live on the fringe’, separate from the larger community, ‘living in a community within a community’. Marginalization, artists underscore, is a significant concern regarding the sustainability of the sector. Artists understand the importance of cross-sector linkages, but are having difficulty developing them, e.g. knowing who to contact to advance practice and/or gaining positive responses to inquiries. Broader community benefits accrued through linking, partnering and integrating artists into community planning processes, and ways of strengthening the sector’s contribution are presented in Chapter Six.

5.1 Fostering Social Capital, Dialogue and Innovation

The study strongly illustrates sector connectivity furthers adaptive capacity. Relationships bring artists together, developing social capital, enabling collaboration, dialogue and innovation, regenerating the sector and the broader community through novel perspectives, products and economies. This section focuses on the dynamic value chain that emerges when artists have opportunities to interact with other creative people.

Analysis of and reflection on diverse consultations over the duration of this research has led me to characterize the force driving artists’ connectivity and interaction as ‘passion and need’—passion for spending more time engaged in the arts, and the need for increased capacity to do so. Both aspects demand greater artistic, technical, and/or entrepreneurial business skill sets and diverse networks and support systems. Unpacked, ‘passion’ includes the desire for benefits acquired through

⁷¹ Artist-led sector planning: Elliot Lake, Sioux Lookout, Chapleau; Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa, Manitoulin Island; Symposium.

⁷² Focus Groups: 4, 5; Artist-led sector planning: Sioux Lookout.

engagement including the continual and deepening ability to reform identity, and increased health and well-being and agency. The second aspect, 'need', centres on the necessity of improving the quality of creative experience and the goods produced. It also encompasses the need for selling work, supplementing household income and/or earning a sustainable livelihood. Collectively the two aspects fuel self-organizing into groups and collectives, driving social capital and innovation, and facilitating and reinforcing the desire and ability to work collaboratively to build creative capacity, address arts ecology deficits and revitalize communities.

Reflection on the consultations across the six cycles traversing cultures, disciplines and locations indicated artists' self-organizing creates a sense of community, strengthening the sector's resilience. Specifically, it supports and facilitates the *desire and ability to work collaboratively* enabling: i) building individual creative practice, i.e. artistic, technical and business skills; and, ii) opportunities for collaborative practices to overcome the North's dearth of infrastructure, including organizational development, governance and management. Thus, networks are critical lifelines for Northern artists. Social capital that connects even only a few people make a considerable difference in the ability to maintain practice and/or remain in home communities. Moreover, artists state the *existence* of networks is more important than the *number or density* and the *diversity* of people connected⁷³. In Northern communities where there may be no one or very few people working in the same discipline, connections fosters camaraderie essential for encouraging, supporting and advancing creative practice. Due to the low population density of the region's communities these networks do not necessarily create a critical mass for what most developers would consider necessary for establishing an arts industry. The study, however, confirms Wheatley and Frieze's (2006) research indicating critical connections—rather than critical mass—underpins the capacity to function by developing new knowledge that informs creative and collaborative practices and builds perseverance to tackle complex personal, community and/or regional issues through the arts and/or other opportunities for civic engagement.

Regardless of the size of the community when research participants gathered I witnessed new connections being created and/or networks extending. Some people had heard of others but had never met in person; some knew each other but were unaware of their creative practice; and others had never heard, met, or knew of anyone else engaged in the arts. For example, during the professional development workshop in Kenora a local photographer taught artists how to document

⁷³ Focus Groups: 3, 4, 5; Artist-led sector planning: Elliot Lake, the three fly-in First Nation communities, Sioux Lookout, the Francophone community, Chapleau; Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa, Manitoulin Island; Symposium; Organizational peer networking.

their work in preparation for applying to Craft Ontario's curated exhibition *CraftCurrents*. A few of the artists were aware of the photographer but did not consider him a resource person that could meet their creative practice needs. Even in the smallest communities the consultations brought people together who had different experiences, with each person knowing something worth sharing. A number of people had information about sourcing supplies, others photography, and a few had expertise in graphic design and marketing.

Connecting with other artists is empowering: it shifts perceptions from being isolated individual artists to belonging to an arts community where, collectively, they can initiate and evidence significant change in their creative practice, the sector and the broader public⁷⁴. As a community of interest artists can collectively discuss, articulate and develop their own Northern sensibility, aesthetics, practice goals and relevancy within their local contexts' as well as fashion an understanding of the role and impact an 'arts scene' has on the broader community's resilience, where it may otherwise be extremely difficult to discern when the vast majority of education, critical analysis, and literature focuses on distant urban cities, specific disciplines and/or genres.

Reflection on the findings deepen understanding of *how* connectivity builds individual and collective resilience through dynamic and emergent processes, linking artists' social capital, dialogue, and innovation. Networks create intersections between and among artists hailing from similar or diverse heritages and/or perspectives that empower and strengthen agency and drive further inquiry and creative activity. Discourse provides space to further understand and revisit cultural values, confirm beliefs and/or reflect on others' views, co-produce knowledge and build understanding of the local context of place and culture. Thus, *direct interaction* creates the time, psychological space, the means (i.e. processes) and place for deeper reflection of one's own practice including: who we are as artists, individually and collectively as a community; why we make particular objects; how to become more sustainable microbusinesses; and sector challenges, such as ways to overcome knowledge gaps and barriers that inhibit collaboration within and across sectors, and how to become recognized as a viable sector.

When artists connect they share processes of creative inquiry, sources of inspiration, stories, legends, and/or manufacturing techniques. Observation, discussion and productive criticism about others' cultural products builds creative capacity including awareness of 'how and why' the work was created, and 'what it means' to the producer. Peers act as supportive sounding boards for bouncing new ideas off each other, testing the ground, and generating solutions to ideological,

⁷⁴ Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa, Manitoulin Island; Fort Frances.

technical, or business related challenges. Opportunities to contextualize oneself, art work and place, exposure to others' work, and critiquing in a safe environment, significantly advances creative depth, the quality of engagement, and the production of cultural products.

Sector level exchanges become part of one's lived life and are woven back into individual creative practice, thereby initiating another cycle of making through the manifestation of more unique, meaningful cultural products. Social capital development and dialogue increases sector innovation, strengthening understanding of place, and the role of culture in its development, in general, and artists' role in particular. The value of discourse to understanding one's creative practice is highlighted in a vignette from a *CraftSmarts* workshop.

During a consultation with Kenora artists a story about a woman emerged whose shift in consciousness and self-identity was a direct result of discussing her work with other producers in their collective. Her long-time practice focused on utilizing found objects and local materials and she always told the story behind her creations to friends and buyers. Discussing her artistic approach with other artists suddenly triggered a deeper understanding of her work, reframing its value and her contribution to community in terms of capturing and re/creating history. The new insights increased her pride and contextualized her identity within a larger framework of understanding of place, for both her and others⁷⁵.

Reflection on the research findings deepens understanding of *how* social capital, specifically, direct interaction, builds individual and collective resilience. Face-to-face encounters enable engaging in dynamic and emergent processes underpinning dialogue, critical discourse and the transference of tacit knowledge. As with individual creative processes—an internal dialogue between oneself and materials that creates the space and means for transformation—sectoral dialogue, between artists, is equally transformative. Iterative cycles of meeting, connecting, sharing, reflecting, and learning initiates a second cycle of transformation—an intra-sectoral transformation—that simultaneously builds individual and arts sector capacity for continual and renewal. Figure 16 illustrates the second cycle of tangible and intangible transformation spurred through *dialogical processes* when directly interacting with other artists.

⁷⁵ Professional development workshop: Kenora

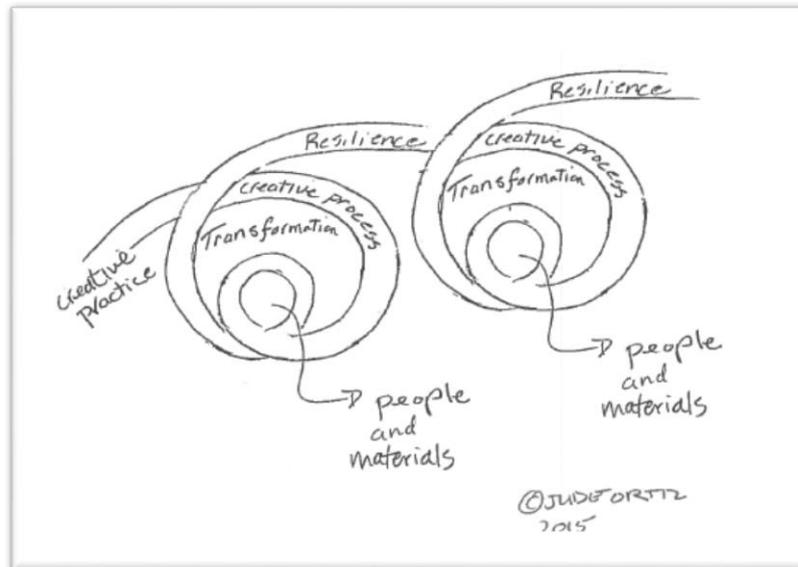


Figure 16: The Transformative Process of Artists' Collaboration

The findings underscore critical to dialogue and learning is the capacity to speak about one's work. Art transcends cultural boundaries; however, artists' insights regarding the intent and meaning are invaluable. As with the general public, artists are not necessarily privy to each other's journey, thus the deeper meaning embedded in the manifested object may not be easily gleaned. The *process* of articulating meaning brings it forward into consciousness, providing space for furthering the creator's reflection on whether or not the product captures the intent, and elicits feedback from others on what they perceive (Carter, 2004). Regardless of the purpose of the goods (creative expression; aesthetic art; creative and culture-based economies) artist participants indicate there is significant benefit to expressing the joy of making and/or the thought processes behind the creation. Gathering with other creative people provides the opportunity to articulate one's practice, building visual literacy essential to conveying or 'translating' the value of one's work to other artists, friends, family, intermediaries, consumers and/or the broader community in ways that resonate with diverse perspectives and/or goals. The capacity to articulate the contributions of creative practice beyond the sector is essential for advocating for the arts, increasing understanding of individual, sectoral and broader community benefits engagement in artistic activity bestows.

A significant barrier to social capital development is connectivity. There are few existing networks to draw upon and limited opportunities to connect in person and/or through technology to create new ones. Finding and accessing networks is particularly challenging as many are not visible. Artists and developers identify the need for a variety of places and spaces to meet and gather, e.g. cafés, coffee houses and larger educational events including workshops, conferences and symposia. Access to broad band internet would facilitate relationship building within and beyond communities and

connect to distant markets⁷⁶. Section 5.3, Creating Arts Clusters, identifies ways Northern artists are taking a leadership role in addressing sector needs in a number of these areas.

5.2 Capacity Building through Peer Networks

Findings from Cycle's Five's professional development workshops and symposium, and the organizational peer networking in Cycle Six indicate peer networks are the *primary* source for building artistic, technical and entrepreneurial capacity in the North. Rural artists are mitigating the region's scarce educational and training opportunities by collaborating, as a community, leveraging individual creative and adaptive capacity to sector level resilience, sparking innovative solutions, and the creation of more meaningful and unique goods for social, economic and community development purposes.

Artist participants explain that peer mentoring plays a significant role in rural locales where creative practice tends to remain an individual activity limited to one person rather than a collaborative process or a production stream of subcontractors spread across disciplines or locations as is often found in larger cities and high-volume manufacturing. The acquisition of new skills and techniques is essential, yet very challenging. In addition to strengthening skills directly related to the production of goods (artistic, technical, critical analysis, reflection) peer networks broadens artists' understanding of an arts ecology specifically, and commerce and community development, in general—areas where knowledge acquired through arts activities is very applicable in other realms of life. These types of educational opportunities are identified as being important to *all* artists irrespective of the reason for engaging in the arts and/or whether their goods are intended for gifting, for bartering or for the marketplace⁷⁷.

During the professional development workshop consultation in Kenora participants spoke of a peer mentoring sharing program called *Fun Mondays* where artists takes turns delivering a workshop of their choice to peers, with each person creating a new piece of their own⁷⁸. The collaboration takes the form of dialogical exchanges and demonstrations that build layers of thought, critical reflection and more uniquely individualized and/or innovative work, whether it be contemporary interpretations of traditional pieces or new combinations of materials and techniques.

⁷⁶ Developers' and Artists' Inquiry Groups; Focus Groups: 1, 2, 5; Artists-led sector planning: Elliot Lake, the three fly-in First Nation communities, Sioux Lookout, Chapleau; Professional development workshops: every session; Symposium; Organizational peer networking.

⁷⁷ Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa, Manitoulin Island; Symposium; Organizational peer networking.

⁷⁸ Professional development workshop: Kenora.

Sustained interaction supports trusting relationships, encourages taking risks, pushing creative envelopes and fostering a sense of community and solidarity to overcome challenges. Having the space to meet is critical and Kris Goold, artist and owner of Fragile Glass Studio⁷⁹ provides this. *Fun Mondays* conversations run the gambit of 'how to' make goods, market work and operate a business. Everyone contributes helpful information, collectively assisting each other to advance creative practice. These artists also note the format serves as an important opportunity for teacher training. Many artists who have never taught before or even considered it as an option are supported by having a first experience in a safe environment. The capacity to teach expands creative identities and increases the possibility of new entrepreneurial ventures that assist in sustaining oneself whether it is through bartering and/or generating a new revenue stream.



Figure 17: *Fork in the Eye*, Kris Goold

Kris Goold's sculpture, *Fork in the Eye*' (Figure 17) is an example of the 'layers of thought and critical reflection' fostered among the *Fun Monday* peer mentoring group. The work is comprised of a deer skull, glass and found objects. Goold explains in her exhibition statement it is intended to spark dialogue on the relationships between people and the land:

A fork in the eye, the soul's window, is like a fork in the road. One is forced to choose. The deer migrating to residential areas are considered a problem by some, while others see these majestic animals as a gift and pause to give thanks for these incredible encounters (CraftCurrents: *Contemporary Craft in Northern Ontario*, 2011, p.18).

⁷⁹ Fragile Glass Studio and Gift Shop (<http://www.kmts.ca/krisg>).

The contribution of peer mentoring to organizational development first emerged during Kenora's professional development workshop with participants citing the newly formed Lake of the Woods Artists Collective (LOWAC)⁸⁰ as an excellent example. Workshop participants who were also members of LOWAC explained that the artists who launched the new initiative from the ground up had limited, if any, experience in developing such a venture. They worked collaboratively, drew heavily upon each other and their broader community relationships and resources to gather critical information for informed decision-making. Peers shared perspectives, reaching consensus and/or a way to move forward in addressing the multitude of logistical and organizational challenges that undertaking such an enterprise entails. LOWAC members indicate the intervention has been an incredible organizational, artistic, and entrepreneurial capacity-builder with a significant number of skills acquired through the process spilling over into other aspects of their lives. They describe launching the initiative as a powerful 'leap of faith' and 'trust in the creative and collaborative processes' necessary to build an organization. Artist producers, many of whom had never sat on a board of directors were faced with establishing a broad-based, incorporated, non-profit organization comprised of many subcommittees aimed at advancing and promoting the arts. LOWAC's activities include exhibitions, professional development workshops, resource sharing and public education. Engagement in LOWAC has fostered self-esteem and pride; empowered its members; increased incomes derived from the arts; raised the public's awareness of the arts; and improved the quality of life in Kenora. As a result of LOWAC's peer networking, many artists now consider their creative practice to be a microbusiness although most agree considerable professional development is needed in both product development and entrepreneurial business capacity before their assets can be fully realized.

Regional peer networks were identified as being extremely valuable during Cycle Six's organizational peer networking consultations with the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District, Conseil des Arts de Hearst and 4elements Living Arts on Manitoulin Island. Based on their experience of engaging in the network they suggested the model could be utilized to build sector sustainability throughout the region as it established critical support through dialogue, resource sharing and knowledge mobilization in a region that is challenged by geographical distances and contextual differences to southern Ontario. The peer networking intervention provided the time and space necessary for the leaders of these three organizations to reflect and learn, strengthening the organizations' management capacity that will advantage them in their future operations. Overall, the three organizations indicate peer mentoring to be cost effective and rewarding in terms of building

⁸⁰ Lake of the Woods Artists Collective (LOWAC) (<http://www.lowac.ca>).

relationships and acquiring critical capacities to develop and strengthen practice, careers and infrastructure. Nonetheless, arts organizations' time and limited resources to participate in such networks are identified as hindering development, thus keeping the sector precarious.

While participants identified considerable benefits inherent to peer mentoring, reliance upon it as a main source of education emerged as great concern. Issues centre on the North's limited connectivity and the current voluntary nature of mentoring. Collective analysis of the dialogues in a number of artist-led sector planning consultations and the professional development series revealed mentors allocate a significant amount of time preparing for and participating in the unpaid sharing sessions, limiting their capacity to sustain their own practice. Furthermore, peer mentorship involves linking people, and as such, is reliant upon social capital networks that are not well-developed locally and/or regionally. As a result, a considerable amount of time is spent attempting to locate people with expertise. A database or a registry of resources does not exist on any scale, and there is no professional or volunteer position and/or agency to oversee development, maintenance and/or house the knowledge. Moreover, sometimes the knowledge does not reside in the community requiring the ability to access external resources through limited networks. To be mutually productive skills and schedules must align and an affordable location for the exchange must be available. Additionally, access to technologies and the capacity to utilize them may be a challenge. Throughout the various research cycles, the study revealed many people do not have broadband internet service, and others are not skilled in using various platforms supported by such⁸¹. Technological difficulties often make telephone conferencing with isolated communities challenging, i.e. cell phone coverage is limited and people may be located in different time zones⁸². Furthermore, travel is expensive and few people are able to take time away from other paid employment.

Dialogue regarding the volunteer nature of peer mentoring brought forth two instances when 'a sense of obligation' negatively impacts on artists. In organizations without paid staff a number of artists express feeling burdened with the responsibility of the entity's survival. Volunteer employees are 'expected or demanded' to extend their hours well beyond the norm to peer mentor other staff through operational duties. Such (spoken or insinuated) expectations force a number of artists to leave the organization, furthering its precarious. Members of the organizational peer networking in Cycle Six note the few organizations that have paid staff are, on occasion, able to allocate training

⁸¹ Artist-led sector planning: Elliot Lake; the three fly-in First Nation communities, Sioux Lookout, Chapleau; Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa, Manitoulin Island; Symposium; Organizational peer networking.

⁸² Artist-led sector planning: Advisory Committee, the three fly-in First Nation communities; Understanding Northern Artists' Context: Steering Committee.

time to operations, but many groups find themselves overextended by daily tasks, thus, dedicating precious resources to capacity building is not realistic. The discussions highlight the considerable strain on artists when faced with developing and maintaining critical community infrastructure in addition to having to seek paid employment to support their own creative practice. Participants argue that strategies are needed for organizations to transition from volunteers to paid skeletal staff. Such themes shall be discussed in the following chapter.

The second vein of obligatory volunteerism centres on artists who invest in their own development, some spending years away at post-secondary institutions gaining expertise, building networks and/or travelling outside the region to source suppliers and galleries, etcetera. Upon returning these artists face the expectation they should share their hard-earned information, skills and knowledge for the general benefit of others and experience negativity when declining to do so⁸³. Research participants note the majority of artists do assist others, to varying degrees; however, a few are considerably more discretionary with their limited time and resources. A number of artist participants and artist colleagues indicate there is a point at which ‘brotherly love’ ends and question why the responsibility for sector development falls on the shoulders of unpaid artists. This raises important community development questions in terms of responsibility for arts development, echoing symposium and organizational peer networking dialogues with many participants commenting that other sectors have development strategies that include education and training. Without such opportunities the culture sector is left behind, limiting people’s creativity and capacity to participate not only in their creative practice but to gain employment in the creative economy.

5.3 Creating Arts Clusters

Currid’s (2007a, 2007 b) research revealing the social milieu underpins the vitality of the arts and culture sector is based in New York City, but claims the arts industry operates similarly around the world. Northern artists participating in the research argue these symbiotic linkages between artists, intermediary venues, galleries and retail outlets and consumers are equally if not *more* critical in sustaining a practice in the periphery. This section highlights the leadership role artists, as a community, are playing to address infrastructure deficits currently limiting creative potential and livelihoods, and ways their provisioning of such is creating the social milieu within rural contexts that builds sector and broader community resilience.

⁸³ Focus Group 5; Symposium.

The study's findings indicate the North's current situation—lack of social, organizational and built infrastructure—leaves artists largely isolated, invisible and inaccessible within the sector, contributing to a sense of isolation and 'creative restriction' that many express as being prevalent. Linkages to consumers and the broader community are also restricting sector vitality. Additional layers of isolation in the region stem from community size, geographical location and/or cultural histories of settler populations that limit social cohesion. Many artists express a range of resignation, neutrality and/or preference to work alone when undertaking creative processes, 'the doing', the 'action' of making, the transformative processes that involves manipulation of materials. There is, however, considerable agreement across cultural heritages and disciplines that a critical part of creative practice—'all that artists do'—revolves around relationships, thus there is a critical need to connect to: i) other artists, ii) marketing mechanisms and consumers; and iii) the broader community. Artists need to know the 'who' and 'how'; specifically, who do they need to meet and how they can connect with them. They rely on social capital to access information, resources and supplies and to link to gatekeepers, tastemakers and marketing mechanisms, echoing Currid's (2007a, 2007 b) research regarding the foundational role connectivity plays in the cultural vitality⁸⁴.

Reflection on artistic engagement, in relation to network development, brought forth the realization that the *nature* of visual arts engagement, the *location* of practice and the Northern context challenges social capital development. It is a sector comprised of individual practitioners who may not know each other and/or may not be aware of others' creative activities and is further exacerbated by the lack of local and regional networks and built infrastructure that would facilitate connecting. The limited availability of studio space and/or affordable live/work accommodations, in part, results in the majority of practitioners working alone, most often in their homes. While a few rent studio space that is sometimes shared most often it is private. Even in small or isolated communities where most people know each other, generally speaking, many are unaware of everyone who is creative and/or the nature of their participation as evidenced during introductions at the beginning of each consultation. Furthermore, despite artists' strongly expressed desire to increase time spent and/or income derived from practice, they are forced to seek employment outside of the sector, negatively impacting on their visibility. Places for artists to gather, practice, and connect each other and consumers, therefore, are as essential in rural areas as they are in larger centres.

⁸⁴ Focus Group: 3, 5; Artist-led sector planning sessions: Sioux Lookout; Elliot Lake; Chapleau; Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa, Manitoulin Island; Symposium.

The North's dearth of organizational and built infrastructure, the 'missing links', identified in the study is fuelling artists' interventions to mitigate such. Research findings relating to artists' initiatives are organized in terms of the types of social and economic development opportunities their interventions create; specifically, their contribution to increasing visibility and accessibility, and the duration of opportunity to connect artists with others within and across sectors.

Three types of infrastructure identified in the study are:

- i) Events and Workshops/ Programming: They provide intermittent visibility and access to artists through direct interaction. They are typically a single event and/or of short duration over a period of time;
- ii) Networks and Organizations: They increase the sector's visibility and accessibility. They are frequently dependent upon staffing. They may or may not facilitate direct interaction or a means of locating artists. Their foci are primarily within the sector but the broader community may be served. Generally, they offer a long duration, and thus, increased opportunity to connect; and
- iii) Creative Places: They are physical spaces that are highly visible and accessible, offering continual opportunity for direct interaction within the arts community and between sectors, sparking innovation. They may include creation space and a gallery, providing artists and/or public education and marketing avenues.

The following sections (5.3.0 Events, Workshops and Programming; 5.3.1 Networks and Organizations; and 5.3.2 Creative Places) unpack the three types of infrastructure artists are provisioning, and ways they create space for direct interplay between artists, creative processes, products, consumers and the public. It analyzes how connectivity and interaction increase sector and broader community capacity for developing new stories and alternative actions. Although artists have a long history of hosting events and developing networks and more recently, establishing creative spaces, adopting a community system lens reveals the important entrepreneurial, community development and leadership roles they are playing in rural locales. Each initiative builds relationships through sharing, reflecting, and co-producing sense and meaning, contributing to shifting values within and beyond sectors and cultures. Most notably, in contrast to the industry-focused arts infrastructure prevalent in large cities, in the periphery artist-led interventions provide informal spaces that are welcoming to a diversity of people, encouraging broader engagement in the arts and creating a transitioning space between social classes and sectors. I characterize these intersecting spaces as the 'rural social milieu'. They attract a mix of people, including leaders, whose paths artists may not normally cross. Artists note, due to community size the physical and

psychological distance between themselves and the public is diminished. For example, in small locales everyone knows someone who makes art and those attending events are a diverse mix of people, often there to support family and friends rather than being collectors or people wanting to be part of the 'scene', underscoring important compositional differences between rural and urban contexts. The concept of the rural social milieu has far reaching implications for generating resilience within Northern Ontario's context and will be further taken up in Chapter Six.

5.3.0 Events, Workshops and Programming

The research findings indicate artists are providing important opportunities for citizens, area residents and tourists to engage in a wide range experiential, community-building activities including festivals, heritage celebrations, studio tours, exhibitions, workshops and arts programming that connect creative people with one other and the broader public. This section identifies ways these types of artist-led interventions increase visibility and accessibility and in many cases generate revenue that contribute to broader resilience.

Regardless of their size they serve as rural cultural attractions, increasing visibility and accessibility to the locale's cultural assets, generating important revenue for artists and area businesses, contributing to community branding and growing the cultural tourism sector. Northern interventions typically make use of existing infrastructure such as town halls, auditoriums, agricultural fields and arenas and are often rented, providing community organizations an important source of income to sustain rural infrastructure. In venues with kitchens, volunteers may provide food that further supports the event and the building's viability.

Artist collaborations draw on each person's strengths, peer mentoring one another, building organizational and marketing capacity to host bigger events while reducing emotional and/or financial risk. The initiatives facilitate a range of professional development opportunities through direct interaction, enabling sharing informational sources, viewing and critiquing each other's work, and fostering new ideas, meaning and relationships through dialogue. A growing number of events are supporting emerging artists through mentorship and role modelling. Many artist-led initiatives are collaborations between a number of artists, self-organizing and regrouping to meet specific personal, sector and/or community needs. Some lead to the formation of non-profit organizations such as Sylvan Circle Tour⁸⁵, an annual artist and artisan tour east of Sault Ste. Marie that provides access to high quality locally produced goods, supplementing incomes, shaping community identity

⁸⁵ Sylvan Circle Artist and Artisan Tour (<http://sylvancircle.ca>).

Figure 18 represents an organizer's portrayal of the impact ArtReach has on younger artists and the broader community. Summarizing, it is rooted in a strong art tradition, and Northern Ontario and Canadian art identities that brings into fruition opportunities for individual development and future artists. The program arranges for professional Canadian artists to work with a number of grade eleven high school students mentoring, them over a four-week period where skills are developed, work is created and an exhibition is staged at the end to highlight the art. It exposes younger artists to a wide range of genuine 'behind the scenes' experiences of an art career such as staging an event and dealing with the public, advancing their development. The final exhibition also serves to raise public awareness of the arts as a viable career as well as the profile of Canadian artists practicing in a variety of media and the range of societal issues that are being addressed through art.

A number of additional ways events, workshops and programming positively impacts on broader resilience identified by participants in the research include providing excitement and a break from the stress and grind of daily life, creating a buzz about what is happening in the community, enlarging the public's awareness of the arts and the availability of local products while being role models for the increasing number of 'do it yourself' (DIY) citizens interested in creating alternative goods and/or supplementing incomes. Each benefit contributes to the social and economic vitality and identity of the community and can be leveraged to foster arts clusters and fuel the growing demand for experiential cultural tourism opportunities (Currid and Williams, 2010).

5.3.1 Networks and Organizations

The study's findings illustrate artists are creating arts development networks, councils, collectives and guilds that greatly increase the capacity to connect (in-person or virtually) through newsletters and activities. Analysis of the findings indicate many networks serve as information and knowledge conduits that increase absorptive and distributive capacity by tapping into local and external sources, packaging it and distributing it to the sector. This section highlights the resilience benefits accrued through the existence of networks and organizations.

In comparison to many events, workshops and programming, networks and organizational infrastructure generally provides year-round support necessary for sector growth and sustainability. They contribute to retaining creative people in rural areas by enabling access to other artists and critical industry intelligence including, highly qualified experts, trends, suppliers and markets. The existence of networks and organizations also creates links to consumers and businesses locally and regionally. Diverse participants (artists, developers, and those interested in the arts) cite networks as

playing a foundational role in connecting artists to other individuals and/or arts communities in nearby and/or distant places, extending the sense of belonging and attachment to place and shaping local, area and regional cultural development. In some cases, artists' note, their relationships to geographically distant arts communities is stronger than their sense of attachment to the local area⁸⁸. These instances are seen as having both positive and negative implications. External relationships can bring in crucial information, educational opportunities and designer supplies and connect local artists to distant producers and consumers through events and/or outlets. Without networks and organizational supports people tend to leave their home communities and relocate to where information and professional development opportunities abound⁸⁹.

One initiative, the Fort Frances Artist Collective that evolved from the research, builds local artistic capacity and educates the public. It connects artists in the small Northwestern Ontario community with artists living in outlying villages and towns and/or countryside. Individually they work in isolation but collectively they have a sense of an arts community and collaborate to increase each other's capacity through skill and resource sharing. The collective grew out of one of Cycle Five's professional development workshops organized by local artist Lindsay Joy Hamilton, a recent graduate of the Emily Carr School of Art and Design in Vancouver. A large factor in her returning home was the availability of affordable studio space. Facing isolation once she arrived, she sought other creative people that might also want to share and support one another. The research connected Fort Frances artists with nearby Kenora, the closest community with an arts organization, approximately 200 kilometers away. Representatives from the Lake of the Woods Artists Collective (LOWAC) travelled to Fort Frances to share their experiences of starting an organization. The peer mentoring provided by LOWAC underscores its importance and effectiveness in rural areas where other opportunities are limited.

The Aboriginal Artworks Group of Northern Ontario (AAGNO) led by John Ferris, provides remote artists, many whom live in fly-in communities, opportunities to gather in Thunder Bay, connect with each other and the public and sell work. There is an increasing demand for Indigenous cultural goods, and this venue provides direct access to them that drives further interest and a localized culture-based economy. John explains the events serve multiple social and economic purposes.

⁸⁸ Focus Group: 5.

⁸⁹ Artists; Inquiry Group; Focus Groups: 1, 3, 5; Artist colleagues.

Figure 19 depicts artwork from Mishkeegogamang and Summer Beaver, two communities whose artists participate in the Network.



Figure 19: Art work from Mishkeegogamang and Summer Beaver First Nations

The event creates opportunity for artists from across the Northwestern part of the region to gather for a few days. For many it may be one of the few times they leave their communities. People meet face-to-face, reunite with relatives, exchange skills, ideas and techniques, trade supplies and source new ones. John underscores the sale of goods is an important means for earning cash that is necessary for the market economy within traditional lifestyles of trapping and hunting. Interaction between artists and the public builds understanding and respect for cultural diversity and assists with social cohesion among urban Indigenous residents and other citizens in Thunder Bay. Music, dance and revelry are a key part of the mix of activities reinforcing bonds that carry people over until the next rare opportunity to gather again.

5.3.2 Creative Places

Physical space, in particular, plays a significant role in the preservation of cultural traditions, innovation, the development of cultural districts and/or neighbourhoods and community regeneration. The presence of built infrastructure enables the same artists to gather over time building trust, co-producing meaning and transferring knowledge, strengthening individual creative practice, and garnering a sense of belonging to an arts community. It also creates opportunity for ‘strange animators’ to connect—critical for introducing new ideas, information and perspectives, as well providing a safe and welcoming space for intercultural sharing across the community spectrum that fosters cultural appreciation and social cohesion (Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006). This section identifies ways artists’ community infrastructure is contributing to sector resilience broader transitioning capacity in rural locales.

Artists providing this type of infrastructure underscore, as physical places, creative spaces become part of the streetscape and are visible '24/7', raising the profile and accessibility of the sector and adding a new dimension to community identity. One artist participating in a focus group (FG.5, M1, p.13) argues "I think without arts in the community, it's just row houses and shops and everyone walking back and forth to work. That's how I felt for years." This powerful statement summarily refers to the reduction of life to an economic equation, capturing many artists' perspectives regarding the current direction the majority of communities are heading toward when faced with financial constraints.

Space enables artists to find each other, connect and collaborate, providing stability for creative practice, in particular, and life in general. The following quote emerging from the Artists' Inquiry Group highlights the significance of having such a place to gather and alludes to its broader community impact:

... the best community affects, or changes, that occurred due to creative process and art is art groups working together... You look at what went on in Paris, those were groups of people working creatively and they had a major social impact ... (IG2.4, #10, p.19).

Creative spaces are revered by the arts community for providing safe and welcoming gathering places for different ways of being, increasing and/or maintaining opportunities for cultural diversity. Artists note they are places where people are respectful and accepting of others regardless of being like-minded, somewhat similar, dissimilar and/or unlike-minded (Cooley, 2003). They facilitate meeting new people or old friends, dialoguing, hanging out, having fun, and/or creating work. Consultations brought forth the importance of artists being able to talk to each other, i.e. in the 'same language', be understood, and have a similar sense of identity even if they work in different disciplines⁹⁰. Following is an excerpt from a focus group discussing the critical importance of creative space to the sense of an arts community:

F#1: It's a place where we can hang out for no good reason and every good reason. We have a safe place. We can come here.

F#3: ... and then you're always just running into these great people because people just hang here ... It's not a big gamble every time you come in the door (FG.3, p.3).

Gathering in physical space generates a sense of inclusion, with creative practice the common thread weaving people together. Production space is not a requirement for creative places; it can simply be a social gathering place.

⁹⁰ Professional development workshops: Kenora, Manitoulin Island; Artist colleagues.

Access to creative space emerged in the study as being crucial for younger people to reaffirm, validate and/or reform their identity:

To have that sounding board for people who were of a similar mind and to have a place to meet, I would argue it drastically changed a lot of perspectives and views of people and where they could go from there, especially from a youth perspective (FG.2, #2, p.3).

For teenagers, specifically, safe space maintains health and well-being, i.e. ‘their sanity’, as they explore their identity and place in the community—or not. An artist in one focus group shares their view:

The Sault, especially, is such a regimented place. There is no room for socializing in a bigger sense outside of the small group you might have known in high school. You just weren’t encouraged to do anything different ... Places like Arcadia [Arcadia House—a creative space] are very important for them [younger people] to understand that there can be alternate ways of doing things (FG.2, #1, p.3).

There is widespread agreement that safe space does not include alcohol. Artists in three of the five focus groups indicate their demographic do not want to engage in the ‘bar scene’. Alcohol is seen as a negative factor, and when introduced changes the meeting and gathering dynamics to one of match-making and finding a partner, accompanied by aggression, thereby limiting creativity rather than enhancing it. They advocate for creative space being inclusive, open to all regardless of age, whereas alcohol limits younger peoples’ engagement⁹¹.

The findings reveal preservation of cultural identity is one of the most significant reasons for engaging in creative practice and is particularly central to First Nation and Francophone communities. Creative space provides a locale to meet repeatedly allowing time to deeply absorb and embed the learnings. Benefits of such include: cultural retention; intergenerational dialogue; and transference of traditional knowledge and skills between younger people and elders with each generation learning from other. Space provides people of a common minority-language opportunity to express themselves in their native language, and learners time to build language skills enmeshed in material culture. Indigenous artists posit that creative practice fosters hope in their culture. It enables traditions to remain relevant to younger people by continually evolving rather than be ‘frozen in one moment in time’, and/or lost to assimilation⁹².

⁹¹ Focus Groups: 1, 2, 5.

⁹² Artist-led sector planning: the three fly-in First Nation communities; Artist colleagues.

Five creative spaces in Northern Ontario—The Circle of Creative Arts, Conseil des Arts de Hearst, The A Frame Gallery, Fireball Café and Arcadia House—were identified in the research, contributing to understanding the significance of having places to gather, create and/or exhibit. The Circle of Creative Arts in Sault Ste. Marie, a downtown Queen St. East storefront operated by Missanabie Cree First Nation, is seen as playing an important role in transferring knowledge intra- and inter-culturally and generationally. Its closure created a significant gap but plans to reopen appear to be gaining traction. While operating, it fostered diverse relationships and increased appreciation and retention of cultural traditions through storytelling during the creation process, imbuing the work with deeper meaning.

A Francophone model of a creative space is owned and operated by The Conseil des Arts de Hearst. The importance of this infrastructure emerged in Cycle Six during consultations between arts organizations as part of the peer mentoring sessions. It is located in Northeastern Ontario with a population of approximately 5,000 people of which close to 94% is Francophone. The centre has a mandate that includes the production, promotion and consumption of Francophone culture with a priority to build the capacity of local artists and foster community identity. The board of directors and staff, comprised primarily of younger people, face challenges related to changing community demographics due to the restructuring of the forest industry. The creative space is adapting to meet shifting community needs, and in doing so, is generating a sense of solidarity to address challenging issues while contributing to local economic stability. The artists are building relationships across sectors locally and regionally, increasing the appreciation and demand for Francophone culture and expanding the tourism industry.

In the Northwest, The A Frame Gallery (Figure 20, left image) is a privately owned creative space conceived to operate as an artist run centre. Dr. Chris and Donna Giles purchased the Sioux Lookout building in 2007 and opened the space to foster local artistic activity across cultures. During Cycle Four, the artist-led planning and networking session in Sioux Lookout, Donna Giles spoke of her role as an artist who collaborated with other artists to advance cultural development in the area. When referring to the Gallery one participant (Breathing Northwinds Community Report for Sioux Lookout, p.8) states “We needed space to create, space to network, space to teach, space to exhibit, space to sell. So without that dedicated space to the arts, we really weren’t happening as an arts community.” The initiative assists and extends the significant work the Sioux Lookout Anti-Racism Committee (SLARC)⁹³ began in 1989. The A Frame Gallery is the first space where internationally recognized Indigenous artist Aamoo Angeconeb’s work was exhibited locally. The built infrastructure

⁹³ Sioux Lookout Anti-Racism Committee (SLARC) (<http://www.slarc.ca>).

continues to adapt to meet community needs while retaining its core function of being a safe and inclusive place for creative exploration and expression. Figure 20 (right image) shows Aamoo in his home surrounded by his art and that of other internationally respected artists. He lives in a very small house without running water in Lac Seul First Nation, a few kilometers outside of Kenora.



Figure 20: A Frame Gallery, Sioux Lookout and Aamoo Angecone, Lac Seul First Nation

One focus group in Cycle Three, investigating innovation and cultural development, was with the founders of the first two creative spaces in Sault Ste. Marie, the Fireball Café and Arcadia House. Fireball, launched by artist Maria Parrella-Illaria⁹⁴ in 1995 upon returning from completing her Master of Arts in Art Therapy from Concordia University, closed in 2002. A critical factor in her decision to return was available and affordable space. Her father offered his Queen St storefront. She describes Fireball as a robust coffee house offering concerts, exhibition space, and unique world cuisine lunches close to a decade prior to there being any restaurants offering ethnic choices. The place became a safe haven for younger people to experiment, test, and develop their musical skills. One artist in particular she states (FG.2, F1, p.6) ignited the local scene by consistently being there, playing original music long before it was vogue, thus “It changed a certain thought process when it came to music and performing.” This musician’s foray into original music encouraged others to write songs, spurred concerts and different combinations of artists playing together. A number of musicians who got their start at the Fireball are well-recognized career artists, some teaching at Algoma Conservatory of Music, one of the largest music conservatories outside of Toronto, and/or Algoma University, and others are winning awards and touring extensively. The second creative space in the Sault is Arcadia House (2006-2009). Notably, owner Matt Ceolin, an artist active in Fireball, modeled his space after Fireball Café, underscoring the importance of role models in building a vibrant arts scene.

⁹⁴ OpenArt Studio (<http://openartstudios.ca>).

Participants in a number of the focus groups and the majority of the professional development workshops, in particular, indicate creative places that include a gallery, a retail outlet and/or a café facilitate formal and/or impromptu ‘public educational’ opportunities within various contexts in addition to generating critical revenue streams. A key development role they serve is linking artists to consumers and vice versa. Many artists note the majority of the galleries and retail stores in the North do not carry local work, and the few that do rarely connect their clientele with artists, thus limiting access and valuable feedback. Participants underscore cultural institutions, e.g. public galleries and businesses, play a very important role in sector development; however, opportunities for direct access to local artists—versus their products—are scarce. Without places to market work locally and interface with the public, locales run the risk of becoming a ‘bedroom community’, where artists live but their goods are sold elsewhere. This also represents an economic leakage and loss of vitality⁹⁵.

Artists’ initiatives are, therefore, transformational intersections between the sector and the public, creating space to converse and share with diverse citizens, utilizing the products as a starting point to revisit one’s values and norms and adapt them to emerging viewpoints. The various types of artist-led infrastructure facilitate networking, artists’ professional development opportunities, linkages to each other and to consumers, the production of higher quality of cultural goods, and economic activity including getting the products to distant markets. Thus, artists are playing a leadership role in simultaneously building sector capacity and broader community change through creating events, a scene, a buzz, generating interest in what is happening locally and attracting tourists and investment, thereby making important contributions to revitalization.

5.4 Mapping the Contribution of Sectoral Collaboration to Resilience

Forging bonds with other artists is seen as scaling benefits gained through individual practice to sector level resilience, simultaneously increasing individual, sector and community level resilience. Regardless of the diversity and/or number of people engaged networks are critical lifelines for sustaining practice, and increasing attachment to place, particularly for young and mobile artists who are instrumental to regeneration. This type of foundational infrastructure increases the desire and ability to interact with peers facilitating further development of intangible characteristics associated with resilience and the production of unique tangible products that support the economic and social life and vitality of the community.

⁹⁵ Focus Group: 5; Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa; Artists colleagues.

Connecting with other artists create the psychological ‘room to be oneself’ within a larger group, validating artistic identity and fostering a sense of community, thus mitigating social isolation for minority groups and creative people in a region where they are not particularly visible and/or accessible and typically employed outside the sector. Engagement gathers diverse people contributing to understanding alternative perspectives, revisiting cultural values and co-creating new meaning through transformational dialogical processes, deepening understanding of oneself within the complex, ever evolving social relations embedded in place, further informing one’s practice and increasing social cohesion. Connections between people of similar cultural heritage support its continuance through intergenerational sharing, teaching and learning.

Networks generate synergy enabling artists to assemble, self-organize, spurring collaborative practices to mitigate the dearth of community infrastructure that is hindering the region’s sector development, functionality, management and growth. Peer mentoring, considered the primary source of education in the region for the majority of artists is increasing artistic, technical, entrepreneurial and business capacity, that underpins successful practices, microbusinesses and the production of more expressive and higher quality goods. Interventions that serve artists and community needs include events, workshops and programming, networks and organization and creative spaces. The combination of connectivity and physical spaces strengthens the sector’s sustainability through generating more relationships and creative activity, driving continual innovation and evolution, leading to arts-based clusters. Higher visibility and accessibility to artists encourage more people to develop their creative capacity through role models and/or increase the demand for cultural products. The interventions foster interconnectedness, a sense of an arts community, linkages to the broader community and the development of the rural social milieu.

The culture-arts-economy-resilience framework developed in the first cycle of research (Figure 6, p.131) illustrates social capital leads to the development of industry clusters. Situating the research learnings from this chapter within a complex adaptive community system reveals social capital sparks transformation through connectivity. Networks facilitate the development of more and diverse relationships, arts activity and microbusinesses that link artists to each other and the public. Engaging in emergent, transformative discursive processes scale resilience-related benefits accrued through individual practice to a sectoral level, creating more unique and innovative cultural products with skill sets, capacity and agency spilling over into other domains and spheres. *The non-linear, dynamic value chain begins with sector connectivity—networking enables self-organizing and social capital fosters the emergence of arts industry clusters and localized culture-based economies.*

Figure 21 depicts the intangible and tangible contributions gained through social capital development that significantly contribute to building capacity, at different scales, to continually innovate and adapt to rapidly changing environments.

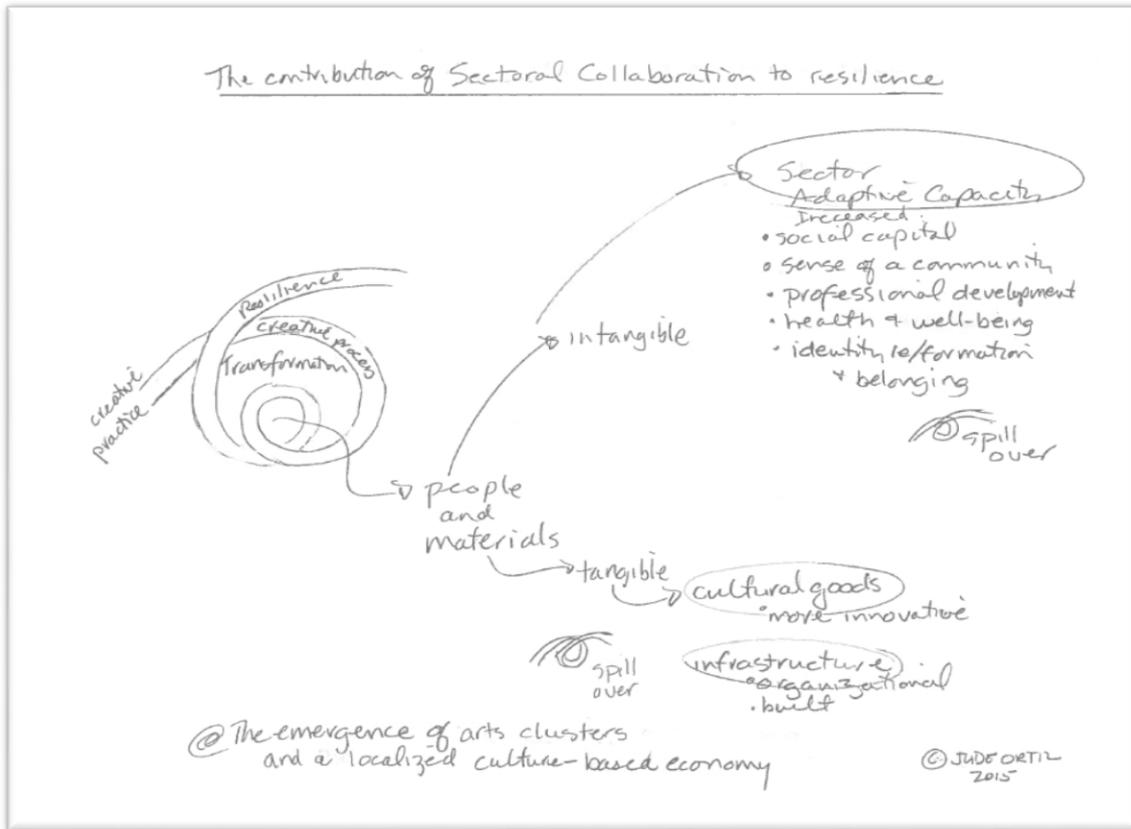


Figure 21: The Contribution of Sectoral Collaboration to Resilience

In summary, artists’ collaborative practices and interventions play a significant role in community development, increasing individual and arts sector level adaptive capacity and providing critical infrastructure that yields broader social and economic benefits. The following chapter, Chapter Six, presents the research findings regarding the impact on resilience when artists are engaged with the larger community through cross-sector relationships.

Chapter Six: Building Community Resilience

Chapter Six analyzes the arts' contributions to community level agency and adaptive capacity, presenting research findings regarding resilience benefits gained from broader public engagement in the arts. Specifically, it looks at the efficacy of participation in creative processes and interaction with the products in reshaping cultural values, reimagining place and shifting community norms toward more respectful and sustainable development approaches such as building on local assets including history, natural resources, Indigenous traditional knowledge and cultural diversity. This chapter identifies successful arts cross-sectoral networks that generate synergy across the community system, engages a wide spectrum of people, and fosters the emergence of more diversified cultural products that define home-grown, place-based economies.

This chapter's findings also underscore the very precarious nature of the arts sector resulting from limited: governance policies and development plans relevant to the North; professional positions to advocate for and/or manage investment; sustainable funding models, research capacity to inform decision-making; opportunities for engagement and education; networks and organizations to connect people; and capacity building and development business supports for arts-related microbusinesses. It presents participants' strategies to strengthen the arts sector's ability to continue the important community development role they are playing in the region. Additionally, it provides insight into the parallels between artistic practice and community development, encouraging more emergent, inclusive practices to creatively develop place and reflect citizens' and the locale's past, present and future direction, thereby increasing resilience. Finally, it offers a new framework for understanding and valuing the arts sector's contribution to resilience based on the concept of the community as a complex adaptive system.

Data for this chapter is taken from the breadth of the study's cycles that engaged diverse participants from various sectors. Artists, developers, arts organizations, elected leaders, funding agencies, and the broader public from across the region were assembled locally in each cycle and regionally in Cycle Four and Five. The Socioeconomic Impact Study of the Art the Economy of Sault Ste. Marie's survey and consultations (Cycle One) provides initial insight into the sector's profile, its precariousness, and identifies key areas limiting sustainability. The following cycles expand and contextualized factors impacting on the sector, identifying what is needed to strengthen the arts including examples of successful initiatives identified during the artist-led community planning (Cycle Four) and the regional symposium (Cycle Five). Perspectives regarding relationships between creative practice and community development are gleaned primarily from the Artists' and

Developers' Inquiry Groups (Cycle Two) held in Sault Ste. Marie, artist colleagues and my reflexive practice.

6.0 The Rural Social Milieu: Understanding and Revisioning Place

Research findings focusing on the impact of artists' interventions on community level resilience indicate they are providing critical informal intersections for people to connect and converse, fostering the rural social milieu and large scale change. The places and spaces they are providing are welcoming to diverse people, linking producers to consumers and connecting artists with community leaders (e.g. elected civic leaders, heads of organizations and businesses and informal leaders) in an atmosphere where power relations may be less daunting. This transitioning space is rich with opportunity for generating dialogue, planting seeds of different ways of understanding overarching pressing community issues, revisioning, and strengthening individual and collective agency in taking a new course of action, thus supporting broader adaptive capacity.

Observation of artists' dialogues indicate creative practice is perceived to be the intersection of tacit knowledge, culture and place with community culture playing a central role in the dynamic relationships between and among people and the land. The arts are a pivotal point in the interplay of these elements, i.e. providing the space and means for illuminating various aspects of life, alternative ways of thinking by developing new stories that transform identity—individuals' and the locale's—while maintaining values integral to its citizens. Artist-led infrastructure (events, workshops, programming, networks, organizations and creative places) reintroduces art back into peoples' lives, opening space for this type of transformation to occur. The interventions are frequently situated outside cultural and educational institutions where the casual atmosphere is perceived by research participants to be safe, and opportune to engage a wide spectrum of residents and tourists. A member of the Artists' Inquiry Group (IG2.4, #10, p.4) familiar with gallery operations highlights social divides and risk factors that hinder participating in more institutional settings explaining "Entering into a room full of people of a different class structure is not something you're necessarily going to do, right? We run into that a lot here." These comments sparked another Artists' Inquiry Group member to pose other important questions for artists, art institutions and community developers in terms of community culture; specifically, where does art 'live' in a community? And, by extension, what is its role in life? Is it perceived to be shuttered in socially inaccessible institutions for a specific slice of society? Or is it readily available and/or visible for all to engage? These artists argue that given the significance of art to one's life and creativity to the knowledge economy, the greater number of people that have opportunity to engage supports a

culture of broad-based innovation and entrepreneurial capacity, generating more jobs, expanding markets, the quality of life and the attractiveness of place, and thus, resilience.

The direct interactions these types of informal environments provide are opportunities for a ‘soft sell’ educative approach that is more effective in ‘stretching the cultural framework without creating waves’. Participants in each of the cycles of research acknowledge it is hard to get people, particularly community leaders, to make and/or accept change, due in part, to the risk factor, i.e. they have always done it this way and/or believe something to be so. Access to leaders is needed to lobby for resources (governance, policy, planning, education, human and financial) that underpin successful function of the arts ecosystem. If artists cannot access the people in power directly the Artists’ Inquiry Group argues the next best thing is to reach the leaders’ ‘feelers’, the people that are gathering information and taking the pulse of the community to ensure their leaders’ re-election. When dialoguing about whether there is a way to bring everyone, the informal and formal leaders, together to create change through art a member offers:

You need a transitional space where the two can meet ... Between the formal and the informal where they can both work together. It’s almost like, if you need to make a change, you need to subvert from within. You can’t be on the outside always trying to work at the castle wall. You have to come inside to find out what the rules are and then be creative with how you’re going to work with the rules (IG2.3, #6, p.10).

Artists’ interventions, therefore, provide a ‘transitional space’ where the informal can meet the formal and engage in creative dialogue. When seeded to subsequent consultations artists and developers concur, underscoring the concept is applicable to citizens wanting to effect change⁹⁶.

A central theme around revisioning emerging early in the Developers’ Inquiry Group and surfacing repeatedly over a number of sessions is that knowing the past, where we have been—individually, as a community, a society—increases the capacity to move forward through the next cycle of change. Participants consider history and collective memory to be important ways that art contributes to resilience. It creates the space and opportunity for cultural preservation, remembering and revisioning, reinterpreting personal and/or collective expression, providing a snapshot of culture in time and place, and a social commentary of the locale. A developer commented:

[Art] ... is a matter of individual perspective and I believe when something is presented that allows people to formulate their own perception of what they’re experiencing ... it allows people to be an individual and at the same time be a part of something much larger (IG1.5, #5, p.2).

⁹⁶ Artist-led sector planning: Elliot Lake, Kenora, Chapleau; Symposium.

The same speaker indicates the value of cultural products to documenting life as an *active and ongoing process*. Art can provide a historic depiction, or an interpretation of an era, that contributes to identity reformation and understanding place by seeing oneself reflected in place, or not. Cultural products are statements and/or records of individual and societal life in terms:

I think it [art] is a very a powerful way to capture the natural growth and decay cycle of the community and I think that a lot of time that is what community development is. It's the cycle of growth and decay and recreating (IG1.2, #5, p.5).

Many artists enjoyed the opportunity to talk about what underpins their work during the lively introductions at the beginning of the professional development workshops and the accompanying meet and greet sessions in Cycle Five⁹⁷. The diversity of artists' backgrounds and interests brought forth perspectives echoing the Inquiry Groups' views on the role of the arts in community development. A number indicate art allows them to learn about and express their individual story, their history and inspirations through images that keep memories alive in themselves as well as in the broader public. For others the art work provides a pathway to share their thoughts, visions and culture with others. For a few creative activities reflects life, retaining moments in time and/or making visible what is or is not there, as a reminder. A small number mentioned their work specifically aims to raise awareness of particular social issues; however, many utilize their art as an educative tool for current citizens and future generations' knowledge of place. Indigenous participants explain colonization rewrites history through songs, texts and maps, for example, by renaming places and note the more recent move to reinstate traditional place names aims to reclaim sovereignty, building a resurgence in pride, cultural identity and a stronger reconnection to the land⁹⁸.

Inquiry Group participants indicate change is underpinned by a series of events that start with reflection, sparking dialogue and insight by bringing ideas forward into consciousness, broadening one's mind, leading to different action. Discussion during a number of the Developers' Inquiry Group sessions focused on the challenges community developers face regarding the viability of large scale change when getting people to change—even in small ways—is extremely difficult. One member offered a personal anecdote, underscoring the role individual reflection plays in effecting change:

⁹⁷ Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa, Manitoulin Island, Fort Frances.

⁹⁸ Symposium.

I am more optimistic about how things can be changed. And I know it is by one person at a time. I was raised in a very racist home. You had to have a lot of money and people saying 'wow, are you ever successful'... [but then] I began to dissemble this and poke a hole in this little part. So that little part of my world that I thought was solid—just crumbled. So I wondered what the rest of it is like and you start pushing and then you realize that is a fallacy. It's a great mirage that you built ... (IG2.3, #4, p.14).

Reflection is spurred by internal engagement with one's own work and/or external reaction to the work by others. Throughout the Artists' Inquiry Group discussions and a number of the professional development workshops artists caution not to focus solely on the product as a means of initiating transformation through reflection, but rather view reflexive practice as an embedded creative process that extends to all aspects of being an artist, and an important skill that crosses over to over sectors.

Artist participants across the cycles note the art work, as tangible products play a critical role in initiating dialogue and reflection with others, creating space for artists to relay a deeper knowledge about the object's relevance—the 'back story'—of the cultural product, facilitating an important educational role about the significance of the handmade product. Conversations are rarely linear, following dialogical social threads that increase personal connections and understanding others' views. As with the dialogical exchanges between artists at a sector level, they underscore, direct interaction with the public informs and builds each other's capacity in similar ways, listening, rechecking one's sense of self, community and place, fuelling new cycles of incremental or ground-breaking transformation. Sharing increases both parties' visual literacy through articulating agreement and/or opposition to the ideas and work, thereby building cross-sector understanding (Wood, Landry and Bloomfield, 2006). Storytelling, artists frequently mention, is not one-sided; the other person often responds with a piece of their history that bridges connections, contributing to co-producing and evolving perspectives. These types of direct exchanges provide artists' tight feedback loops about their work in relation to the public's response, e.g. what is meaningful, tastes, price points, and ideas about art that enlarge understanding of place, that are fed back into artists' next cycle of making. Sharing is also seen as forging a human connection rooted in time and place between the artist—the person who made the work—and the consumer, with the object harkening memories back to the exchange and/or the circumstances surrounding the gifting, bartering and/or purchase (Hushka, 2010). Interventions such as annual exhibitions and tours, in particular, contribute to creating rituals. Artists and consumers connect at particular exhibitions, often patronizing a few rather than all the shows. Although each event's social milieu is different, all afford a sense of community connection between producers who often work alone and the public, e.g. local residents, families, and friends, young and old and tourists.

The efficacy of the arts in sparking change and shifting perspectives prevalent throughout the research findings is well captured in the following Developers' Inquiry Group quote:

The arts are a bridge ... In my mind it's like a manifesto, here's how we're going to change the world and do things ... How do you do it incrementally? ... Artwork is one of the ways of making suggestions about that because you want success. That's the bridge if you will, how do we get to this new enlightened thinking, whatever it may be? (IG1.4, #3, p.11).

The speaker highlights the arts' role in illuminating solutions to individual and/or community issues by proposing new conceptualizations and/or processes for achieving such. Ideas, once concretized become more visible and accessible, contributing to individual and community level transformation. This perspective suggest that artists plant the seeds of transformation through envisioning new ideas and making the responses tangible, charting alternative pathways for people to collectively work through change, supporting the perspective of 'artist as visionary' in society. The following Artists' Inquiry Group exchange illuminates *how* the arts initiate change at the community level, driving development of place:

- #6: Art is the documentation of the community process ...
- #10: It documents community, but everything shifts. Inevitably everything shifts ...
- #6: Is it the actual finished artwork piece, is it the play, is it the CD that's produced, is it the paintings or the murals? Are they the elements that define the community?
- #10: I'd say that it's the community reacting to those products—the art—that is important.
- #6: So, somewhere in there you have to have individuals who are thinking enough about what's going on around them to produce these things, then you sort of need an audience to be the ones who view them or buy them.
- #9: It's the community's involvement with it all (IG2.3, p.2).

Shortly thereafter, during the same Artists' Inquiry Group session, one member summarized the dialogue stating:

#10: Maybe that's the role of art in this whole process [of community development] is to give ... the community the freedom towards creative thought and approach that they become participants as opposed to just viewers ... (IG2.3, p. 3).

Later in the same Artists' Inquiry Group session, when honing in on the role of art in developing place, the following exchange transpired:

- Researcher: So, what you're saying is, there needs to be opportunity for creative engagement?
- #10: It gets you past the viewership
- #9: And gets you into ownership.
- #6: And not in a tangible way, but as in enjoyment.
- #10: Enjoyment and support. There's so many ways to own something or take ownership in it, other than putting money into it ...
- #9: When we're talking about ownership in art ... It should drive the community to take ownership of itself.
- #10: And in taking ownership of itself—taking pride in that too. Like you're saying ownership towards responsibility (IG2.3, pp.7-8).

The concept of *'engagement leading to ownership and taking responsibility'* is a tenant of grass roots, community-based development. These artists posit that creative processes underpin change and transformation as evidenced in their own practice and argue for more opportunities for the public to embrace creative processes through interacting with artists and/or taking up artistic activities. This view concurs with Duxbury's (2014) and Hawkes' (2001) call for broad engagement in the arts as a means of civic participation and fostering creative expression for personal and community aspirations. These cross-sectoral intersections and exchanges between artists and the broader community create the third cycle of transformation, depicted in Figure 22 that informs creative practice and initiates large scale change.

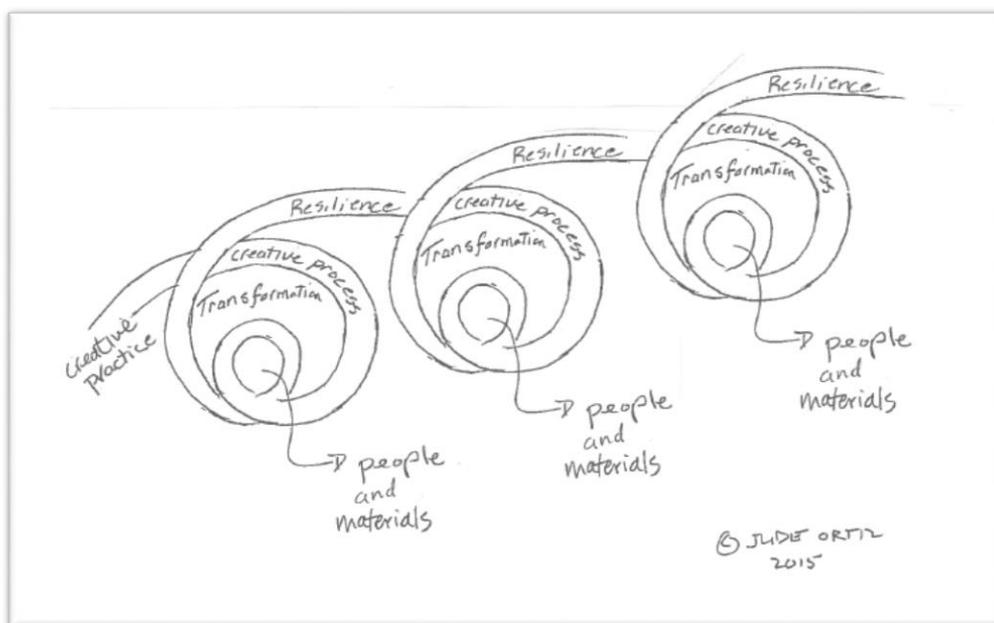


Figure 22: The Transformative Process of Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

A number of artists are deeply concerned about the loss of understanding the world in terms of fundamental relationships and connections between and among people and the land locally, and globally, becoming a thread within 'the role of art in community development' theme. There is a sense of urgency for people to bridge divides and initiate more respectful and deeper understanding and connections with others in the same locale, fostering reciprocity and mutual respect, and supporting more informed and equitable decision-making. Globalism and the lack of creative practice in daily life are identified as factors that contribute to the disconnection between people and place. The arts, participants argue, rebuilds links between people and place through engagement and dialogue, and increasing reflexive capacity that tips the balance toward participating in the life of the community, fostering a sense of responsibility for personal and community development.

6.1 Creating a Culture of Resilience

Throughout the research study participants acknowledge larger scale forces—provincial, federal government and global—shape structure and policy that influence the degree of response and/or change people have control over. Within this context, diverse participants including artists, municipal professionals, economic and tourism developers and a number of art advocates, consider community culture and geographic location to be significant factors impacting on local sustainability. Their views concur with resilience literature (e.g. Centre for Community Renewal, 2000) that recognizes culture as playing a critical role in community decision-making processes, actions and priorities. This sector presents the study's finding regarding challenges Northerners face in transitioning and the role community engagement, creativity and the arts play in supporting change.

Many participants from diverse backgrounds note current community development practices are primarily 'top down', exclusive and remain largely focused on traditional job creation strategies related to resource-extractive industries. Research participants indicate new conceptualizations of community assets is required to survive the current socioeconomic upheaval resulting from globalization. They purport core components in achieving such is broad-based community engagement in co-producing plans, leading to the emergence of alternative visions based on understanding of the regions' resources, and residents' interests and expertise. The exploration of new opportunities (e.g. non-timber forest products, ecotourism, social enterprises, cooperative models, microbusinesses) fosters a community-wide culture of creativity and social and economic innovation, and the collective determination to build attractive places and localized knowledge economies⁹⁹.

The centrality of culture and the region's long and complex history of Anglophone, Indigenous, and Francophone communities continue to challenge community cohesion and collective will. Research participants acknowledge the difficulties Northerners face in bridging divergent perspectives and addressing historical issues, suggesting community development culture and the arts have a key role to play in moving forward. Both engagement in community development and the arts sector support crossing boundaries, contributing to building trusting relations and the desire to work collaboratively. A Developers' Inquiry Group member notes:

It's the culture of the community and people that make a place resilient or not. Culture is dependent upon its history. History is a determining factor in who currently lives there and the problems they face (IG1.8, # 1, p.9).

⁹⁹ Artists' Inquiry Group: 3, 4; Developers' Inquiry Group: 5, 8; Artist-led sector planning; Kenora, Wawa; Symposium; Artist Colleagues.

Participants understand place develops through the ever changing relationships between and among citizens, underscoring interaction is dynamic with peoples' responses based on individual functioning capacity, social relationships and past positive and/or negative experiences. When discussing development processes' role in defining places members of the Artists' Inquiry Group state:

#9: It's all based on a single point to gather around, that's sort of where you start a community from. No matter what kind of community it is, it's still around a single point of some nature. Be it art, be it culture.

#10: And maybe it is about distinguishing what that commonality is—what that common point is—and then utilizing it in a creative way to access the community and develop it (IG2.4 p.15).

The exchange highlights successful development is dependent upon finding a commonality, and engaging people in co-producing plans for creative utilization of assets that allows for new ideas and innovation to emerge. Later, in the same session, when dialoguing about how development happens, the artists provide the following insights:

#10: I don't think one does [develop a community]. I think a community goes about developing itself.

#6: You have to have something that brings them all together. I mean in this town [Sault Ste. Marie] we have transportation and industry. You have to have a common reason why a whole bunch of people are going to live in a certain area.

#10: Right. I wrote interactivity down

#9: Well, that ties into the social side as well. You know you're not a community if you won't interact with each other. You're just a whole bunch of ones

#10: So, how do you achieve that interactivity? I guess I always go back to shared experience (IG2.4, p. 27).

Engaging with others is a core element in creating a community, otherwise, as Flora and Flora (2013) argue, it is simply a place comprised of people living in the same locale with no connection. There needs to be a reason for people to interact, and a process to facilitate such that leads to improved lives. Art is seen as a key reason for people from diverse background to assemble and engage as a group or community. An Artists' Inquiry Group member notes:

It always comes back to looking at the question of place and how art can develop place. To me the key thing is giving people the opportunity to have some perception of themselves, that they are free to be creative within the community as opposed to not having the right (IG2.3, #10, p.15).

Across the research the concept of 'utilizing the arts as a means of change' is considered relatively straightforward in the sense that artistic expression is accessible—most people can engage and glean benefits associated with increased agency and resilience. Shifting community development culture, however, is considered to be much more complex with processes; specifically, *how* it is

undertaken is key to success. There is a strong sense among diverse participants that existing approaches to community development restrain engagement, and therefore, do not meet local needs. For instance, when recruiting artists for the artist-led sector planning sessions many expressed the necessity for integrating the arts into community planning, but a few declined the invitation to participate stating current development practices lead to further marginalization, seeing them as economic-driven job creation and wealth generation initiatives capitalizing on their creative talents for the benefit of others. An example cited is the allocation of limited financial resources to the tourist industry rather than investing in the local arts sector to germinate unique activities that directly respond to community needs and would also be attractive to visitors. Irrespective of artists' interest to contribute to cultural development there is wide-spread agreement that top-down approaches or those exclusionary of engaging diverse citizens in general, and artists in particular, in planning processes are attempting to turn communities into 'authentic' cultural places based on someone else's vision, rather than allowing identity to emerge. Such initiatives are perceived to be rarely built on fostering, healthy respectful relationships between and among those engaged in the sector, community professionals and administrators, and the broader public in ways that would lead to significant social change, (increased health and well-being, quality of life) and thus, not worthy of supporting, or if so, very cautiously.

The Developers' Inquiry Group lament the professionalization of community development practice within government agencies has resulted in a tendency to assume that expertise resides within institutions, giving developers the role to determine and implement solutions rather than engage the community to collaboratively solve problems. They recall the challenging times when community input was discouraged and noted, fortunately, that it is no longer the rule and many departments are now more receptive to discussing, if not implementing, alternative plans¹⁰⁰.

¹⁰⁰ Developers' Inquiry Group, #4.

6.2 Building Cross-Sector Relationships for Local and Regional Development

Art is like Lego ... there is a million ways you can connect to it (FG.5, M1, p.15).

The above quote captures the perception exuded in the research regarding the efficacy of the arts in developing resilience. It highlights the sector's broad appeal and utility in meeting diverse needs and goals due to its breadth of disciplines and range of applications. This section identifies ways artists' cross-sector relationships fosters local and regional culture-based economies, while reducing the precariousness of the sector.

The arts' contribution to resilience is significant—"We make the community"¹⁰¹ states a participant in the organizational peer network initiative (Cycle 6) summarily echoing many comments expressed throughout the study. The various ways the arts build community include: fostering relationships among diverse people; developing understanding between cultures; adding colour and vibrancy; creating primarily summer and/or entry level employment for younger people; and attracting tourists. These attributes contribute to community level resilience by increasing the quality of life, retaining creative people and generating important external revenue streams.

A considerable number of artists expressed a range of bewilderment and exasperation that developers are not focusing on the arts sector as a diversification strategy. They see ways its utilization would advance sustainability and wonder when it would be 'their time' to finally be recognized as vital citizens, and a potentially dynamic sector in this regard. A few artists commented that leaders would likely only consider the arts worth investing in as a 'last option'. Consultations with diverse participants beyond the arts sector suggest that formal and informal leaders are unaware of the cultural assets in their backyard that could be leveraged for development. Some note that many communities do not have the human or financial resources to focus on arts sector development. Others indicate they think the arts is an essential tool for developing and defining place; however, the lack of traditional economic evidence perpetuates the belief that the arts are not a viable diversification or community development strategy, particularly for rural locales¹⁰². This speaks to the need for alternative assessment models that would capture the sector's significant value in building capacity and agency for social and economic innovation within new and emerging

¹⁰¹ Organizational peer networking: Sault Ste. Marie.

¹⁰² Artists' Inquiry Group; Artist-led sector planning: Elliot Lake; the three fly-in First Nation communities, Sioux Lookout, the Francophone community, Chapleau, Temagami, Advisory Group; Professional development workshops: Kenora, Manitoulin Island, Wawa, Fort Frances; Steering Committee; Symposium; Organizational peer networking.

knowledge economies in the periphery. It also suggests the need to identify cultural assets (people, historic, and natural) that could be leveraged, and potential partners in advancing such.

The relationships between the art, identity and the land; specifically, how art can define place, is a theme the Developers' Inquiry Group's dialogues centred on over a number of consultations. Sault Ste. Marie's competitive edge—should it chose to develop its artistic assets—was discussed over three sessions with one member providing the following three quotes. The first brings forth the concept of place as a crucible:

I think it's been a crucible ... It has spawned artistic endeavours, whether it's literature or painting, photography. And it becomes the question of 'What is it'. Is it the natural setting? Does that permeate into the residents? I think, yes. And pride has had this effect on others. Bragging rights, maybe. For whatever reason—I live in a community, not like ... [others]. I feel like it's a symbol of its own place. [Art] has this ability to do these things ... (IG1.5, #3, p.7).

Seeding this idea to participants in the artist-led sector planning sessions across the North evoked similar responses regarding the latent and underutilized value of the arts in creating community identity and place making. In the second passage the developer highlights the inspirational aspects of the landscape:

If someone [Ken Danby] of that international significance can talk about inspiration being derived from the landscape in this community, then that tends to underscore the importance of the contribution that art or landscape makes and how it is manifested (IG1.8, #3, p.3).

Many participants across the region recall a number of highly regarded artists from their area who were inspired by the physical geography but forced to relocate to advance their practice, thus contributing to another city's prosperity and vitality¹⁰³. The developer's third statement once again raises the connection between the art and the land:

If you look at the number of artisans that have been spawned here because of the landscape I would submit, it's probably beyond what the norm would be in other communities. So, what motivated those people to do that? ... All of those artisans got something out of the vibrations of the earth. They expressed themselves given the richness of the surrounding landscape (IG2.9, #3, p.12).

The importance of finding and developing a niche to differentiate the Sault, i.e. 'not bland mediocrity' first referenced in the Developers' Inquiry Group was voiced in the following cycle (Cycle Three) investigating innovation and cultural development and across the research cycles. People want to live in exciting places, participate in their development and see themselves, their ideas and

¹⁰³ Artist-led sector planning: Sioux Lookout; Steering Committee; Symposium; Organizational peer networking: Sault Ste. Marie, 4elements Living Arts; Conseil des Arts de Hearst.

aspirations reflected in the community. The arts are seen as a critical component and means to this end.

Participants from a range of artistic and community development backgrounds indicate inclusive and emergent processes embedded into community planning contributes to building responsive, engaging and simulating locales. Strategies include engaging artists in community development activities and/or ensuring diverse peoples' expressed views are incorporated into priority and action plans. Examples of integrating the arts into community plans through respectful cross-relationship building occurred in a number of locations in Cycle Four (artist-led sector planning and network development) that assembled artists, municipal staff and government officials and citizens interested in the arts to collaborate in a strengths-based creative planning process. The consultations elicited each person's understanding of local cultural assets, building a rich awareness of existing and underutilized strengths and resources, and a diversity of potential ways for increasing intra- and inter-sectoral connections to elevate the community's profile, locally and beyond. Advantages of inclusive and emergent sector engagement include accessing tacit local understanding, encouraging social capital development, particularly linking to decision makers and/or potential champions, identifying artists interested in development initiatives, increasing artists' sense of connection to the larger community, and the co-production of plans that have broader buy-in and greater collective will to implement them¹⁰⁴. Participants' reflections at the conclusion of the consultative process indicate considerable increased knowledge about the sector. A number of consultations also focused on 'how to' develop strategic plans, and ways the sector and developers can advocate to advance ideas that build community capacity in these areas. In a few communities it sparked the political will to prioritize some of the session's emergent ideas, leading to two initiatives taking their strategic plans forward to be advanced by their respective municipal councils. Chapleau is beautifying the community through the addition of more wall murals, and Elliot Lake is using the report to develop funding proposals to support arts development including cultural mapping and planning.

Elliot Lake's long-time practice of integrating the arts into planning has been a particularly successful attraction and retention strategy in transforming it into a retirement community, and retaining a greater number of younger people. Dialogue during the consultation with artists and municipal arts and tourism professionals revealed the community experiences a constant flux of seniors, e.g. those relocating with limited or any prior relationship to the city, and those departing for the winter

¹⁰⁴ Artist-led sector planning: Elliot Lake, Sioux Lookout, Chapleau.

and/or moving on for various reasons. The City's Lester B. Person Civic Centre¹⁰⁵ houses a community theatre, visual arts studios and a gallery, providing meeting, gathering, creating and presenting space contributing to a very vibrant cultural sector given its size. A stable space enables the ever-changing groups of citizens to continue practicing with "whoever shows up". Discussions with local artists indicate the arts are a pathway and a bridge into the community. Connecting with others through creative practice mitigates artistic, social and economic isolation by developing diverse relationships, discovering community events and sources of information necessary for continuing and/or advancing engagement.

The following three examples from the research findings illustrate how cross-sector relationships have effectively and efficiently utilized artists' skills and cultural assets to engage the public, fostering an understanding of place, contributing community identity and a localized and/or regional arts-based economy. The initiatives are: i) 4elements Living Arts; ii) Lake of the Woods Artists Collective; and iii) The Coalition for Algoma Passenger Trains (CAPT).

4elements Living Arts, located on Manitoulin Island, is led by Sophie Edwards and Heather Thoma, both of whom play important dual roles as artists and community animators. They have worked with the local community development corporation, LAMBAC, and the Township of Billings over a number of years to raise the awareness of the link between culture and resilience. Manitoulin Island has a rich cultural history and particular geographical and geological features, a large Indigenous population representing approximately 50%, and a substantial number of summer residents with increasing year-round tourism. A primary goal of 4elements Living Arts is to increase residents' and communities' resilience by building connections to, and a deeper ecological understanding of the land and place, through the arts.

In September 2012, 4elements Living Arts led the research/community development project, The Art of Being Billings, that brought together residents of all ages and cultures to share their stories of Billings Township as part of the community's Sustainability Plan. The year-long initiative engaged community members in a process of envisioning of what the Township of Billings meant to them. Their involvement shifted community development processes from 'what to develop' to 'how to develop them' sparking further sustainable cultural development. The two women artists explained (during the organizational peer networking, their unique 'land based inquiry' is underpinned by creative processes of mapping, art making, and other activities designed to bring forth tacit local and traditional knowledge in making sense and meaning of the past, present and potential future

¹⁰⁵ Lester B. Person Civic Centre (<http://www.cityofelliottlake.com/en/recreation/civiccentre.asp>).

directions for community development. Sophie and Heather spent a lot of time listening to community members to find out what things they love (and love to do) and developed engagement opportunities along those lines, such as an evening of stargazing, with a campfire and storytelling. They assisted participants to map local stories, engage in creative visioning sessions, attend popular history nights, embark upon walks, and create land art along the Kagawong River.

The land art making, new to community members, the animators indicate, engaged people in river ecology, i.e. it facilitated residents' experiencing a well-known and well-loved space in a new way, encouraging people to see the river in different ways by getting off the trail into the surrounding bush and water. It also familiarized people with the concept of land art.

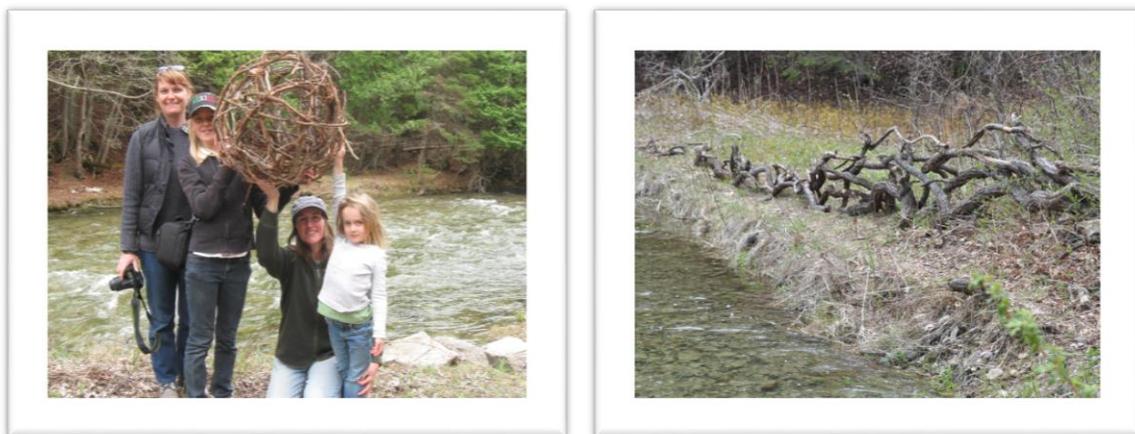


Figure 23: The Art of Being Billings, Land Based Art

Figure 23 depicts two images from the Art of Being Billings project utilizing land-based inquiry to connect people to the land. The left image features Sophie Edwards with three participants holding up their work a 'river sphere', comprised of twigs and roots. The right image *Billings Roots* is a site specific installation of roots collected along the river bank.

The Art of Being Billings initiative resulted in 4elements Living Arts being invited to move to the Township of Billings, which has led to the establishment of an annual environmental art festival called Elemental Festival that is supported by the community. Another significant outcome of the Billings research is the identification of key resources on which to create a culture-based economy leading to a Request for Proposals to further map the entire Island's cultural assets.

In Kenora, the inclusion of a few artists in an annual breast cancer fundraising event was instrumental in shifting the community's tourism-based identity from the traditional hunting and fishing focus—a declining sector of the industry—to cultural tourism. Located in Northwestern Ontario, the community has a winter population of approximately 20,000 people but in the summer

the influx of residents and tourist triples to upwards of 60,000 people. To take advantage of the increased population, the artists suggested they strategically locate their work around town to make it easier for people to bid on them. The simple act of placing art in the public's pathway, in parks, along downtown streets, verges and driveways, etcetera, changed the physical and aesthetic landscape, putting art back into the daily life of the community. The impact was significant: the event raised much needed funds; identified a number of local artists; and raised the visibility of the high quality of art being produced in the area. The Lake of the Woods Artists Collective (LOWAC) that developed out of this initiative has significantly increased artists' and the broader community's capacity through social capital development and revisioning of place. This is an excellent example of how connectivity facilitates development, and the presence of art in the public sphere sparks more activity, connections and broader community resilience. Figure 24 depicts one of the pieces of art in the exhibition that was placed against a tree in a public space.

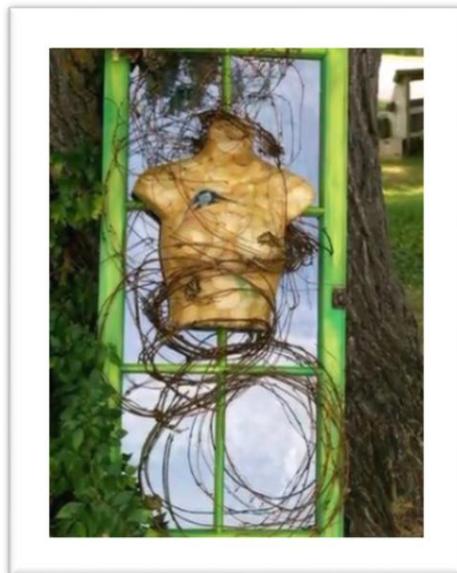


Figure 24: Art in Kenora's Public Pathways

An illustration of the 'Lego' connectivity of the arts (FG5, #M1, p.15) to other sectors is the Coalition for Algoma Passenger Rail's (CAPT) Group of Seven and Glenn Gould Train Event. The initiative raised awareness of the importance of passenger rail service while highlighting the Group of Seven's use of the Algoma Central Railway's (ACR) box cars to access the area's rugged wilderness. Although the Algoma region is known for being the painting ground, and thus, instrumental in defining the Group's distinctive 'Canadian style' of landscape painting as the first Canadian genre setting themselves apart from American/European approaches, there was no local initiative to preserve and/or celebrate the contribution of the painters' nation-building. The first Group of Seven Train

Event was launched in 2007 as a one-day initiative with passengers embarking on a short rail ride to Searchmount Resort north of Sault Ste. Marie to enjoy a day of arts and cultural activities. Figure 25, The *Group of Seven Train Event* poster advertises the second year of the event. The iconic image *Solemn Land* by J.E. M MacDonald is representative of the landscape of Northern Ontario, particularly along the shore of Lake Superior, although this painting is of a nearby inland lake.

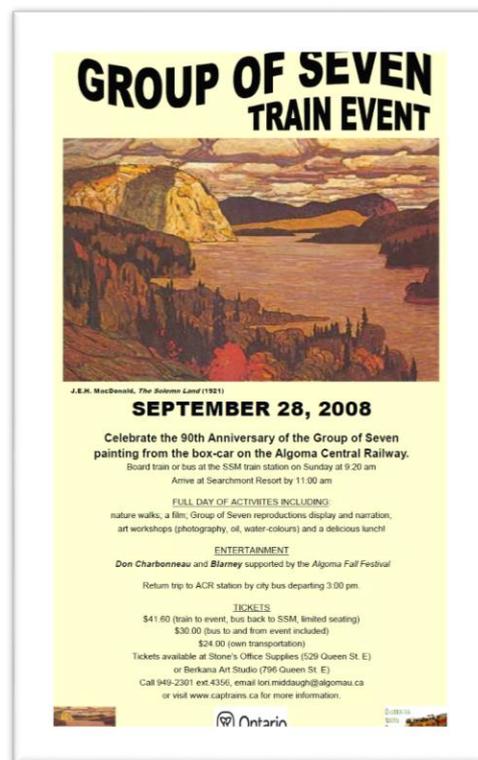


Figure 25: Group of Seven Train Event Poster

The Train Event quickly expanded to a two-day excursion that involves riding the rails through the wilderness accessed by the Group to Wawa where Glenn Gould spent time composing. Collaboration between the transportation infrastructure coalition and area artists Michael Burtch and Garry and Joanie McGuffin resulted in the film *The Painted Land* (White Pine Productions, 2015)¹⁰⁶ and Dale Innes' book *Seeking Solitude: Glenn Gould and the Goldberg Variations* (Innes, 2015). CAPT notes, everyone, artists, organizers and participants seemed to 'get it' in terms of the importance of building on the historical use of culture in the development of the region and its potential use¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁶ *The Painted Land: In Search of the Group of Seven* (<http://www.whitepinepictures.com/painted-land-in-search-of-the-group-of-seven>).

¹⁰⁷ Linda Savory Gordon, Co-Chair of CAPT, NORDIK research meeting.

Furthermore, this cross-sectoral initiative has spurred a number of other economic development activities that capitalize upon the area's connection to the Group of Seven. A new for-profit organization in Wawa, Soul of Superior Tours¹⁰⁸ organized a weekend event in 2012 celebrating Glenn Gould's 80th birthday and has expanded to offer other trips. More recently, recognizing the potential to draw high-end tourists from around the world, the Northeastern Ontario Tourism Division' Request for Proposals has led to a regional tourism strategy based on the Group of Seven's legacy and a provincial strategy is under development.

6.3 Community Development as a Creative Process

The fourth overarching theme emerging from the research, 'community development as a creative process', first surfaced in the two Inquiry Groups. Participants suggested communities can become more resilient through inclusive engagement strategies and collaborative development plans. Many of the same points resurfaced during the professional development workshops and the symposium focusing on Northern Artists' contexts, reinforcing previously expressed views¹⁰⁹. Reflection on the collective dialogues, and my own creative practice, suggest there is significant parallels between artistic practice and community development, and recognizing and adopting similar strategies would advantage community transitioning. This section identifies relationships between the two disciplines.

Both fields, creative practice and community development, can be largely divided into creative processes and products, each with a separate yet intertwined role to play. Processes undertaken to 'solve problems' have significant inherent value in building adaptive capacity that is separate from, and in addition to, the tangible final outcome. Key in each discipline is connecting to peoples' creative forces, following inquiry threads and/or ideas as they emerge, creating new relationships to make sense and meaning of them, enabling and supporting perseverance to work through complex issues and reach amicable solutions.

The arts manifest cultural products; community development creates planning documents, e.g. visions, identification of assets, opportunities and challenges, and action plans to mobilize resources, implement, monitor and assess performance. The intangible outcomes of creative artistic processes—agency, identity and belonging and health and well-being—are also outcomes of holistic, inclusive, emergent approaches to community development. Both processes are iterative,

¹⁰⁸ The Soul of Superior (<http://soulofsuperior.com>).

¹⁰⁹ Professional development workshops: Kenora, Manitoulin Island, Wawa; Symposium.

underpinned by dialogue: art, with materials and community development in concert with people. An underlying tenant of both is being open to changing directions as new insights emerge, often leading to alternative pathways that require reframing the question, which may more robustly capture the core issue and/or take one in a circular course back to the original question with increased understanding of underlying contexts. Practitioners must be ready to begin again with deeper understanding of the situation. Undoubtedly there are differences between the two practices revolving around inanimate versus animate subjects and locus of control being ‘within’ artists and ‘outside’ in developers, as well as timescales and agency.

Embedding emergent, creative processes into community development, the Artists’ Inquiry Group (IG2.3, #10, p.15) underscores, unleashes peoples’ creativity “giving the community the freedom towards creative thought and approach” as mentioned previously when referencing how art can develop place. It also raises the awareness that, paradoxically, people are already engaged in art on a daily basis—continuously and unconsciously—it is inherent in socialization. Culture is built on communicating with each other and should, therefore, be part of how we approach all things. The following exchange illustrates artists’ deep understanding of the relationship between art and community development practices, highlighting the parallels between the two:

#6: So as a community it’s much like that then [engaging in artistic processes] as you’re trying to problem solve within the community, trying to get problems from within the community addressed and figured out and the results might be a new resolution at city council or it might be a group of people admit ‘ok we need a new park here’ that kind of thing. That might be the creative results or documents.

#10: And the end product is the park. And then a recognizing that that park is valuable and we should probably go through the process again. That seems to be how all of it works. In that sense, that’s where the art value—or community development is—in building that space. The space is the art. The downtown is the art—this is the art—the park is the art (IG2.3, #6, p.12).

Art and community development are both underpinned by creative process with outputs intended to advance society; however, they are socially constructed into two different fields. Artists’ Inquiry Group members contend developers that implement ‘top down’ approaches are not ‘*creating community*’ but rather ‘*excluding community*’¹¹⁰. *Community development is the act of creating community*, i.e. making the park, engaging others in the emergence and creation of it, reflecting on what is important in one’s life and manifesting it through local invention (Carter, 2005). Inclusive, emergent processes, therefore, transforms development into *community development*, generating

¹¹⁰ Artists’ Inquiry Group #6.

the creative capacity, social capital and collective will to address community issues and persevere through challenging times.

Perceptions regarding the similarities between art and community development are not limited to artists, but emerged during the majority of artist-led sector planning consultations and a number of the symposium discussions. As well, the Developers' Inquiry Group brought forth a story about a community development conference one participant attended:

We did the same thing at the retreat, listened to the Jazz band the first night because the lessons learned [about community development] were there. Just watch and listen and see how everyone works together and how without them all working it just doesn't sound right (IG1.9, #1, p.8).

The speaker underscores jazz parallels development, explaining jazz is an emergent form of music created between the players and reliant upon collaboration, understanding the process, and respecting each other. Each player has a chance to contribute to the music, in their own style of expression and often as a solo, with the other members rejoining and playing together again as a team (Pstross, 2014; Westoby and Kaplan, 2013; McKnight and Block, 2010).

Later in the same session a different member of the Developers' Inquiry Group spoke at length about the iterative and transformative process of learning, linking it to individual and community level change, describing development as a *big, non-linear picture* that deepens each time issues are revisited:

If you want to try to plot it, the learning process or curve ... it's a spiral and you keep coming back to these things. I keep coming back to this 'Who am I?' and 'What is my place?' And 'what is community' and 'what is it all about?' Yeah, if you're learning you should be in a slightly different part of that curve, you're coming back into that realm again. You're moving [spiraling outward] expanding with the knowledge and wisdom ... the fact that we keep revisiting questions doesn't mean we're not learning, it just means we're taking the knowledge that we learned from the last time we asked this question and we're bringing it forward ... What more do we know about this? About myself? About community? You hear 'You know we had a thing like this a few years before, back then it was R.A.P.I.D.S. [a Sault Ste. Marie community development plan from the 1990s] and before that was something else'. And they think we're never getting better (IG1.9, #4, p.7).

The above passage echoes artists' understanding of the iterative and cyclical nature of transformative learning inherent in creative practice. Its value lays in the emergence of new insights that reflection and revisiting issues brings forth, articulating and manifesting it in cultural products in one way, and other times a different way, but advancing knowledge and building capacity in each cycle. The speaker continues unpacking the learning processes, cautioning:

... but don't think that because you're coming back to the same issues doesn't mean we're not learning from last time ... Learning is cyclical and life is cyclical, things do come back and revisit. Countless times you're going to call into question your meaning on this planet. It doesn't mean you're an idiot who didn't learn it last time, and you never have to revisit that again. You always have to revisit these things. And I guess these things are different for everybody, what these parts are on the spiral, my personal might be my own 'What am I doing here and what are these personal relationships?' But for everybody else it's different. You will come back and come back and come back again, but you're at a different part (IG1.9, #4, p.7).

Recognizing everyone is embedded in their personal journey, at various points along the iterative learning cycle contributes to understanding the parallels between creative practice and community development. Both are underpinned by similar transformative learning processes that facilitate moving forward toward similar goals—increased agency, health and well-being and a sense of belonging—but are operating at different scales (Crane, 2010). Both practices are integral parts of life and involve *learning to how to change* by reflecting on the past, seeing things in a different light, and building new relationships to make sense and meaning as part of everyday decision-making processes. The same developer carries on expounding:

... Because very little is actually linear. Very little in nature is actually linear. Life, I believe, is not linear. It's repeated over and over and over again. When a tree grows and it falls and it turns into soil and new things grow up. Things don't just start here and stop here, in my humble opinion, and if you look back and say I can prove that it's linear, pull back, because you're just looking at a tiny little fragment of a much larger cycle of things. You're looking at a tiny little piece of a big giant piece of things. And so, why wouldn't learning be the same way with all these things, resiliency and all these things? And people keep saying jeez, economies keep rise and fall, rise and fall ... Can't we learn from this and just stay at the good part? No (IG1.9, #4, p.7).

The above passage hints at the frustration many of the developers engaged in the research expressed about leaders and/or community responses that include 'Been there, done that' and Why do we have to and/or Why are we doing this again? It speaks to the challenges of collaborating and the complexity of changing community culture. It suggests one must be respectful when working with others, to give people 'space and time' to work things out, to make sense of it all, to shift perspectives and values and respond differently. Learning and change, and 'learning to change' at a community level is an iterative process that sometimes gives the appearance of repetition. The research indicates that while it may seem redundant, it is underpinned by transformation, small and larger steps that may not be obvious to participants and/or the public.

Acknowledging the parallels between the two practices allows learning from each other, building bridges and relationship across fields and the community system, thus strengthening resilience. Implicit in creative approaches to development is the necessity for developers and community members to be comfortable with emergence and inclusive processes, and allow sufficient time for people to work collaboratively through the process. Recognizing parallels between artistic and community development practices shifts the lens of artistic practice from being an individualistic arts-based activity to being community development, and community development to being an active and dynamic, creative process and practice. In summary, adopting more responsive community development approaches shifts processes and focus from *'what to develop'*, to *'how to develop them'* allowing people to participate and express their aspirations, and generate innovative solutions. Both disciplines can benefit from a deeper understanding of each other's role in sustainability.

6.4 Mapping the Contributions of Cross-Sectoral Collaboration to Resilience

Analysis of the study indicate the arts sector is playing a significant role in community development and building healthy, resilient places. Specifically, artist-led initiatives are leading the development of the rural social milieu, critical transformational and transitioning space that increases broader community adaptive capacity. They provide the space and the means for the cultural sector to develop, grow and transact business though fostering networks that link producers to consumers and the public, shaping community identity and spurring localized economies. The community infrastructure artists are providing creates a variety of safe, welcoming and inclusive places to gather, attracting diverse people including leaders, enabling artists to access them in informal environments. These spaces and places significantly contribute to citizens' sense of belonging to the larger community, while reintegrating art back into peoples' lives by making it accessible. Direct interaction between and among artists, attendees and the products support the dynamic interplay that create community. Sharing, conversing and co-producing knowledge are key to deepening understanding of the complex relationship between people and place, facilitating realigning values and norms, and creating a sense of belonging and social cohesion. Reactions and responses to objects and personal exchanges provide important feedback loops to artists that inform creative practice, sparking the development of more diverse cultural goods in their next creation cycle.

Engaging artists and citizens in inclusive, creative community planning processes fosters a broad culture of creativity and innovation by establishing space for people to express their aspirations, identify common ground and bridge cultural divides through understanding place from diverse

historical and current perspectives that have impacted on relationships. Drawing upon a wide spectrum of people identifies a wealth of assets that can be strengthened and/or leveraged to diversify the economy, gaining a competitive advantage. The co-production of plans through creative, emergent processes builds community, agency, innovation and collective will to enact development. More responsive community development strategies grounded in collaboration revisions practitioners' role toward being facilitators, part of an emergent process, shifting the focus from 'what to develop' to 'how to develop them'.

Integrating the arts into official plans, i.e. linking cultural development, land use planning and economic development, provides effective and efficient pathways for allocating resources to the sector, increasing the quality of life by sparking community-wide innovation and regeneration. Cross-sectoral collaborations between artists and other fields strengthens the social fabric, reducing the sector's precariousness while fostering local and regional culture-based economies and expanding the tourism industry.

Parallels between creative practice and community development practice are many, i.e. both can be largely divided into creative processes and products, each with a separate yet intertwined role to play. The arts generate cultural products; community development creates planning documents. Each discipline is dependent upon making connections and building capacity to generate new knowledge to understand complex issues and reach amicable solutions. There is much potential sharing and learning from each other, between the two socially constructed fields that would strengthen resilience.

The culture-arts-economy-resilience framework developed in the first cycle of research (Figure 6, p.131) illustrates holistic community plans lead to place marketing strategies, and capacity building fosters a home grown economy. Situating the research learnings from this chapter within a complex adaptive community system reveals inclusive, creative community development processes, integration of the arts into planning documents, and diverse cross-sectoral partnerships with the arts sector builds multi-scale transitioning capacity. *The non-linear dynamic value chain begins by engaging artists and the broader public in creative, cross-sectoral community planning processes, and developing holistic, cohesive place marketing plans, leading to the emergence of the rural social milieu that fosters more and diverse cultural products and local and/or regional place-based economies.* Cross-sector partnerships with the arts sector creates unique relationships that become the foundation for creative products and services, shaping community identity, and providing a competitive advantage with skills and knowledge gained through participation spilling over into

other domains and spheres. Figure 26 maps the intangible and tangible contributions of cross-sectoral relationships to community level resilience.

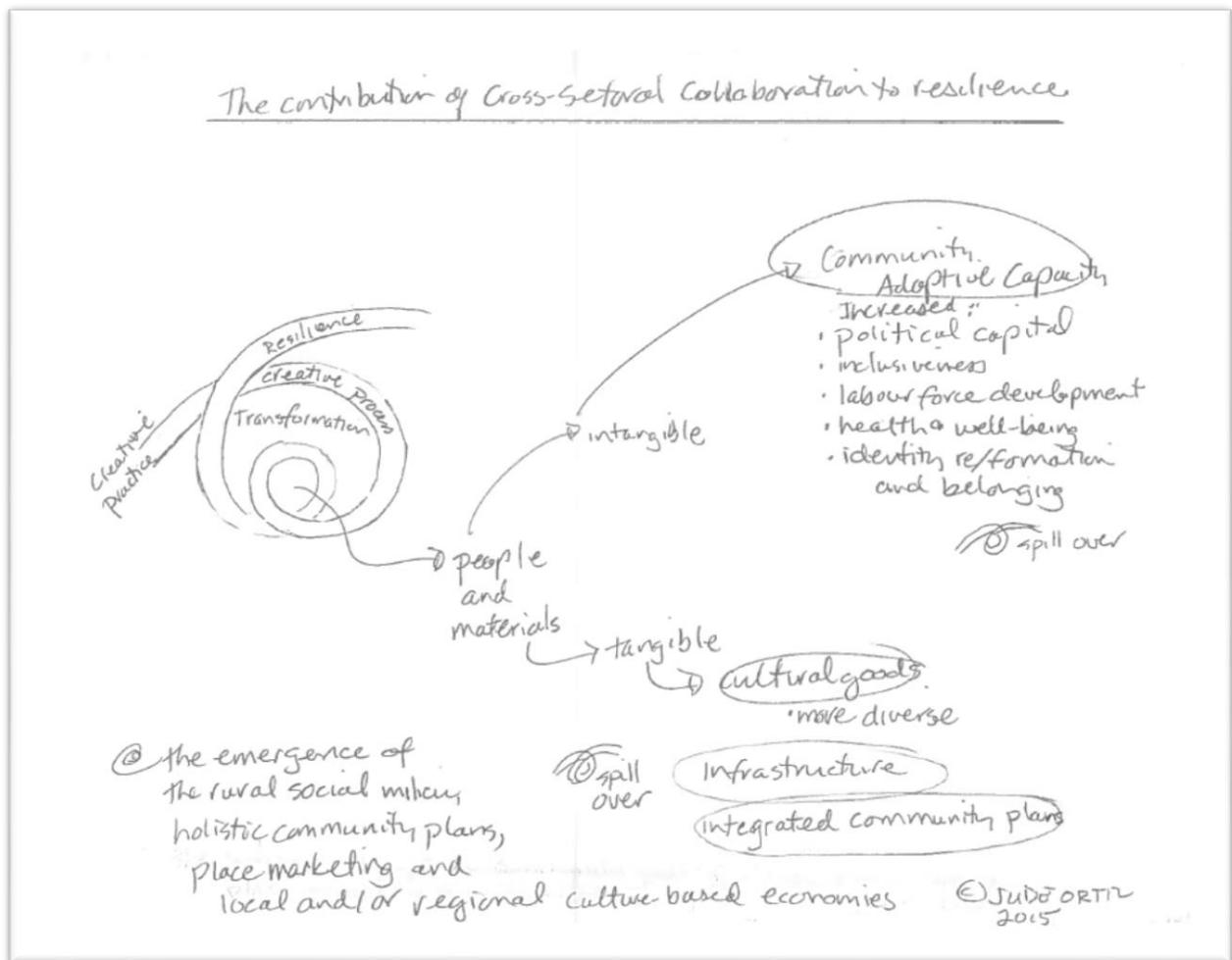


Figure 26: The Contribution of Cross-Sectoral Collaboration to Resilience

The research findings indicate to further build on the arts sector’s foundational community development role and maintain existing social, organizational and physical infrastructure cross-sector linkages through partnerships and integration into formal and informal planning processes is essential. Strengthening the arts ecology, from education to business supports, creates opportunities and pathways for citizens to unleash their creative potential, participate in the life of the community, express themselves through art making for gifting, bartering and/or the marketplace and contribute to co-producing relevant local solutions to addressing pressing issues. Section 6.7 presents the research findings regarding ways of strengthening the arts, thereby increasing individual and collective capacity to continually adapt.

6.5 A Systems Framework for Understanding the Arts' Contribution to Resilience

A review of literature regarding evaluation frameworks for arts and culture indicate traditional economic models are of limited utility for a number of statistical, classification and data collection-related reasons that challenge capturing the sector's activities, and thus, its vitality (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009; Gordon and Beilby-Orrin, 2006; Johnson, 2009). This suggests new assessment framework are needed. During the first cycle of this research (The Socioeconomic Impact of the Arts on Economy of Sault Ste. Marie) I developed a new integrated culture-arts-economy-resilience framework (Figure 6, p.131) illustrating the relationships between the arts and the development of knowledge economies within the context of resilience. Over the course of the research I developed a new visual map (Figure 27) expanding the original framework to include the numerous intangible characteristics and tangible outputs derived through engaging in the arts that facilitate building individual, organizational and community level capacity for transitioning through change.

Figure 27 reveals the relationships—the interconnectedness and interdependence of the intangible and tangible benefits derived from the intertwined role of creative processes and products—within each community dimension (i.e. People, Organizations, Community Processes and Resources) and the resulting synergy that circulates around the wheel and radiates outward within each section toward resilience. Action-based creative processes and commodity-based products collectively build capacity to continually revision, adapt and generate cultural goods for place-based localized economies.

First, transformation lies at the core of creative practice: transformation of people and materials. Transformation, it in and of itself, encapsulates a number of process stages that underpin resilience; specifically, the capacity for innovation, adaptation and transitioning to new and/or deeper understanding of oneself within the web of socioeconomic and historical relational contexts of place, through the manipulation materials and the manifestation of products. Embedding creative practice into a systems framework illustrates and maps the contribution of arts engagement identified in the research.

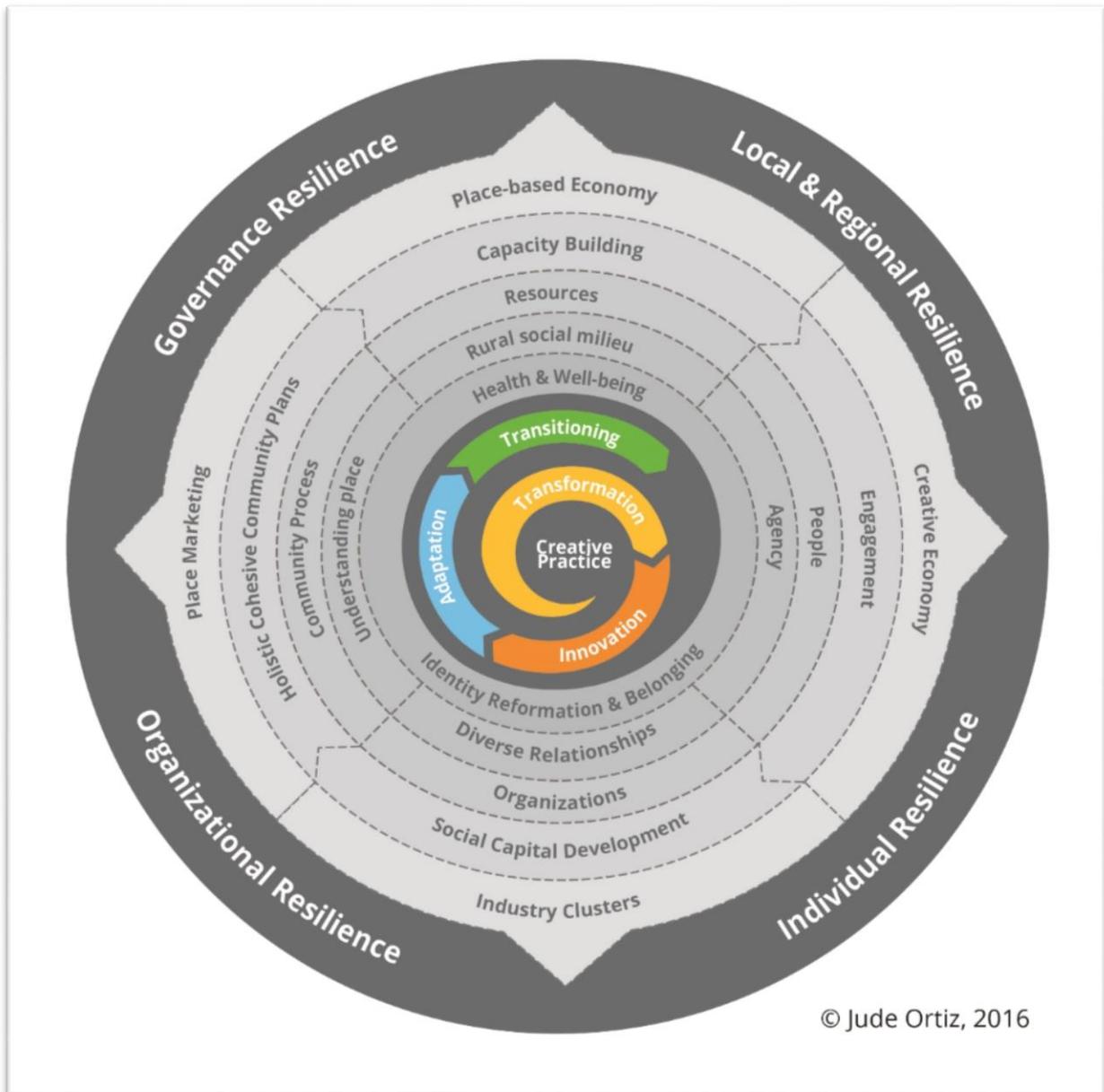


Figure 27: A Systems Framework for Understanding Creative Practice's Contribution to Resilience

At the centre of the schema is creative practice, depicted with its four creative aspects: transformation, innovation, adaptation and transitioning. The next second layer illustrates the contribution of creative practice to Health and Well-being and Identity Reformation and Belonging impacting on each of the system's dimensions, underpinning continual managing and responding to change.

The following circle is comprised of Agency, Diverse Relationships, Understanding Place and the Rural Social Milieu. While each of the four contributions in this layer is necessary for strengthening each dimension, they are more closely associated with one. It is important to note benefits scale up

as contributions move from the individual to the community level. Thus, increased Agency leads to more Diverse Relationships that contribute to enlarging Understanding of Place through people's various perspectives, which in turn, fosters the Rural Social Milieu, connecting and engaging and more people.

The next circle identifies the four community dimensions (People, Organizations, Community Processes and Resources) and their connection to Engagement at an individual level, Social Capital Development at an organizational level, Holistic, Cohesive Community Plans at the community scale and Capacity Building through the utilization of community resources, again at the larger scale. This layer, through the use of arrows, illustrates synergy building from one community dimension to the next. The next layer indicates the four knowledge economies that emerge from the connectedness and interaction of each community dimension: The Creative Economy, Industry Clusters, Place-Marketing and Place-based Economy.

Each dimension also radiates outward, illustrating the contribution of creative practice to various aspects of resilience. Agency encourages People to Engage in creative practice as a means of civic engagement, leading to the development of a Creative Economy and Individual Resilience. Diverse relationships create Organizations leading to social capital development and the development of Industry Clusters and Organizational Resilience. Understanding place encourages inclusive Community Processes, and the development of Holistic, Cohesive Community Plans that support Place Marketing, leading to Governance Resilience. The Rural Social Milieu builds on local assets and Resources, Building Capacity of citizens to develop a Place-Based Economy, leading to Local and Regional Resilience.

The map is depicted utilizing dotted lines indicating the sectors or dimensions are not silos, but rather a system of relationships, with connectivity and synergy building dynamically in various directions and scales, with skills and knowledge gained through creative practice and collaboration spilling over to other work/life spheres and domains within sectors and between and across the breadth of the community.

Critical is understanding that creative practice, and thus, its benefits to resilience, is not limited to artists and/or the arts sector. The research findings indicate people who engage in and/or engage others in creative processes, such as community developers, derive the same benefits from practice as artists, given the inherently transformative nature of the arts. The community system is strengthened when inclusive creative processes are incorporated into various domains and sectors,

allowing the space and means for citizens to tap into their latent creativity and express their aspirations for themselves and the broader community.

Understanding the intertwined and dynamic role creative processes and products play in individual, organizational and community resilience supports the argument that one alone does not create resilience in a complex adaptive system, but rather direct interaction between the components. Community culture and processes shape opportunities for, and terms of, engagement, i.e. by the way people interact and connect, or not, impacting on synergy, the capacity to collaborate, innovate, revision and diversify economies. More specifically, the *nature* of relationships fosters or hinders respect and trust that underpins the development of healthy, resilient people and communities and capacity for continual renewal.

6.6 Strengthening the Arts for Increased Resilience

There is a considerable amount of artistic capacity and innovation across the North as evidenced throughout the research that is currently contributing to increased individual, arts sector and broader community resilience. Many participants (artists and people from other sectors, government and agencies) in the study consider artists' productivity—from cultural goods to community infrastructure—to be largely unrecognized and undervalued contributions to increasing sustainability and generating wealth within emerging economies. The sector remains isolated, 'a community within a community', undervalued in community development, and facing significant challenges in maintaining creative practice and infrastructure that also serves the larger public¹¹¹. Locales that have fostered cross-sector collaborations with the sector are reducing the arts' precariousness and increasing broader creativity and innovation; however, to further leverage cultural assets a more robust ecology is needed. Many of the missing links hindering development in the North identified in the research is community infrastructure that would typically be provided through public and/or private investment in more urban areas¹¹².

¹¹¹ Developers' Inquiry Group; Artists' Inquiry Group; Focus Groups: 1,2,3,5; Artist-led sector planning: Elliot Lake; the three fly-in First Nation communities, Sioux Lookout, the Francophone community, Chapleau; Temagami, Advisory Group; Professional development workshops: Kenora; Manitoulin Island; Wawa; Fort Frances, Steering Committee; Organizational peer networking: Hearst, Steering Committee; Symposium; Organizational peer networking.

¹¹² Artist- led sector planning: every session, Advisory Group; Professional development workshop: every session; Symposium; Organizational peer networking

The following sections present a number of participant-generated recommendations and strategies for strengthening the arts. The data is organized around a resilience framework of engagement, social capital development, holistic, community plans, and resource development, identifying what communities need to foster in becoming more self-reliant and local assets upon which to build to achieve such. Strategies for increasing, developing and/or supporting Northern arts ecosystems centre on: engagement and education; networks and organizations; governance, funding models and research capacity; and capacity building and development supports including, among other things, places to gather such as cafés, clubs and restaurants and diverse venues that underpin an vibrant arts scene and the rural social milieu.

6.6.0 Opportunities for Engagement and Education

Across the research cycles diverse participants strongly indicated germinating a culture of broad-based creativity for community innovation, regeneration and continual renewal is a priority. Throughout the study, particularly the artist-led sector planning sessions, First Nation and Francophone communities, spoke strongly of the need to reintegrate creativity and art back into daily life by increasing engagement opportunities. People learn by doing and experiencing, therefore, a greater number and diversity of culturally appropriate opportunities at all levels, in all disciplines within the three engagement streams (creative expression; aesthetic art; creative and culture-based economies), within school curricula, after school programs, and in the community at large would make the arts accessible to all.

Educational programs, conferences, symposia, research and exhibitions investigating and celebrating the locale's history and natural and cultural heritage would support greater understanding of the links between the arts, the land (environment), and creative and culture-based economies. The local, regional and global connectivity garnered from assembling, dialoguing and co-producing understanding would foster industry clusters within these disciplines, building community level identity as knowledge hubs around rural and Northern issues. Opportunities of this nature would also support artists to develop reflexive practices and hone critical discourse skills that would further increase the quality of engagement, leading to more unique, expressive and meaningful goods regardless of whether they are retained, gifted, bartered or sold. Equally important is educational events that create space for direct interaction between artists and the public to exchange and inform perceptions and beliefs. Initiatives of this nature would also develop cultural literacy, i.e. the capacity to articulate the sector's purpose, meaning and societal value to diverse stakeholders, partners and audiences, and the various roles creative processes and products play in community

development, wealth generation and sustainability. The ability to convey the value of the arts beyond economic benchmarks is essential in advocating for resource allocation which study participants indicate plays a key factor in perpetuating the perception that investment in the sector is a subsidy, one that locales can afford given the challenging economic conditions the region is facing. Artists capacity to ‘unpack’ creative practice, express the underpinnings of their work increases self-pride and broader public’s appreciation for, and understanding of, the sector, encouraging cultural appreciation, diversity, continuance, and investment.

Priorities for strengthening engagement and educational opportunities emerging from the study include:

- Improving existing formal education opportunities: more schools offering art education, and a greater variety of programming;
- Improving the delivery of existing programs in Boards of Education by using a combination of face-to-face interaction with Northern artists and online learning;
- Developing special online formats for art education in Northern Ontario;
- Presenting art and craft as a profession in Full Day Early Learning Kindergarten Programs to Grade Twelve;
- Integrating traditional art and craft making into school for cross-cultural and intergenerational knowledge sharing and learning;
- Developing a curatorial study program for Northern art at an Ontario university and/or college; and
- Organizing topical workshops, symposia, exhibitions, etc. investigating and celebrating relationships between the arts, place and creative and culture-based economies.

First Nation and Francophone participants indicate cultural identity and preservation is a primary reason driving engagement, identifying a significant need for more opportunities for all ages and levels of interest to participate¹¹³. Recommendations include increasing access to a wide range of formal and informal educational opportunities including peer mentoring between generations and across communities. In contrast to Francophone culture that is promoted and to some degree considered ‘preserved’ though the school system¹¹⁴ Indigenous culture is much more tenuous as it is not necessarily part of the curricula. During the artist-led sector planning sessions with the three fly-in First Nation communities, participants spoke of challenges they face. For example, artists from

¹¹³ Developers’ Inquiry Group; Artists’ Inquiry Group; Artist-led sector planning: every session, Advisory Committee; Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa, Manitoulin Island; Steering Committee; Symposium; Organizational peer networking.

¹¹⁴ Artist-led sector planning: Advisory Committee.

Kingfisher and Summer Beaver explain beadwork is taught on a limited basis in the elementary school; however, it is not sufficient to retain cultural heritage. They advocate for integrating the arts into the education system and broadening the scope of activities, but note that it is dependent upon finding teachers and funding to pay for the expertise as it is considered an external activity rather than core curricula. To mitigate these deficits artists are organizing monthly jamborees, elder craft nights, traditional celebrations, girls' arts and craft nights and men's carving workshops to learn traditional arts. All express a need for more opportunities and an appropriate teaching space. There is an sense of urgency due to an aging Indigenous population whose language and cultural vitality and identity is only now beginning to recover from British and French colonization at one end of the spectrum, and a burgeoning population of younger people that is more connected to the internet than the land, at the other end. Of particular concern is the continued loss of language. Some dialects have been lost forever, others are near extinction. Concerted effort is being made to reclaim language and with it deeper understanding of world views.

6.6.1 Development of Networks and Organizations

Participants from diverse backgrounds and sectors throughout the research indicate networks and organizations strengthen the sector by raising the visibility of, and access to, the arts. They facilitate engagement, social capital development, innovation, and cultural clusters that increase sustainability and leverages creative capacity for growth. Social relations build critical intra-, inter-, cross-sectoral, local, and regional connections that enable accessing information, supplies and markets; sharing, co-producing meaning and knowledge dissemination; and cultural continuity. There is recognition amongst participants that networks and organizations are slowly forming and expanding but the pace of development, their precariousness, and sustainability is of great concern¹¹⁵.

The three fly-in First Nation communities underscore the importance of networks to connect intergenerationally in keeping traditional knowledge and skills alive. Kingfisher Lake, Mishkeegogamang and Summer Beaver each note they have several members who are actively engaged in preserving traditional practices and knowledge; however, the communities do not necessarily have the same areas of expertise. Between them they appear to have most of the cultural practices covered¹¹⁶. For example, Kingfisher Lake has approximately ten active fiddle

¹¹⁵ Artist-led sector planning: every session; Symposium; Organizational peer networking: Sault Ste. Marie, 4elements Living Arts, Conseil des Arts de Hearst.

¹¹⁶ Artist-led sector planning: the three fly-in First Nation communities.

players while Mishkeegogamang has few and are desperate to find ways to preserve traditional music. The session highlights the urgency and necessity of working collaboratively to support each other through community networks and exchanges, underscoring the need for logistical and financial investment in achieving such. It is essential for people of a common minority-language community to meet and express themselves in their native language. It provides learners the opportunity to practice and build on their language skills and it enables transferring traditional knowledge and skills between younger people and elders with each generation learning from other. A resident of Summer Beaver echoes the concern for passing on traditional knowledge from one generation to the next:

I'd like to show the youths to carry on our knowledge and education from the parents, like what I said on paddle making, tikinagan, so we can carry on and educate our youths. But we don't have any older person, [...] who would teach the youths. I'd really like very much to have that happen (Breathing Northwinds Community Report for Kingfisher Lake, Mishkeegogamang, and Summer Beaver, p.12).

The existence of social infrastructure contributes to cultural retention, awareness and promotion. A Francophone participant from Hearst states:

Si nous avons des organismes dans la communauté francophone, une des raisons c'est pour qu'on puisse communiquer en français (...) Mon expérience c'est qu'aussitôt qu'il y a un Anglophone dans le groupe, la conversation change immédiatement à l'anglais. Voilà pourquoi nous nous tenons ensemble, il le faut, si on veut développer notre culture.

[If we've had organizations in the Francophone community, one of the reasons is so we can communicate in French. My experience is that as soon as there's an Anglophone in the group, the conversation immediately switches to English. That's why we stick together, we need to, if we want to develop our culture.] (Breathing Northwinds Francophone Community Report, p.13).

Participants from the Francophone communities consulted during in the artist-led sector planning sessions strongly express the need for network development. These communities are tied to existing province-wide Franco-Ontarian cultural networks, however, they feel that smaller, Northern communities are not as well serviced by these networks as they should be.

Connections between artists are also important local and regional development tools, with links between cultural heritages supporting the retention of cultural diversity and social cohesion and contributing to place identity. Across the region many participants consider Northern Ontario's cultural diversity an asset to build on expressing a desire to connect to other cultures, and are seeking opportunities to work together. For instance, in Chapleau there is a strong Francophone

community supported by the Centre Culturel Louis Hémon¹¹⁷ but increased relations with the Anglophone community is desired, as are connections with the three neighbouring First Nation communities, Chapleau Cree, Brunswick House and Chapleau Ojibway.

A number of Francophone participants, particularly in larger centres such as Sault Ste. Marie and Sudbury, also wish to collaborate with other linguistic and cultural minorities to assist one another with their respective goals, expressing an understanding of the challenges cultural minorities face and the critical role the arts play in preserving cultural and linguistic traditions from Euro-Anglophone assimilation¹¹⁸. Members of the Francophone community also note the need for further developing networks with other Franco-Ontarians to increase cultural tourism. Opportunities of this nature are being pursued by the Conseil des Arts de Hearst as a strategy for diversifying organizational revenue streams while retaining and expanding appreciation for French culture¹¹⁹. The importance of establishing strong local artistic communities, however, takes precedence over developing relationships with artists in other locations, or outside of specific cultural communities. One participant from Chapleau (Breathing Northwinds Community Report for Chapleau, p.10) explains “If we had a local arts club, where there’s a membership and people will be able to get together, it kind of encourages each other instead of just being on your own doing your art work.” This speaks to the need and desire for arts networks to support engagement through camaraderie.

Arts Councils, arts organizations and discipline-specific organizations were noted as important vehicles for developing and maintaining relationships and creating a sense of community. Strong arts organizations are essential to sector development, facilitating and coordinating the complex ecology. A participant from Sioux Lookout (Breathing Northwinds Community Report for Sioux Lookout, p.15) explains “The long range plan is to have a non-profit arts group that could then be doing grant funding, fundraising and membership and sales.” The value of arts organizations includes the important role they play as the voice of the sector linking formal leaders (civic, organizational, businesses) other sectors and the broader public to an otherwise often discrete population.

Network and organizational development priorities are:

- Networks within the arts community and partnerships across sectors (e.g. economic, social, environmental, tourism);
- Strong local networks first, with networks between communities secondary (e.g. for sharing resources information and best practices); and

¹¹⁷ Artist-led sector planning: Centre Culturel Louis Hémon, Chapleau. <http://www.quatrain.org/reso/cclh.html>

¹¹⁸ Artist-led sector planning: the Francophone community

¹¹⁹ Organizational peer networking: Conseil des Arts de Hearst.

- Networks across cultural groups (e.g. Anglophone, Indigenous, and Francophone) as important secondary links once strong local cultural identity is established.

A number of participants in Northwestern Ontario identified a strong sense of disconnection from Northeastern Ontario, which would have to be addressed in any Northern Ontario-wide network¹²⁰.

6.6.2 Governance, Funding Models and Research Capacity

Hawkes' (2001) seminal research proposes culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable informs the other three pillars: social, environmental and economic. The increasing world-wide recognition of culture's centrality to creativity, community identity and emerging economies necessitates ensuring its appropriate placement and incorporation into community governance. Across the region participants in the artist-led sector planning, many of the professional development workshops and the symposium discussions indicated the sector is in dire need of such community infrastructure. Identified areas to be strengthened include: governance (policy, planning and development strategies; professional staff for sector advocacy and management); sustainable funding models; and research capacity.

Policies reflective of the North's geographic, cultural diversity, historical contexts and changing demographics within provincial, regional and community level planning would significantly strengthen the sector's visibility, vitality and viability. Few locales have comprehensive community-wide planning that establishes the necessary conditions for local cultural development. Diverse participants indicate many communities in the region do not have a cultural policy and/or have not integrated culture into other planning documents including official plans, land use and economic and development, housing it within another department or folding it into economic development or tourism agencies. Additionally, participants noted a few communities, including small and larger urban locales do not have qualified staff to govern, develop, manage and implement plans and/or advocate for the sector, significantly contributing to the lack of investment in the arts, and thus, its precariousness. Participants proposed having dedicated staff in larger centres and those with professional qualifications serving in positions within related fields in smaller locales would better utilize limited human and financial resources.

¹²⁰ Artist-led sector planning: Sioux Lookout; the three fly-in First Nation communities, Advisory Group; Professional development workshops: Kenora, Manitoulin Island; Symposium.

Consultations held during Cycle Four and Five, in particular, noted funding models are shaped by community culture, values and priorities. Many research participants (artists, arts organizations and community developers) indicate current structures and criteria are developed primarily for southern Ontario's more urban and metropolitan centres and are not applicable and/or feasible given the region's population density, geographic expanse and development needs. Local and regional policies leading to more sustainable funding models responsive to the socioeconomic landscape and changing environment would strengthen creative capacity and sector viability. Longer-term investment enables strategic planning and sustainable practices that support meeting current and future community needs. There is consensus across the research cycles that more attention to cultural development, including investment in the sector from public, private and broader community members would increase opportunities to engage in the arts for various socioeconomic reasons, which would consequently reap resilience benefits. Municipal/band investment and incentives is seen as a leader for orchestrating such. Strategies include: business investment, partnerships through multi-year sponsorships, in-kind support, public and/or private investment in affordable built infrastructure, e.g. space (operating, studio and storage) housing, cafés and venues that link producers to each other, to the public and to the marketplace.

A policy recommendation emerging from the symposium research is to provide a number of key local arts organizations acting as 'connectors and magnets' with core funds that enable them to address operational issues and fulfil their mandates of driving engagement and vitality through linking to other sectors and organizations within the area and beyond¹²¹. Agencies within the community development field are considered potential investors given the important community development role the arts sector plays.

Arts infrastructure is at risk under current funding models. Organizations spoke of attempting to operate with limited and precarious funding that is jeopardizing its ability to plan effectively, leverage assets for longer-term provisioning, maintain ageing infrastructure, address space restrictions and grow. Many of the artists currently provisioning and operating the community infrastructure are volunteers who are calling for a foundation of qualified paid employees to stabilize the sector and advance the value chains and synergy they have initiated. Without professionals in key positions organizations are at risk of losing management capacity, organizational memory, social capital, community relevancy and accountability through volunteer turnover and/or the loss of dedicated project staff when the initiative ends. Artists concur they learn a tremendous amount when operating the infrastructure and depend on it for a number of supports; however, a few

¹²¹ Sophie Edwards, Symposium presentation.

likened it to a double-edge sword, i.e. time spent maintaining them is time away from designing and producing goods. Considerable volunteer energy and personal finances are invested in the interventions, diverting already limited resources away from creative practices. Many lament tough choices must be made between the sector's collective survival and immediate individual needs resulting in their withdrawal¹²².

Most arts organizations rely heavily on volunteers for operational needs and are facing challenges attracting and retaining people. Due to the change patterns of volunteerism, recruitment and retention is increasingly difficult with many organizations citing the need of formal processes and marketing materials to attract people with specific competencies. Board development opportunities would also increase volunteer capacity for effective governance, which is also a noted deficit. In the North the need for board development in the non-profit sector is not limited to the arts but spans across the community¹²³. Study participants note that there are many highly skilled and capable volunteers currently governing and managing organizations; however, many are taking time away from their own creative practice to do it.

Place marketing is a component of community governance, and integrating the arts into strategic initiatives would benefit the entire community. In larger communities, specifically, participants spoke of the desperate need to address the gap in city-wide coordination, promotion and marketing of cultural activities locally, regionally and globally. Many individual artists and arts organizations do not have the human and financial capacity to undertake marketing in meeting their immediate needs. A cohesive marketing and branding strategy would broadcast the locale's variety and diversity of activities and opportunities for engagement, thereby creating community identity, competitive advantage and increased tourism. Equally necessary is recognizing and protecting the community's current and past citizens' cultural diversity, i.e. neighbourhoods and the built environment, particularly the heritage aspects largely located in downtown areas that contributes to a sense of place, and in larger locales impacts on the potential growth in the film industry which frequently seeks places to meet specific production demands. There is considerable room for architects, urban planners and designers to create built spaces reflective of the North's history, culture and four season environment.

¹²² Focus Groups: 1, 2, 5; Artist-led sector planning: Sioux Lookout, Advisory Group; Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa, Manitoulin Island, Fort Frances; Symposium; Organizational peer networking.

¹²³ Organizational peer networking.

A critical element of sector sustainability is the capacity to conduct local research to inform decision-making around resource allocation and management and attracting investment, to name a few. Building local research capacity is a priority to ensure plans reflect community aspirations, strengthen local cultural assets (history, natural and built infrastructure) and leverage such¹²⁴. Research participants across the North indicate there is little relevant local arts sector data, if any exists at all. Municipal Cultural Planning (MCP) or similar initiatives is needed to identify resources and develop cohesive management plans. Mapping, including tangible and intangible assets, cross-sector relationships and governance structures, underpin development plans that support pathways for engagement in the life of the community through creative expression, aesthetic art and/or creative and culture-based economies. Participants, throughout the various research cycles, underscore the lack of databases capturing cultural resources (networks, organizations, producers, and/or consumers) is a significant gap in understanding the sector's capacity and potential growth areas, and increasing awareness of, and access to, cultural assets. They indicate most communities do not have a central hub, website, or an organization representing the sector to facilitate coordination, collaboration and/or engage at the 'community planning table' as an equal partner. Should the local government lead the venture, a cautionary note is that it needs to be community-based, coached within inclusive, creative planning processes that encourages broad citizen engagement and reflects diverse voices and are implemented by the responsible entities.

Additional research opportunities that arose during the study include conducting local and/or regional impact studies for art and craft, with a few people suggesting the inclusion of the tourism industry. More comprehensive studies measuring, for example, events, festival, activities, education and training, and monies leveraged from outside the community would more adequately reflect the sector's valuation through a social return on investment (SROI) model. Economic impact studies do not reveal its true valuation due, in part, to the nature of sector (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009; Gordon and Beilby-Orrin, 2006; Johnson, 2006).

Many of the artists engaged in the study express a desire to participate in research activities and the development of sector resources¹²⁵. Organizations participating in the peer networking sessions (Cycle Six) advocate for utilizing local people and organizations particularly when undertaking policy and/or large scale planning to mitigate challenges that contracting out-of-area consultants bring, i.e. they do not understand the North's culture and context and do not have any relationships in the

¹²⁴ Artist-led sector planning: every session; Professional development workshops: Kenora; Manitoulin Island, Wawa; Symposium; Organizational peer networking.

¹²⁵ Developers' Inquiry Group; Focus Group: 5; Artist-led sector planning: every session; Professional development workshops: Manitoulin Island, Wawa; Symposium; Organizational peer networking.

communities in which they would be working. If expertise is not available within the community and/or region participants propose partnering the external proponent with a local resource to co-conduct the research, alleviating the pressure local people experience when consultants request their assistance to voluntarily provide information and/or contacts necessary for undertaking their study.

Priorities centred on governance, sustainable funding models and research capacity include:

- Developing provincial, regional and local policy reflective of the Northern context, the sector's current, future and/or broader community needs;
- Integration/incorporation of culture into other community planning (e.g. land use and economic development) for more effective and efficient utilization of resources including strategies for developing aesthetically and culturally appropriate built infrastructure and place marketing plans;
- Highly qualified staff in key professional positions to advocate for, develop processes and plans, and manage implementation;
- Sustainable funding models for individual and organizational viability and maintenance of ageing infrastructure;
- Cultural mapping, including the creation of databases and websites to raise awareness of the sector's assets and facilitate strategic investment and management of resources; and
- Research agendas to inform decision-making, plans and investment as well building increase local capacity for such.

Although policies, sustainable funding models and research capacity facilitates art sector development, management and growth, participants in the study, however, consider these supports to be community infrastructure, benefiting all citizens and not limited to those directly engaged in the arts.

6.6.3 Capacity Building and Development Supports

The sector is comprised of primarily part-time artists working year-round with revenue generated through the arts making important contributions household incomes in subsistence economies characteristic of Northern Ontario. The vast majority of artists are interested in spending more time engaged in the arts and many desire and/or need to scale up activities and microbusinesses. These creative and entrepreneurial interests bode well for communities given the important spillover effect the sector has on other domains and spheres that support broader resilience. A wide range of capacity building and community development supports that would significantly strengthen the

sector's visibility, accessibility and sustainability emerged from the study. Five identified areas are: i) microbusiness development including access to credit, entrepreneurial education, peer mentoring networks and teacher training; ii) marketing mechanisms; iii) broad band internet; iv) affordable space; and v) diverse gathering spaces and venues that support the rural social milieu.

Despite many artists' goal to increase household income generated through creative practice there is a lack of pathways in Northern Ontario to migrate part-time employment to microbusinesses, confirming the research of Duxbury and Campbell (2011, 2009). Many factors work against the development of arts-related business.¹²⁶ For example, government self-employment programs are limited to new business ventures; therefore, those who already produce goods are ineligible. Most business expansion and/or work force development opportunities depend on owner investments and/or hiring employees, and therefore do not fit the cultural sector's profile. The following quote from the Artists' Inquiry Group highlights challenges the sector faces with others understanding creative practice as a microbusiness, identifying cultural values and perspectives as a limiting factor:

But, guess what? That's the same thing they're doing in that big building down by the water front, making steel. It's the exact same thing. There is no difference, except for the fact that they're surrounded by a massive structure that has money and capital and industry. I mean, it looks impressive, therefore it must be, you know. Whereas the person who is working in the back of their shed at turning wood, maybe there is more social and cultural value in that than there is a piece of plate steel, but it's too small and we're not seen ... (IG2.6, #10, p.13).

Access to capital is one of most significant factors restricting business growth with many participants perceiving values associated with industrial world economies to be negatively impacting on securing funds. Educating the financial sector and business development providers, establishing peer lending circles, angel investors and other investment tools would increase access to funds. Cooperative models rather than sole proprietorship would reduce personal risk; however, information regarding these business models is not typically suggested in development circles and many artists do not know where to find it and/or other people who might be interested in starting one, which speaks to the necessity of networks.

Business development supports specifically tailored to the arts sector is a priority. Current offerings utilize economic terminology creating accessibility barriers. The few Business for the Arts courses now available through technology from southern Ontario do not reflect the Northern context, the geographical isolation from other artists, suppliers, and markets and the current state of the arts ecology, particularly the lack of marketing mechanisms and access to broadband internet. Not all

¹²⁶ Artist-led sector planning: Chapleau; Professional development workshops: Kenora, Wawa, Manitoulin Island, Fort Frances; Symposium; Organizational peer networking.

artists, however, are interested in operating a business. Analysis of the professional development workshops indicate there are three categories of artists: i) those genuinely interested in operating a business; ii) those reluctantly learning the business of art but would prefer others handle it; and iii) those not interested in business because their products are gifted. The largest category is artists reluctantly participating in business activities out of default. Many cite the need to generate revenue to continue producing but consider time spent on business activities not the best use of their limited resources, preferring business professionals handle it. A number of artists whose goods are intended for gifting suggest they would be interested in selling their work if others would do it for them. Cooperative business practices that link artists with business-minded people who have an interest in the arts would grow small businesses and significantly contribute to the creative sector's sustainability.

Peer mentoring networks within and across sectors connecting artists to expertise in microbusiness operations including product development would build capacity to expand and deepen product lines and establish reliable pricing structures. Artists invest a considerable amount of up-front design time when creating new goods. Capitalizing on this investment by producing a series of the same product and/or utilizing the design for different products reduce the expenses while expanding markets. How to price one's work repeatedly emerged during the consultations as being very challenging, since the goods are unique and often similar examples that would typically serve as comparable items are not available on the market and/or difficult to locate.

A number of artists indicate a desire to teach but do not have the management capacity such as advertising strategies, program registration and/or space to host workshops. Cycle Four and Five in particular frequently raised the prospect of education as a growth area that could be met through artists' professional development and administrative supports. Teacher pedagogy is also a necessary component of this investment. The development and delivery of local education and training would generate additional revenue streams for artists, offer new programs and diverse opportunities for community engagement, thereby supporting a culture of creativity.

Specific areas of microbusiness development include:

- Access to credit;
- Peer mentoring networks; education, product development and pricing;
- Workshops: biographies, artist statements, funding applications and documentation;
- Bookkeeping and accounting practices including tracking inventory, shipping and sales;

- Online marketing education for establishing ecommerce sites such as Esty¹²⁷ and EBay¹²⁸;
- Presentation skills and sales training; and
- Teacher training, pedagogy, management capacity and administrative supports

Marketing mechanisms including the development of local, regional and global strategies would connect producers and consumers and facilitate exporting goods and attracting tourists. Northern agents and websites, operated and maintained by development agencies and/or private investors business with expertise in the arts, emerged in a number of consultation, as being critical supports for artists who do not wish to run their own business and/or artists who are operating their own and seeking further opportunities. An important component of the marketing theme is the need for access to education and training for artists to create their own tools including websites with e-commerce capabilities and the skills to utilize others' mechanisms.

Additional marketing infrastructure underpinning development includes a diversity of:

- Venues: places for creating, meeting, marketing space; empty buildings as gallery spaces, for pop-up and/or annual events;
- Places for exhibiting conceptual art;
- Galleries willing to take on risky subject matter (no censorship, disclaimers); and
- Studio tours

Broad band internet is critical community and regional infrastructure and access to it is one of the most important factors hindering the North's sustainability (Hall and Donald, 2009). There are a number of areas where the internet is unavailable. Some places have access to dial-up internet but it is unsuitable for downloading documents, accessing suppliers' on-line platform and/or viewing websites. Conducting business with an on-line component is impossible in those locations. Education and training to utilize the internet is needed. A number of artists indicate they are reasonably functional in this regard; others are seeking training in social media; and a few do not know how to search and navigate and/or use technology-mediated discussions platforms, for example Skype or Google Hangout.

Affordable space including operational (office, studio, creative places, storage, venues) housing and/or live-work accommodations is another critical gap in community infrastructure limiting engagement and sustainability. Space needs are many and diverse with a number of organizations at

¹²⁷ Etsy (<https://www.etsy.com/ca>).

¹²⁸ EBay (<https://www.ebay.ca>).

risk of closing and artists unable to continue practicing due to challenges of finding suitable places. Young people in particular are in need of housing and live/work accommodations. Artists who are unable to work in their home for a number of reasons and/or those who need specialized workspace are also at a disadvantage in maintaining a sustainable practice and business. This infrastructure gap could potentially be served by private and/or hybrid public partnerships models. Artscape¹²⁹ is an organization that is facilitating such development in southern Ontario. Further research on this topic is needed with a specific focus on rural areas given the differing housing and commercial building composition between the North and larger urban centres, i.e. there are fewer industrial buildings of a size that could be converted into appropriate affordable space. The need for an arts centre, a creative place that accommodates a number of artists and educational programming and/or retail space arose during a few consultations with each locale defining its conceptualization and composition¹³⁰.

Diverse places to gather such as creative spaces, venues (cafés, restaurants, galleries, retail outlets) and events (festivals, tours, etc.) in close proximity, spark clustering, collaboration and innovation, and generate an arts scene, a buzz. Linkages to the public raise the visibility and accessibility of the sector fostering the development of the rural social milieu, supporting continuous creativity and cultural renewal, and fuelling further demand for locally produced cultural products.

Overall, participants consider strategies for strengthening the arts could be realized through: i) governance and policy reflective of the Northern reality; ii) integrating culture into other planning documents; iii) reallocating existing development resources to the arts sector; iv) resource sharing across sectors; v) increasing access to capital through peer loaning circles and/or other financial instruments; vi) investment incentives for private and/or public/private partnerships, particularly for built infrastructure including operational, live/work space and broad band internet. Improvements in these areas would foster a culture of community-wide creativity, arts clusters, increase the quality of life, and develop local knowledge and solutions for transitioning through change.

¹²⁹ Artscape (<http://www.torontoartscape.org>).

¹³⁰ Focus Group: 5; Artist-led sector planning: the three fly-in First Nation communities.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

Northern Ontario's regional centres, rural and First Nation communities are experiencing significant social and economic destabilization with the shift from a manufacturing and resource-based world economy to a global creative economy where mobile financial resources are turning to more profitable investments. A primary concern for communities is 'how to' transition to the new environment. Resilient communities have the capacity to resist adverse conditions, economic or otherwise, and the ability to adapt and transition through change by self-organizing, mobilizing local assets (people, financial, historic, cultural, natural) and developing solutions that retain its core values (Lewis and Lockhart, 2002). Community culture plays a significant role in garnering collective will to revision, and persistence to implement initiatives given the competing perspectives of citizens, the state and the marketplace (Torjman, 2007; Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006).

Resilience-related community development and art literature indicate the arts contribute in many ways to social and economic innovation, vitality and transitioning capacity. Engaging in the arts is transformative. They build resilience-related characteristics including increased complex problem-solving skills, divergent, lateral thinking, and artistic, technical, and entrepreneurial and business skills that spill over into other sectors and domains, thereby increasing the broader community's resilience (Sacco, 2011; Brault, 2005; Savory-Gordon, 2003). Creative practice provides the space and means to make sense and meaning of oneself in the context place, the interconnected and interdependent web of cultural values and relationships that shape people and place (Carter, 2004). They provide the impetus for diverse peoples to cross socioeconomic boundaries, fostering trust and creating networks that enable sharing divergent perspectives, re-scripting and revisioning unsustainable values into alternative, more resilient ones (Reinsborough and Canning, 2010; Sarkissian *et al.*, 2008; Carter, 2006; Cooley, 2003; Barndt, 1989). Inter- and intra- cultural and generational connectivity contributes to cultural continuance, retaining diversity and increasing appreciation and tolerance (Duxbury and Campbell, (2009).

Although the arts and culture sector is utilized to advance agendas they are typically assessed with traditional economic frameworks that do not provide true valuation for a number of statistical, classification and data collection-related reasons, and therefore, are of limited utility (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2009; Gordon and Beilby-Orrin, 2006; Johnson, 2006). As a result, in many jurisdictions, including Northern Ontario, they remain under-resourced, underutilized and undervalued in creating a culture of creativity, solidarity and renewal.

The study investigated the contributions of creative practice to rural Northern Ontario's resilience in a time of significant socioeconomic change, and how the arts can be strengthened to continue this work. The research findings confirm community development and arts literature regarding the sector's efficacy in generating social and economic innovation, provided insights to its applicability in rural locales, and widened the traditional economic assessment of the sector to a community systems perspective gaining a broader understanding of the dynamic relationships between culture, creativity, the arts, the economy and resilience. The study's findings concur that resilience is an active, ongoing process embedded in community culture with causal linkages between individual and community resilience (Buikstra *et al.*, 2010). It deepens the literature regarding the underlying processes of building resilience, i.e. the intertwined role of creative processes and products and how arts engagement fosters individual, organizational and community level resilience. The research enlarges understanding of the ways direct interaction increases agency, social capital and local innovation that shifts cultural norms and builds capacity for continual adaptation and renewal. It unpacks the components of creative practice and artists' role in society, places it within a community development framework and identifies what is needed to strengthen the sector's work in this continuance.

This chapter highlights the contribution of the research to new knowledge regarding relationships between creative practice and Northern Ontario's resilience, and identifies strategies to leverage the arts sector's foundational synergy in building a sense of community identity and attachment to place, regenerating locales and diversifying economies. It draws parallels and reciprocity between creative practice and community development practice, illustrates the impact of conducting the study on residents, identifies further research opportunities and provides my final thoughts as the research journey comes to a close.

7.0 Research Contributions to New Knowledge

The basic criteria for a PhD is that it is an original piece of research. To this end, the study contributes to knowledge around the relationships between the arts and resilience in general, and to knowledge about these relationships within rural communities, more specifically.

Contributions to knowledge around the relationships between the arts and resilience in general:

1. Proposes a new overarching framework that bridges and nests the socially constructed divisions between the fields of arts and community development, providing an understanding of the central role that culture, creativity and the arts play in resilience within

a context of a complex adaptive system where emergence drives innovation and social evolution.

The framework:

- Identifies a number of *critical, place-based relationships* that underpin resilience;
 - Presents *a relational understanding* of the *tangible and intangible benefits* of engaging in the arts, regardless of discipline and/or level of expertise that increase individual, organizational and community level resilience from a holistic, systemic perspective;
 - Illustrates *how engagement* in artistic practice contributes to the development of *resilience characteristics*, providing foundations skills to respond and bounce back that *increase agency*;
 - Charts a clear pathway illustrating *how individual resilience scales up* to organizational and community level through *direct interaction* and engagement in emergent, transformative processes with oneself and others, *creating dynamic, non-linear value chains*; and
 - Underscores the *arts are points of intersection*, junctures, transitioning space for investigating cultural values and engaging in *transformative learning* that fosters *continual adaptation* across sectors and systems.
2. Develops *new visual images* illustrating relationships between creative practice's transformational processes that generate intangible and tangible benefits to individual, organizational and community level resilience, contributing to understanding and *articulating the sector's value and efficacy* in sparking large scale social change and increasing resilience.
3. Highlights *parallels between artistic creative practice and community development practice*, encouraging understanding of both as emergent, dynamic, dialogical collaborations, shifting developers' focus from '*what to develop*' to '*how to develop them*'.

Contributions to knowledge around the relationships between the arts and resilience in rural communities:

1. Identifies the *critical community development role rural artists play* in provisioning and maintaining social, organization and built infrastructure that typically exists in more urban centres.
 - *Critical connections* build social capital and innovation and social change, rather than critical mass;
 - Engagement with others provides an *educative space* for experiential learning within/across sectors through direct dialogue and discourse; and
 - Introduces the concept of the *rural social milieu*, a broader, transitioning space attractive to diverse people, rather than being industry focused.
2. Identifies the significant role *arts spillover plays* in rural, subsistence economies.
 - *Skills, knowledge and products* generated through part-time engagement in the arts contributes to individual and broader community resilience through *transferring, bartering and gifting skills and knowledge* within home and work spheres, and identifies this topic as an area in need of further research.

These contributions are discussed further in the next sections of this chapter.

7.1 Creative Practice's Contributions to Building Northern Ontario's Resilience

The study confirms community development and arts-related literature's largely urban focus is applicable in rural contexts. Creative practice significantly builds individual, sectoral and broader community level resilience within dynamic community systems characteristic of rural Northern Ontario. It indicates artists' energy and dedication is building creative capacity to continually adapt, regenerate and transition through change within and across these three scales, as well as generating unique cultural products that diversify economies into creative, knowledge-based ones attractive to people, investment and much need external tourist monies.

7.1.0 Individual Resilience

In Northern Ontario engagement in the arts is building intangible characteristics that underpin adaptive capacity in three key areas: i) creativity and complex problem-solving capacity; ii) health and well-being; and iii) the ability to reflect on, revisit cultural values and reshape identity, thereby increasing a sense of belonging (Carter, 2006; Brault, 2005; Hawkes, 2001). These skills are foundational to one's capacity to respond, bounce back, persevere and develop alternative solutions when faced with adversity, thus supporting agency and resilience. Due to the relatively low engagement barriers (e.g. the cost, entry level skills) the arts are enabling a wide spectrum of people particularly, younger and older citizens to remain socially and mentally active, contributing to individual and broader community health and well-being (Anwar McHenry, 2011; Cooley, 2003).

The products, the outcome of the creative process journey, facilitates sharing the learnings with others, creating space for dialogue, a transitioning space where deeper and/or new understanding can emerge between and among people. The goods are being retained by the artist; gifted for social purposes (e.g. fundraising) supporting large and small scale projects that increase the quality of life; bartered; and/or sold in the marketplace, making important contributions to household income within subsistence economies, and forming the basis of localized culture-based economies.

Most notably, resilience-related benefits are attributed to participation in and of itself. They are *inherent in engagement*—rather than specific to a discipline (e.g. painting, quilting); genre of work; duration of practice; skill level; age; home community; cultural heritage; and/or regardless of the goods' end purpose use (retained, gifted, bartered or sold). This underscores the efficacy of the arts in providing *immediate and continual resilience benefits*, thus strengthening the foundation of the community system (Bash, 2006; McCarthy *et al.*, 2004; Cooley, 2003).

The capacity to work within uncertainty and adapt to shifting circumstances reflective of what many Northern people and communities are currently experiencing, is a particularly significant resilience benefit fostered and strengthened through the arts. The inherent nature of creative processes necessitates *continued* engagement and adaptation, in real time. The arts are developing: micro and macro conceptualization skills; the ability to be flexible yet retain values when solving complex problems; perseverance for managing and processing change while working through unknowns and rapidly changing contexts; and overcoming the fear of change. Since practice in the North is both self-developing and self-reinforcing engagement further strengthens resilience characteristics including the capacity for more sustainable livelihoods by: building artistic sensibility and production

capacity; more clarity and speed in sorting out ideas and projecting where decisions may lead; and the ability to skillfully make things in less time.

Northerners' engaged in the study consider the arts a core aspect of the quality of life, reaping a wide range of health-related benefits revolving around joy and pleasure, fostering new and diverse relationships, maintaining balance and mental acuity, and enriching others' lives. Engagement is fostering self-reliance by developing strategies for maintaining health and well-being which is crucial in the region's underserved, subsistence economies where there are limited resources to draw on in times of need. Practice is providing time away from daily routines and stress, serving as a judgment-free retreat or an oasis that can be squeezed in between the growing responsibilities of job demands, caring for children and aging parents. The arts are grounding people during times of uncertainty and change. Indigenous artists can draw on the wisdom of elders and the strength of tradition when needed.

Furthermore, creative practice is playing an important role in managing the isolation of living in the North. Creating reconnects people to whoever passed on traditional arts, heritage craft and/or home-making related skills, generating a sense of a continued meaningful relationship with the mentor over time regardless of where the teacher may live now and/or if the person has passed on. People are drawing on creative activities to pass time with 'busy hands and active minds', filling time productively, for example, when waiting for family to return from working in distant communities, when travelling between locales for work and/or personal reasons, and/or when attending to care in homes, hospitals or doctor's waiting rooms. An important aspect of the arts is the pleasure of enriching someone else's life. Cultural goods are greatly contributing to making new places bearable for loved ones or friends during short and/or longer times away, i.e. blankets and wall hangings become memory-keepers and testaments to relationships, and/or the public's enjoyment in general (Hushka, 2012).

The vast majority of artists participating in the research have a strong sense of a 'Northern identity' contextualized within the region's geography and history, the vastness, ecological diversity and area's beauty; relationships with decision-making centred in the urban southern part of the province; and the long and complex history between Anglophone, Indigenous and Francophone communities. The arts are contributing to peoples' foundational sense of identity and belonging, expressed as 'I belong', feeling included in a larger collective. Practice is engendering a deep connection to oneself and others that is frequently associated with increased bonding, caring, mutual respect and reciprocity and attachment to place. Indigenous and Francophone participants

consider it 'part of who we are' defining them within their cultural heritage. There is growing pride to identify as Indigenous and to reconnect to traditions through creating material objects that retell oral history and capture and transmit stories and legend. The arts are an effective means of introducing younger people and the broader public to traditional knowledge. Its integration into school curricula, e.g. Queen Elizabeth District High School in Sioux Lookout, provides opportunities for teaching traditional values and skills to all students, simultaneously supporting the appreciation of different perspectives, cultural literacy and continuance and social cohesion.

The arts connect people to the land through the utilization of local natural materials such as birch twigs, clay, antler and stone in art work in traditional and contemporary ways. Gathering materials and/or creating work 'en plein' (outdoors, on site) is inspirational and powerful, playing an important role in one's sense of self and attachment to place. The experience is captured and expressed through unique cultural products that represent local knowledge and the locale.

Knowledge and skills acquired through the arts are spilling over into social and work spheres, contributing to broader community resilience (Sacco, 2011; Miles and Green, 2008; Markusen *et al.*, 2006; McCarthy, 2004; Savory-Gordon, 2003). In rural and subsistence economies of the North the spillover effect is particularly important. Having a variety of skill sets and knowledge bases is advantageous to maintaining a livelihood, particularly when employment is becoming scarcer and short-term contract work more prevalent. A few of the valuable transferable skills being gleaned from creative practice include: increased curiosity, cognitive and interpersonal skills that underpin innovation, the ability to conceptualize and articulate ideas, critical reflection, better organizational capacity, greater business sense, more self-confidence in tackling new tasks, and an aptitude for teamwork. Financial and business services, design, information and communications technology, advanced manufacturing, the sciences and the tourism sector need people with these skills. In the North, given the part-time nature of practice there is a potentially large spillover effect into 'day jobs' (Ortiz and Broad, 2007).

In summary, the value of creative practice extends beyond building individual resilience within the sector to positively impacting on community level transitioning. Northerners are benefiting from the non-linear, dynamic value chain of the arts that begins with engagement, generates creative capacity and innovation across scales and provides products that increase the quality of life, diversifies the economy and regenerates the community.

7.1.1 Arts Sector Resilience

At the sectoral level Northern artists' passion for the arts and dedication and perseverance to advance their creative practice is bringing together diverse people, fostering networks of social relations, leading to a sense of an arts community with artistic activity as the common denominator. Relationships with other artists is validating one's creative identity which is very important in the region where the majority of artists are employed outside of the sector. Regardless of the size of the community, connections between artists are serving as critical lifelines that encourage and enable maintaining creative capacity, and therefore, the continual acquisition of associated resilience characteristics. In locales where a sense of an arts community exists it is greatly contributing to the retention of talent, particularly younger and mobile artists that underpin regeneration and renewal (Duxbury and Campbell, 2011).

Networks are fuelling artists' ability and desire to collaborate, leveraging individual benefits of engagement to a sectoral level, simultaneously building both scales. The arts are fostering diverse relationships across socioeconomic divides introducing new ideas, different histories and stories, enlarging perspectives on cultural values and sparking cycles of sectoral level of transformation through creative dialogical processes (Westley, Zimmerman and Patton, 2006; McCarthy *et. al.*, 2004). Incorporation of learnings into practice is leading to local innovation and more meaningful and/or unique goods (Carter, 2004). Social relations are supporting the transference of traditional knowledge and cultural continuance through intergenerational sharing and storytelling, imbuing products with meaning for personal use and/or ceremony and contributing to remaining relevant over time.

Education is one of the key areas where the arts community is making significant contributions to creative and entrepreneurial capacity and the broader public's appreciation and appetite for locally produced cultural products, driving the development of place-based economies. Due to the North's limited opportunities for arts education, peer mentioning is the primary source of knowledge and professional development (artistic, technical and business skills) that is key to maintaining and advancing practice. Mentoring is increasing critical reflection and strengthening dialogical skills that underpin the *quality* of engagement, directly impacting on the experience of creating and the goods produced. One's creative capacity (critical analysis, artistic, technical skill, entrepreneurial) shape the ability to envision ideas, push the envelope and create products that capture the intended meaning and/or visual expression, regardless of the purpose or end use of the goods.

Artists' social capital is spurring innovation and synergy, facilitating fluid grouping and regrouping and/or more formalized structures in response to sectoral and broader community needs. These networks are playing a critical role in the North through provisioning social, organizational and built infrastructure underpinning the industry's functionality that are typically provided for in larger urban centres. Their collaborative practices are mitigating the region's deficits currently hindering cultural vitality, sector sustainability and economic diversification. Self-organizing and collective action is leading to the development and delivery of a range of artist-led interventions, (e.g. events, exhibitions, workshops, programming, networks and organizations, and creative places) that furthers sector capacity and fosters the rural social milieu (Crane, 2010; Bash, 2006). There is considerable activity in this regard across the North. The following seven examples were part of the research activities and/or referenced during the study's consultations. Sylvan Circle Tour, a non-profit organization, hosts an annual artist and artisan tour east of Sault Ste. Marie that provides access to high quality locally produced goods, contributing to people's household incomes and shaping the area's identity. It is fostering traditions of gathering with friends, families and tourists to travel rural routes between venues during the fall colour season. ArtReach validates younger peoples' creative identity and contributes to shifting the general public's perceptions toward the arts being a viable occupation. Experiential learning with professional Canadian artists advances students' creative and entrepreneurial capacity, and the closing exhibition celebrates the newly created art work and introduces people to the range of issues currently being addressed through art. Networks, such as the Fort Frances Artist Collective, connecting artists in the community with artists living in outlying villages and towns and/or countryside, is retaining young people, building local artistic capacity, educating the public, and increasing the quality of life. The Lake of the Woods Artists Collective (LOWAC) is providing significant individual, sector and community level benefits including artistic, technical, business skills and governance capacity through the establishment of a non-profit organization, raising awareness of the quality of the arts and reversioning community identity and place as an attractive cultural tourism destination, a recognized growth sector. The Aboriginal Artworks Group of Northern Ontario (AAGNO) is responding to and fuelling the increasing demand for Indigenous cultural goods by providing direct access to them. Artists from across the Northwestern part of the region gather for a few days in Thunder Bay. For many artists it may be one of the few times they leave their communities facilitating reuniting with relatives, exchanging skills, ideas and techniques, trading supplies, sourcing new ones, and earning cash that is necessary for the market economy within traditional lifestyles of trapping and hunting. The interaction between artists and the public is fostering understanding and respect for cultural diversity, and

contributing to social cohesion among isolated and urban Indigenous residents and the other citizens in Thunder Bay.

Conseil des Arts de Hearst, a Francophone model of a creative place, is owned and operated by the arts organization. Its mandate includes the production, promotion and consumption of Francophone culture with a priority to build the capacity of local artists and foster community identity. The primarily youth board of directors and staff are responding to changing community demographics precipitated by the restructuring of the forest industry. The creative space is an important role model for adapting to new economic realities and is generating a sense of solidarity in addressing challenges while contributing to local economic stability. The artists are building relationships across sectors within the community and regionally, increasing the appreciation and demand for Francophone culture, thereby expanding the tourism industry. In the Northwest, The A Frame Gallery in Sioux Lookout is fostering local artistic activity across cultures. The initiative assists and extends the significant work the Sioux Lookout Anti-Racism Committee (SLARC) began in 1989. This built infrastructure continues to adapt to meet community needs while retaining its core function of being a safe and inclusive place for creative exploration and expression.

Artists' social capital is strengthening resilience across the web of the community systems, scaling individual benefits gained through creative practice to a sector level. Collective action garnered through arts connectivity is developing critical infrastructure essential to cultural vitality, growth and the development of localized economies. Artists are building and diversifying each other's capacity to create more unique cultural products, generate more artistic activity and microbusiness that lead to industry clusters, and leverage more skills sets for other employment opportunities, thereby supporting large scale change.

7.1.2 Community Resilience

An underlying theme throughout the research is that the arts 'make the community'.

The various ways the arts are doing such include: fostering relationships among diverse people; developing understanding between cultures; adding colour and vibrancy; creating primarily summer and/or entry level employment for younger people; and attracting tourists. These benefits contribute to community resilience by increasing the quality of life, retaining creative people and generating important external revenue streams. A more nuanced understanding of the many ways Northern artists' creative practices are contributing emerged during the research, building on and extending the aforementioned cross-cutting foundation.

Artists' interventions are creating wider resilience through increased opportunities to link to and interact with others, crossing boundaries and creating the rural social milieu, the vehicle for the social and commercial functionality of the cultural industry. In the periphery it plays a significant community-building and economic diversification role. The places and spaces artists are providing are informal, welcoming and inclusive, attractive to diverse people attending for a range of reasons, raising the awareness of the arts community and increasing artists' sense of belonging to the larger community. The interventions are important avenues for reintroducing art back into people's lives by being causal in nature and most frequently located outside of cultural and educational institutions. These initiatives serve as transitioning space rich with opportunity for learning about and reflecting on different perspectives of the complex web of societal relations in which people and place are embedded, enlarging ways of envisioning the locale and/or the world, increasing autonomy, agency, and thus, adaptive capacity.

Engagement, social networking and the interconnectedness and interaction between people involved in the production, circulation, and consumption cycles of cultural products underpins the creation of a vibrant arts scene reflective of the uniqueness of each locale (Currid and Williams, 2010; Currid, 2007a, 2007b). The infrastructure artists are providing is allowing for the direct interaction between the sector, cultural goods and the broader public, engaging people in creative, dialogical processes that enable the dynamic interplay of sharing, conversing and transformative learning, deepening understanding of place, developing new stories, shifting individual and collective identity while maintaining values integral to its citizens. Feedback on the cultural goods is informing artists' development of more innovative and diverse products. The cultural goods themselves connect people to place and further influence the public wherever they reside (Hushka, 2010).

Capitalizing on community assets to establish localized economies increases self-reliance, reducing the negative effects resulting from global restructuring of the resource-extractive industries. To create distinctive 'authentic' locales, place is transformed into something culturally meaningful and collectively personal where citizens see themselves reflected in their environment (Duxbury and Pepper, 2006). Northern artists are contributing to place making through the development of arts-sector led community plans, larger community planning processes, and cross-sectoral relationships that are building local and regional creative and culture-based economies. Artists' engagement in these activities is fostering more inclusive and responsive process-based approaches to community development, creating space to identify local assets and associated meanings from diverse perspectives including historical, cultural, environmental. They support exploring new opportunities (e.g. non-timber forest products, ecotourism, social enterprises, cooperative models,

microbusinesses) based on alternative understanding of the regions' resources, and residents' interests and expertise. These initiatives are supporting a community-wide culture of creativity and entrepreneurship. It is important to note, that these collaborative, creative-based, emergent processes are building local capacity to conduct research that provides evidence for informed decision-making. Moreover, they are shifting development foci from 'what to develop' to 'how to develop them'—increasing engagement, buy-in and the social capital and collective and political will underpinning successful implementation. 4elements Living Arts' contribution to the development of the Township of Billings Sustainability Planning is an excellent example of this work underway on Manitoulin Island. Chapleau and Elliot Lake artists and community leaders, in particular, have advanced initiatives emerging from artist-led collaborative community planning sessions, increasing community identity. Community-based research led by NORDIK Institute in partnership with the Arts Council of Sault Ste. Marie and District culminated in the report *Culture, Creativity and the Arts: Achieving Community Resilience and Sustainability through the Arts in Sault Ste. Marie* (Ortiz and Broad, 2007) with City Council adopting the study's recommendations.

Cross-sector relationships between artists and other disciplines are furthering resilience at all scales through innovative social and economic development, while reducing the precariousness of the sector. The foundational work of the Coalition of Algoma Passenger Trains' (CAPT) collaboration with Sault Ste. Marie artists Michael Burtch and Garry and Joanie McGuffin recognizing the Group of Seven's historical presence in the area and the importance of passenger rail transportation for experiential, eco-tourism tourism, is sparking considerable local and regional growth. CAPT's one-day excursion to appreciate the painters' work is now two days; Dale Innes has authored *Seeking Solitude: Glenn Gould and the Goldberg Variations* (Innes, 2015) and *The Painted Land* (White Pine Productions, 2015) winner of a Canadian Screen Award continues to generate spinoffs, i.e. footage from the film contributed to their recent production *Where the Universe Sings: The Spiritual Journey of Lawren Harris*. CAPT's collaborative initiative has sparked other economic development activities that capitalize upon the area's connection to the Group of Seven. Recognizing the potential to draw high-end tourists from around the world, the Northeastern Ontario Tourism Division' Request for Proposals has led to a regional tourism strategy based on the Group of Seven's legacy, and a provincial strategy is under development.

Creative practice, 'all that artists do', is significantly contributing to Northern Ontario's capacity and *continued ability* to creatively respond to change by building broad-based intangible resilience-related characteristics, a culture of entrepreneurship and demand for unique cultural products. They are playing a valuable community development role through engaging the public in creative planning

processes, fostering the development of diverse networks that inspire citizens to collaborate, revision, and develop new stories underpinning holistic, cohesive community and place marketing plans. Artists' cross-sectoral social capital is leveraging local cultural assets, regenerating place and shaping economies to be attractive to youth, mobile people and investment and tourists.

The findings corroborate research identifying the arts as instrumental in building respectful relations and synergy that underpins social and economic innovation with benefits accrued through engagement spilling over and transferring other domains impacting on the entire community. The value of individual artists and the sector as a whole, therefore, extends well beyond economic benchmarks and models tied to perceiving the sector as providing primarily limited private gains (Sacco, 2011). Acknowledging the significant role artists are playing as community developers and animators within subsistence economies of rural Northern Ontario further substantiates arguments for valuing the contributions of the arts within the broader community system context. The sector is building individual, organizational and community level adaptive capacity for continual renewal and providing goods that are fostering localized creative and culture-based economies, thereby retaining residents, and increasing community identity and competitive advantage in transitioning to the global environment.

7.2 Ways to Strengthen the Arts in Continuing This Work

Culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable informs the other pillars, i.e. social, environmental and economic (Hawkes, 2001). Its integration into community planning—as the foundation of society rather than a luxury—is essential. Communities seeking to diversify economies through culture-led regeneration are strongly urged to safeguard the autonomy of culture, creativity, and art, valuing the role each play in building adaptive capacity and agency rather than conflate them into economic models of prosperity (Gielen *et al.*, 2014).

The research indicates there is an increasing number of people turning to creative practice within three broad engagement streams (creative expression; aesthetic art; creative and culture-based economies) for a number of socioeconomic reasons. The North's cultural assets including artists' considerable productivity, from cultural goods to arts infrastructure currently advancing local and regional resilience, are perceived to be undervalued, under-resourced and underutilized, hindering the sector's connectivity and innovation, sustainability and growth, and thus, the broader capacity for continual regeneration. The dearth of community infrastructure typically available in larger urban centres that is currently restricting the sector's functionality is reinforcing the perception that arts

and culture are a drain on limited financial resources (i.e. in need of a subsidy) rather than an investment that would enable the sector to fulfill its important social and economic development roles. Areas within the arts ecosystem in need of strengthening include more, diverse and relevant opportunities for: engagement and education; development of networks and organizations; governance, funding models, and research capacity; and capacity building and development supports.

Strategies for strengthening the arts could be realized through: i) governance and policy reflective of the Northern reality; ii) integrating culture into other planning documents; iii) reallocating existing development resources to the arts sector; iv) resource sharing across sectors; v) increasing access to capital through peer loaning circles and/or other financial instruments; vi) investment incentives for private and/or public/private partnerships particularly for built infrastructure including operational, live/work space and broad band internet. Improvements in these areas would foster a culture of community-wide creativity, arts clusters, increase the quality of life, and develop local knowledge and solutions.

Unpacking the areas for strategic support, opportunities for formal and informal diverse, inclusive engagement and education at all levels, in all disciplines would make the arts accessible to all fostering a culture of creativity, entrepreneurship and regeneration. Conferences, symposia, research and exhibitions investigating and celebrating the locale's history, natural and cultural heritage would support greater understanding of the links between the arts, the land (environment and place), and creative and culture-based economies, promoting industry clusters within these disciplines, and building community identity as knowledge hubs around rural and Northern issues. Educational opportunities of this nature would increase cultural literacy, the capacity to articulate and convey to different stakeholders, partners and audiences the sector's purpose, role and value in social and economic development and innovation.

Connectivity is seen as a significant gap in the arts ecosystem. The development of local, regional and international networks, and organizations with similar connections would raise the visibility and accessibility of the arts, fostering engagement and social capital development and multi-scale opportunities for innovation and growth. Social relations (intra-, inter-, cross-sectoral, local, etc.) enable sharing meaning and co-producing knowledge of place and intergenerational cultural continuity. Local networks within the arts community and partnerships across sectors (e.g. economic, social, environmental, tourism) are a priority, followed by networks between communities and across cultural divides. Connectivity across the region is also important in creating

and maintaining a Northern identity while respecting the differences between Northeastern and Northwestern Ontario.

The increasing world-wide recognition of culture's (i.e. values and norms) centrality to community survival and prosperity necessitates ensuring its appropriate placement and incorporation into governance frameworks to inform decision-making and create cohesive, effective and efficient plans. Governance policies reflective of the North's geographic, cultural diversity, historical contexts and its changing demographics within provincial, regional and community level planning would significantly strengthen the sector's viability and visibility, attracting and retaining citizens and investment and grow tourism. Few locales have comprehensive community-wide planning that establishes the necessary conditions for cultural development. Many communities in the region do not have a cultural policy and/or have not integrated culture into other planning documents (official plans, land use and economic development) housing it within another department or folding it into economic development or tourism agencies. Furthermore, many communities do not have qualified staff to govern and/or develop the arts and these deficits are contributing to underutilization and lack of investment in the arts, and thus, its precariousness. Having dedicated staff in larger centres and those with professional qualifications serving in positions within related areas in smaller locales would better utilize limited human and financial resources.

Sustainable funding models are needed to reflect the North's population density, geographic expanse and development needs. Longer-term investment enables strategic planning and sustainable practices, addressing current community needs and supporting emerging cultural practices and initiatives. Public, private and broader community member investment in the sector, particularly over longer timeframes, would increase and diversify opportunities to engage and acquire resilience benefits. Municipal/band investment and incentives is seen as a leader for such. Strategies include: business investment, partnerships through multi-year sponsorships, in-kind support and/or private investment in affordable built infrastructure, e.g. space (operating, studio and storage) housing, cafés and venues that link producers to each other, to the public and to the marketplace.

Core funding to a number of key local arts organizations acting as 'connectors and magnets' would enable them to address operational issues and fulfil their mandates of driving engagement and vitality through linking to other sectors and organizations within the area and beyond. Agencies within the community development field are considered potential investors given the important community development role the arts sector plays. Current models are inadequate, forcing

organizations to operate with limited and precarious funding that is putting arts infrastructure at risk. It is restricting organizations' ability to plan effectively, leverage assets for longer-term provisioning, maintain ageing infrastructure, address space restrictions and grow. The community infrastructure currently operated by artist and arts advocates are calling for investment in qualified professional staff in key operational posts to stabilize and advance the value chains and synergy they have initiated. Such positions increase management capacity, organizational memory, social capital, community relevancy and accountability through volunteer turnover fuelled by burnout and/or dedicated project staff when the initiative ends. A considerable amount of artists' time and resources are invested in the initiatives, diverting them from their own creative practice, but a number withdraw their support when the operational demands become overwhelming. Furthermore, volunteer patterns are changing negatively impacting on organizations' capacity to function, underscoring the need for a few paid positions.

Community-wide cohesive promotion and place marketing strategies advertising the breadth of the locale's cultural activities and opportunities creates identity, competitive advantage and attracts tourists. Place marketing, a component of community governance, also has a role to play in recognizing and protecting the community's current and past citizens' cultural diversity, i.e. neighbourhoods and the built environment particularly the heritage aspects largely located in downtown areas contributes to a sense of place. In larger locales these assets impact on the film industry which frequently seeks places to meet specific production demands. From a planning perspective, there is considerable room for architects, urban planners and designers to create built spaces reflective of the North's history, culture and four-season environment.

Research capacity is a critical element of sector sustainability, informing decision-making, the development of cohesive management plans and directing investment. Building local research capacity is a priority to ensure plans reflect community aspirations, strengthen local cultural assets and leverage such. To address the dearth of relevant local arts sector data Municipal Cultural Planning (MCP) or similar initiatives that map tangible and intangible assets, cross-sector relationships and governance oversight is needed. Community-based initiatives endorsed by local governing bodies are recommended to ensure inclusive, creative planning processes and plans that reflect diverse voices and are implemented by the entity responsible. The lack of databases is restricting access to cultural resources, e.g. networks, organizations, producers, investors and/or consumers. Most communities do not have a central hub, website, or organization representing the sector to facilitate coordination and collaboration and/or engage at the 'community planning table' as an equal partner. Additional research opportunities include conducting comprehensive local

and/or regional impact studies for art, craft and cultural tourism that capture the sector's wide-ranging contributions, providing a truer valuation than a strictly economic focus. Engaging the arts sector to conduct the research would strengthen internal networks and knowledge of resources. For studies where capacity is limited, partnering external proponents with local residents would increase the ability for future initiatives and reduce consultants' demands on local organizations that typically do not have the contacts and contextual insights to undertake the work.

Five areas of capacity building and development supports that would significantly strengthen the sector's visibility, vitality and sustainability are: i) microbusiness development; ii) marketing mechanisms; iii) broad band internet; iv) affordable space; and v) diverse gathering places and venues that support the rural social milieu. Microbusiness development includes pathways for transitioning part-time activity and employment to increased and/or full-time engagement. Access to capital is critical. Financial instruments such as peer lending circles, education centring on alternative business models, e.g. cooperatives and social enterprises, and angel investors are key areas for increasing financing. Business for the Arts education dedicated to rural and Northern context and delivered using terminology more familiar to the sector (rather than traditional business language) is also an identified need. Equally important is linking people with business interests to artists who would rather not assume the commercial side, fostering innovative economic solutions. Peer mentoring networks within and across sectors connecting artists to expertise in entrepreneurship and microbusiness strengthens capacity in all areas including expanding and deepening product lines and establishing reliable pricing structures. Teacher training and administrative support (e.g. advertising, registration, space to host workshops) would simultaneously increase artists' revenue streams and build local artistic, technical and business sustainability.

Local, regional and international marketing mechanisms linking Northern producers, consumers and tourists would support growth and regeneration. Agents and websites maintained by development agencies and/or private investors would expand current opportunities, particularly for producers not interested in operating a business. Training in website development and social media and the capacity to access and utilize technology is necessary.

Access to broad band internet is critical community and regional infrastructure and is one of the most important factors hindering the North's sustainability (Hall and Donald, 2009). Large swaths of the region do not have access to this type of community infrastructure. People in areas that have

dial-up service find it impossible to conduct business. Training artists in the use of technology and social media would greatly advance the sector.

Affordable space including operational (office, studio, creative places, storage, venues) housing and/or live-work accommodations is another critical gap in community infrastructure limiting, particularly young peoples', engagement and production of goods, the sense of an arts community and the development of cultural clusters. Private and/or hybrid public partnerships, cooperative housing, perhaps based on the Artscape model, could address the need. Research into solutions for rural and Northern communities with few industrial buildings of a suitable size for repurposing would provide direction. Integral to affordable space and housing is the proximity of diverse venues galleries, festivals, retail outlets, creative places, tours, etcetera that sparks gathering and clustering, raising the visibility and accessibility of the sector, generating an arts scene, a buzz. These types of community infrastructure that connect artists to the public leads to the development of the rural social milieu, underpinning the sector's capacity for continual creativity, fuelling further interest in locally produced cultural products.

Strategic investment in the sector would lead to a community-wide culture of creativity and entrepreneurship through the complex web of relationships, structural interdependencies and the significant spillover of attributes, skills and knowledge gained through engaging in the arts to other domains and spheres. As a model for community development there is significant opportunity across the region to capitalize on the increasing interest in arts activity, and the growing demand for local goods and cultural tourism to create vibrant, healthy, resilience people and distinctive places.

7.3 Creative Practice and Community Development: Reciprocal Relations

The research provided the space and means for unpacking artistic creative practice and framing it within a dynamic, complex community system crystallizing my understanding of research as a creative process. The study provides considerable theoretical foundation for my choice of community development as an artistic practice framework and role in society. I perceive the two as inseparable—the same practice expressed in different fields. Both are creative practices, dynamic, discursive collaborations aimed at advancing individuals and collective society. The artist manifests ideas and change through interacting with oneself and others through dialogical processes and/or cultural products; and the community developer engages diverse citizens through dialogical processes embedded in holistic and creative approaches to community organizing, capacity building, the development of planning documents and implementation of such. Both disciplines necessitate

fostering relational skills to gain wisdom and tacit knowledge inherent in all people, strengthening agency and the courage, will and perseverance to move forward while remaining true to one's core values.

7.4 Impact of the Research

The action research engaged a diversity of artists, community developers, decision-makers, funders, and citizen advocates to investigate the contribution of creative practice to resilience in rural, Northern communities. It connected and built bridges within and across boundaries and communities, positively impacting on identity and belonging, social capital development and articulating the value of creative practice to continual individual, organizational and community level adaptation and transitioning capacity. Specifically, the research engaged approximately 1,826 people across cultures (Anglophone, Indigenous, and Francophone); geographical locations (isolated, fly-in, Northeastern and Northwestern Ontario); community size (small urban, second-tier regional centres, larger urban centres); and people from the cultural, social, governance (local, regional, provincial) and economic sectors.

The outputs of the research include:

Articles and Reports:

- *Craft and Resilience: Northern Ontario's Emerging Cultural Identity* (Ortiz, 2012). Peer reviewed article;
- *Culture, Creativity and the Arts, Achieving Community Resilience and Sustainability through the Arts in Sault Ste. Marie* (Ortiz and Broad, 2007);
- 6 community reports: (Kingfisher Lake, Mishkeegogamang and Summer Beaver; Sioux Lookout; Elliot Lake; the Francophone community; Chapleau; and Temagami);
- *Breathing Northwinds Project Final Report: Artist-led sector planning and network development in Northern Ontario* (Ortiz, Meades and Broad, 2010);
- *Growing Ontario Craft Community North* (Ortiz and Broad, 2012); and
- *Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations Through Peer Networking* (Ortiz, Albleson and Broad, 2013).

Community Engagement:

- 2 Advisory Groups/Committees;
- 2 inquiry groups (Artists and Developers);
- 5 focus groups;

- 5 arts-community led planning and network development consultations;
- 5 professional development workshops;
- 5 Meet and Greet events;
- 1 regional forum: *Building Resilience through the Arts* (livestreamed);
- 1 regional symposium: *Reflecting the North: Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture* (livestreamed);
- 1 symposium blog;
- 1 video of Northern artists, arts organizations and arts development;
- 1 curated craft exhibition *CraftCurrents: Contemporary Craft in Northern Ontario*, travelling to six locations in Northern Ontario; and
- 42 presentations (21 'internal' introducing recruited participants to new concepts and/or consolidating ideas and images directly related to the thesis' inquiry topics; and 21 'external' delivered at academic, community development and government-funded conferences and/or workshops that I was invited to attend.

The following sections identify the impact of the research activities on participants engaged in the study.

7.4.0 Artists' and Community Identity

The study validated artists' creative identity through recognizing the instrumental social and economic development role the sector plays in sustaining individuals, organizations and communities through continual transformation, adaptation and renewal. Consultations provided opportunities to reflect on what it means to be a creative person, 'an artist', from personal and societal perspectives. As the study progressed a number of participants' self-referencing moved toward 'entrepreneurs operating microbusinesses' with deepening understanding of the broader benefits engagement contributes to sustainability. A few artists that created goods for pleasure also expressed a more robust sense of their 'artist self' and greater pride in the societal role they play when contextualized within a broader development framework. The recognition of local artists' current and potential contributions to community development—through the identification of cultural resources, engagement in community planning, cross-sectoral initiatives—encouraged community leaders to consider and/or strengthened existing endorsement for utilizing the arts as a means of building identity and place, creating vibrant culture-based economies and healthy, resilient people.

7.4.1 Social Capital Development and Innovation

The vast majority of artists in Northern Ontario work in isolation within cultural and/or geographical communities. The study assembled local artists who may or may not have known each other and/or their creative interests, building social relations across boundaries, and strengthening networks that shall advantage them in future endeavours. Consultations focusing on increasing capacity through sharing skills and resources also identified peoples' assets and needs, encouraging future collaborations. For example, the session in Fort Frances linked Kenora artists who had recently established the Lake of the Woods Arts Collective (LOWAC) with those who were interested in developing one in Fort Frances to support area artists, raising the sector's profile. The new collective has contributed to creating a sense of an arts community and retaining creative people in general, and younger, more mobile artists, in particular.

The technology-delivered workshop connecting Kenora artists in the Northwest with Manitoulin Island artists in the Northeast, a geographical distance not likely to be bridged individually, transferred knowledge, experience and solutions that work in the region. The artist-led sector planning sessions, in particular, built linking social capital, the type of social capital artists have most difficulty in generating. These sessions contributed to integrating the arts into community planning by connecting artists to formal and informal community leaders. The collaborations enlarged understanding of place from different perspectives, and identified cultural assets that could be leveraged to diversify the economy and create identity and competitive advantage. They raised the profile of artists and leaders interested in advancing the sector, thereby setting the stage for inclusive, respectful development approaches that foster 'authentic' places. Manitoulin Island's professional development workshop brought together a diverse group of Indigenous and Anglophone artists to discuss ways of bridging divides to increase collaboration and sector development. They identified need for an Island wide map highlighting the spectrum of cultural assets in promoting the area as 'whole experience', which has since been incorporated into a much larger initiative for a Request for Proposals for the Manitoulin Cultural Planning Project.

The symposium *Reflecting the North: Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture* connected regional artists, arts organizations, economic and tourism developers, policy makers, educators, businesses and funders. The event provided opportunity for diverse artists to speak directly to other practitioners, a wide range of decision-makers and the broader public, educating them about the many challenges the sector faces. It provided the time and space to collaborate in developing strategies to advance the sector and reduce its precariousness. The experience of hearing artists' voices first-hand greatly contributed to 'getting it'—the drastic difference between Northern and

southern Ontario's contexts, and therefore, the necessity for development tools to meet the regions' needs, thereby influencing future policy and planning agendas. Strategies emerging from the symposium reflect many of the issues raised during other cycles of the research. A summary chart is posted on the event's blog to further disseminate sector issues and solutions. The event provided at least one of the funders located in southern Ontario a reason to travel to the North, noting it was one of few times they had ever visited the region even though the organization has a provincial mandate.

The video produced for the symposium featured approximately 30 people, i.e. artists, arts organizations and leaders representing arts developments. Each participant spoke about their work they are doing and the reality of living in the region, providing a snapshot of the high quality of cultural products generated locally, and a sampling of the stories reflective of Northerners' experiences. For many producers it was their first video opportunity due to limited access to such technology and/or skills to create one. It is posted on the symposium blog for the arts sector to utilize in self-promotion and/or for others' as a marketing tool for the arts in the region. Its production highlights the synergistic role of connectivity, providing more opportunities to engage in a variety of ways, underscoring the necessity of networks and social capital development in the region to become sustainable.

7.4.2 Articulating the Sector's Value and Making It Accessible

A significant challenge of the research was articulating the value of the arts beyond traditional economic frameworks. The ongoing cycles of image making, gathering diverse input, analyzing the connections and naming the components led to the production of visual maps portraying the relationships between creative practice, culture, the economy and resilience. The process of map making increased my ability to capture and share my conceptualizations on paper rather than in a jewellery format, extending my artistic voice to another media. It increased participants' cultural literacy by engaging them in the image development process, providing space for articulating their perspectives, confirming and/or contesting the evolving images.

The research findings identified characteristics of resilience gained through transformative processes inherent in creative practice, i.e. 'all that artists do' builds adaptive capacity across scales. The new model situates the benefits and contributions of the arts with a complex community system depicting the dynamic, non-linear relationships and linkages between creative processes, products and people that flow across socially constructed boundaries, and ways direct interaction generates social capital and innovation to continually respond and transition through change.

Utilizing studio journaling and mapping tools brought forward my artistic 'knowing' into tangible forms as starting points for dialoguing with artists, engaging them as active participants in processes familiar to them. Concretizing the sector's value enriched the investigation, providing the arts sector with visual depictions based on their understanding of creative practice. It enabled artists to connect to and convey deeper meaning to one another, fostering visual literacy and extending and/or re-conceptualizing their artistic endeavours within a community development framework. It validated their artistic identity, and increased pride by being able to articulate the important societal roles they play. Furthermore, the images and capacity to frame their work within emerging social and economic development frameworks provides them sound evidence for advocating for investment in the sector, financial and/or otherwise, to fulfill mandates and goals that include engaging citizens, developing latent creative capacity and agency for taking more control over their destinies, and fostering a sense of community identity and place.

Presentations at local, regional, national academic, community and government-funded workshops and conferences provided opportunity to gain feedback on the relational maps and the accompanying explanatory commentary from a wide range of people from a spectrum of sectors. Illustrating its value in an accessible format, transcending language barriers and/or depicting it in ways that resonates with diverse stakeholders, partners and audiences facilitated further understanding of the sector's contribution to resilience, and increased awareness and understanding of Northern Ontario's context, artistic strengths and scholarly work.

The use of images clearly demonstrated the critical role visual art plays in understanding complex concepts, and creating important junctures for shifting values, attitudes and perceptions about the arts from being seen as tangible outputs with limited economic viability to significantly contributing to wide-spread creativity and social and economic innovation within global knowledge economies.

7.5 Final Thoughts

The research began as an exploration into community culture, how it can evolve to support values that underpin resilience and creative practice's role in such. It enriched my 'artistic knowing' through artists' willingness to share their perspectives, developers who were interested in the arts and able to dedicate time to the study as well as numerous other participants who engaged through workshops, symposia and conferences. The assembling and interaction led to co-producing understanding of the North's complexity, and the sector's significant and crucial contributions to

agency, health and well-being and identity and belonging, in general, and during times of change, in particular.

Moving forward there are three interlocking overarching ‘tenets’ where the research deepened my understanding and will continue to inform my practice now with increased ability to articulate them.

1. Culture is *the* framework for change in the ongoing process of creating resilience, and the arts are the means for its evolution, simultaneously co-creating community through interaction, and finding ways of living within community, socially, economically and philosophically.
2. Understanding community development as a creative practice foregrounds the dynamic nature of, and necessity for, nurturing respectful relational work that engages diverse people in emergent heuristic processes supportive of accessing and generating a wealth of knowledge in finding ways to live rewarding and meaningful individual and collective lives in shared space. Practice demands the capacity to work with uncertainty.
3. Northern artists are resilient. Collective action is overcoming significant barriers to maintaining a creative practice. Their tenacity speaks to the region’s identity—one of survival, of ‘making it work with whatever we have’, a culture that has evolved from often being left to its own devices to address pressing challenges with little external assistance.

The study also revealed further research opportunities. Topics include: i) the impact of arts-generated supplemental income within subsistence economies; ii) local and regional peer mentoring networks for building artistic, technical and entrepreneurial capacity and critical support systems; iii) affordable live/work space in areas where there is limited housing stock and few industrial buildings available for repurposing; and iv) cultural policy and planning respectful of the Northern context.

These underexplored areas might shed light on ways to deepen understanding of the contribution of creative practice to building resilience in rural, isolated and Canada’s northern communities. It may increase understanding the sector beyond traditional economic frameworks and individual benefits, assisting to shift perspectives toward its potential for providing diverse opportunities to engage in the life of the community, fostering a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation, vibrancy, and continual individual, organizational and community level adaptation and renewal.

In closing, on an individual level, I look forward and back: forward to incorporating these learnings into my practice, in my jewellery studio and when I collaborate with communities—and back to the beginning of the study starting as an artist/researcher, becoming an artist/researcher-researcher/artist during the study and now at the end of the journey an artist/researcher—a more integrated sense of the two practices and a deeper understanding of their respective and overlapping creative contributions to Northern Ontario's resilience.

At the organizational level, I am inspired by artists' and arts organizations' dedication to creative practice—the diverse and novel ways they collaborate, regroup and persevere, increasing their sustainability in a region where the sector is under-resourced, underdeveloped and undervalued.

Travel across the North has illustrated there is considerable artistic talent that significantly contributes the vibrancy of the locale's social and economic health and well-being, bringing much needed economic benefits. Key to regeneration is providing environments that foster diverse networks and social capital that support respectful relationship building across boundaries. As Wheatley and Frieze (2006) indicate—it is critical connections not critical mass that develops new knowledge, practices and commitment to broad-base change that underpins transitioning through significant change while retaining core values.

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Appendix I: Overview of Summary Reports

Following is where support material for the research findings is found.

Cycle One: The Socioeconomic Impact of the Arts on the Economy of Sault Ste. Marie

Culture, Creativity and the Arts: *Culture, Creativity and the Arts, Achieving Community Resilience and Sustainability Through the Arts in Sault Ste. Marie* (Ortiz and Broad, 2007).

Available from: <http://www.nordikinstitute.com>

Cycle Two: The Role of Art in Community Development and Resilience

Appendix II: Summary of Inquiry Group Themes

Cycle Three: Innovation and Cultural Development

Appendix III: Summary of Focus Groups Themes

Cycle Four: Network Development

Breathing Northwinds, Final Report (Ortiz, Meades and Broad, 2010)

Available from: <http://www.nordikinstitute.com>

Cycle Five: Understanding Northern Artists' Context

Growing Ontario Craft Community North, Final Report (Ortiz and Broad, 2012)

<http://www.nordikinstitute.com>

Symposium, Reflecting the North: *Regional Realities in Art, Craft and Culture*

blog: <https://reflectingthenorth.wordpress.com>

Presentations, summary of symposium discussion and video vignette of Northern artists, arts organizations and arts development

Cycle Six: Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations through Peer Networking

Sustaining Northern Arts Organizations through Peer Networking (Ortiz, Ableson and Broad, 2013)

Available from: <http://www.nordikinstitute.com>

Appendix II: Summary of Inquiry Groups' Themes

1. The role of the arts in identity reformation and belonging

- If surrounded by visible creativity it might support people to be creatively adaptive in response to crisis and increase perseverance
- Art creates a safe space and a sense of belonging
- Engagement and interaction: increases connection to oneself; others; creativity is validated
- Necessity of creative expression to being human and life
- Cultural minorities can practice safely; neutral space to meet
- Try new things; enlarge identity; new social understanding and appreciation
- Individual and community health; determinates of health
- Sense of community is lacking; artists are a community within a community; unappreciated; others 'just don't get it'
- Contributions: expedite healing and return to work; mental health and well-being
- Transformational aspect of knowing oneself, connecting to oneself is at the core
- Culture is about pleasure, ideas and growth

2. The role of the arts in community development

- Art is a mediating factor which in turn contributes to resilience—art shapes values and culture, which in turn impacts on a community's resilience and capacity for development
- Art as a form of participation; an interactive engagement in a community; by creating artistic pieces we are directly contributing to the community
- Creative process is the glue; must engage everyone in developing a community
- Community culture is created and recreated through the creative process of art making
- Art provides a transition place where informal can meet formal and engage in a dialogical creative process
- Art documents community life over time; decay; colonization
- Pervasiveness of art; unappreciated; undervalued; challenge live A Day Without Art
- Art is something you have to locate but not pin down because it's always in constant motion
- Art is community development—it is the park; art/community development processes are the same—why are they difficult to understand?
- Engage people; bring them back to life—always told leave it to professionals
- Bring in new ideas and make it happen—things we want to help keep us here
- Visual identity creates cohesion, e.g. symbols, visual minorities
- Immigrants migrate to familiar environments where others have migrated
- Arts provide sense of home and security
- Social norms are re-enforced or challenged through their representation and their representation takes an artistic form, or can be
- Art captures culture through stories, visual identity, performances, built environment
- Art is created and recreated—dynamic process, in motion, shaping ideas; documenting records and new avenues of perceiving past

3. The significance of place in cultural development

- Sense of community: individuals, networks create it—or not
- Art is the common factor; creative validation; need opportunities to connect; lack of space; no support for arts space; disconnected
- Ownership, belonging and being able to take something home with you
- CD process, governance, top down; should be operationalizing community ideas
- Education critical for arts; children, adults, must reduce fear factor, qualified educators, exposure; typically, first to be cut; no afterschool programs; no qualified teachers
- Focus on the people who are here and the resources—don't chase big companies
- They fear our creativity
- Stuck in the past—industrial age; fear of risk; one lone model for development—'big business
- Process vs. product of arts; economic framework vs. creative practice for all
- Engagement; need art but need everyone enjoying the arts more
- They're focusing on the wrong thing—it's the process not the product
- Creative practice is where it is at— the reward
- Galleries make the money not artists
- The land, environment; place; is a crucible; inspires
- Geographic distance; isolation; lots of resources/talent but no development plans
- Decolonizing; sharing

4. Community development as a creative process

- What's there not to understand? Art is the same thing, same processes as development; different fields; art vs. planning documents
- No one practice 'rule book'
- People need to develop their creativity to break out of rut
- Developers need to learn to work with emergence

Creative Process

- Creative thinking is transformational spurs new ideas, transformation
- Inner dialogue; transcends problem solving
- Entrepreneurial thinking spurs innovation
- New ways of being, thinking doing; diverse artists; new mixing
- Instils a culture of creativity and design and aesthetics while developing critical thinking skills—necessary for innovation and transition to change CD
- Creativity and innovation—it's art; need skills and access; connect to others
- Creativity is portable in an increasingly mobile/fragmented world—take it with you
- Maintain your health and means of engaging in a new community
- All the benefits of transformation; learning; enjoyable; discovery; time for oneself

Products

- Hold the message, the learning; they communicate meaning
- Underappreciated; people shop by price rather than quality
- Have to sell them; how to sell them; no time to sell them; too many gatekeepers
- Need to have interaction with others; other artists; buyers; educational role them-us

Appendix III: Summary of Focus Groups' Themes

Timing-opportunity

- Government funding available, festivals were flavor of the month; expert available; City wanted festival to attract money
- Nothing in Sault Ste. Marie at that time; arts active but no facilities
- Fertile timing; well-connected people began the festival
- Strong local human people were a strength: mostly impassioned women made it happen
- Government role: aim was to foster arts at young age, grants for festival's education program
- Returned to Sault Ste. Marie from Montreal; had the space—that was key
- Drew upon family support to develop Fireball Café; history of space as social place
- Time, space, history and opportunity—that's the key isn't it? There are the moments when you take the opportunity

Goals/Objectives

- Wanted cultural life equal to southern Ontario in home community, so created festival event
- Art woven into classrooms, then children back into community
- Festival provides opportunity for kids to pay attention to culture and the community
- ArtReach core idea: bring professional artists to Sault Ste. Marie as role models and educators, targeted to Grade 11 students.
- Education and artistic practice elements not covered in high school
- Art making is accessible: low technology, costs
- Social part was the focus, then grew into coffee house; offered place to hear original music
- Mixed use focus but youth latched on and took over; adults afraid of space after that
- Potential of the place, potential for something else; to engage others
- Film works because documentary filmmakers are really telling a story that is more useful than what politicians, lawyers, scientists and sports people are doing
- Larger audience should be privy to artist work
- Honouring the work of Ken, young people on film team; choosing to stay in the North
- Ken who? Of that guy, 3 degrees of separation from someone who has his work on their wall
- He embodies the North
- Promote art show; community awareness; outside community

Networks

- Kept talking about intent to make film until I met someone who was interested—networking; through networks met another person; cool idea; never heard of Ken McDougall
- Film team was complete
- Size of place had impact, networks, close knit

Space

- Safe space, non-alcoholic; youth welcome
- Relationships are navigated, conducted around space
- Change in population over time; 'me' focused; destructive force, closed Café
- Place to validate yourself in the arts as an artist
- Wanted to build a creative arts centre because space was amazing
- Atmosphere, circumstance for generation of energy, creativity to occur
- Socializing space in a bigger sense; alternative ways of doing things
- Sault Ste. Marie always a gathering space, still attracts, absorbs; all businesses were about talking and giving back to community

- Arcadia House: self-generated space; anti-authoritarian, grown on its own
- Fireball Café worked because I was there; singular leader, focus
- System fails people; turn to family and friends; supporting culture
- City has authoritarian approach; they don't understand people
- Non-alcoholic places are essential: not about consumption but engagement
- Youth too young to creative create space; need organizational skills and additional support; transient population
- Arcadia House: social sculpture space; congregate; safe space; great space
- Hang out for no good reason and every good reason; inclusive, safe place; no big gamble
- Drawn to building; impact- changes in community; people linger, appreciate beauty, history
- Experience of city would have been different; verge of leaving but building attracted me
- Affordable place to live otherwise, leave town
- Connect with people here
- Socialize with each other; proximity
- Key: Arcadia space extends beyond place into other parts of life
- Caustic resins used in practice; need safe workspace outside of home
- Congregate outside; display of expression; sharing; fun; draws people to place
- Spaces connect people otherwise how to connect; no forum
- Creative arts centre; equipped; non-hierarchical

Personal impact/benefits

- It was a compelling endeavor
- Opportunities for kids and other artists in Sault Ste. Marie
- Childhood memories, cherished arts events
- I think it's the feedback from people that keep me going
- It's the pleasure you get out of that you can't let that go. If you get the pleasure that I get you can't let it go
- Demographics; volunteerism, government requirement of 40 hrs in high school
- Personal exposure to other arts; methods; professional artists visiting SSM
- Transformative; frustrating, wonderful; size of community allowed for it

Impact on the development of the arts

- Spurred other groups
- Film lead to the establishment of Algoma International Films
- Synergy and creativity lead to more opportunities
- Artistic development; move between modes
- Validated arts, especially youth; could do it in Sault Ste. Marie
- Fireball Café led to the development of Arcadia House, role model
- Education System, failure of validating art and profession; contemporizing it
- Generated original music scene in Sault Ste. Marie
- People associated with space have vested interest; social accountability to place
- New partnerships, strengthening partnerships
- He didn't know process of touring an exhibition, etc. learned process it was an education
- Introduced film into schools; students make films
- Community artists can have shows

Artist as role models/educators

- It is very much about relationships. Relationships with the two school boards. Relationships with the teachers and students. Relationships with the artists, the gallery and the education system and the gallery

- Artist role in education and community
- Grade 11 cross-pollination; brings diversity, fruit
- Fostering independent youth; safe places; opportunity; identity; potential life, opportunities in Sault Ste. Marie; respect; learning outside the classroom
- Network of artist-youth to professional artists
- Art Gallery an important link; ongoing exhibition roster of artists; connecting to community; bringing in other demographics

Impact on community

Community identity

- Festival promotes Sault Ste. Marie's identity
- Northern Ontario identity; supported by artist facilitators and educators
- Networking: Built festival networking through Director
- Arts influence youth culture
- Youth engagement and audience development
- Festival: need/opportunity for young families to bring their children to the arts
- Arts necessary component of life
- Benefits extend beyond the dollars
- Links us to the larger cultural life
- Festival has a community responsibility to other groups; fundraising
- Community: medium is cultural community
- Community: boundaries; inclusiveness; size-vision; integration
- Opportunity to recognize people; people thankful for opportunity to participate

Size and vision

- Size of community—smaller community; more integrated
- Sault Ste. Marie is a weave of different cultural skeins

Us-Them and creating opportunities for change

- Immigrant mentality exists—immigrants excluding other newer immigrants
- Individual concept to overarching concept; need critical mass/connections to change place
- Energize negative spaces by lighting a fire; other places can't stay dark; change is inevitable
- Connect people to place through history; take care of place
- Effecting community change through education
- Current system doesn't support social community building
- What is the next step? Engagement; meaningful public art; stimulate creativity; already exists here
- Retain community memory; visual impact on place but Sault Ste. Marie doesn't know about
- Cyclical events turning to excitement and anticipation
- Sault Ste. Marie was getting known outside city; inspiration; exciting place to be around
- Without the arts, a community is a row of houses and people just walking back and forth to work
- Arcadia House is a sculpture and people are clay; forming space and themselves