



Submission to the Government of Canada's  
Standing Committee of Finance  
2013 Federal Budget

## **Creative Spaces and Community Based Arts Programming for Children and Youth**



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## Executive Summary

*The Arts Network for Children and Youth (ANCY) is an arts service organization national in scope formed in 2000 by artists working in community-engaged programs for children and youth. The organization was formed to support, sustain and expand arts programming in municipalities.*

Research shows the enormous benefits to the health and well-being of children and youth when they have access to the arts and other creative activities. The results show increased learning and community involvement, a reduction in crime and high school drop-out rates, reduced psycho-social behaviour and improved health and social skills. These benefits come with a **considerable reduction in costs to the social, health and justice sectors.**

**Cultural industries are one of the fastest growing sectors in Canada** and early exposure and training in the arts offer many youth a future career. Observational research shows that some of our most vulnerable youth are highly creative, and when involved in creative programs and activities are more successful academically, socially and as they move into the labour market.

**Arts activities for children and youth can be viewed not only through the cultural, but also through the economic, health, social and labour market lenses.**

The Arts Network for Children and Youth has identified, along with others, that a **response to the lack of ongoing funding, infrastructure and training for artists** is needed to support existing programs and to support the creation of much-needed program expansion at the municipal levels.

Many have the misconception that art programs are readily available to all children and youth in Canada and are well funded, when in fact only a small percentage of families can afford to send their children to arts programs and in some communities they do not exist. **Less than 25 – 30% of children and youth in Canada ever have a “creative arts experience” in their life outside of the school setting.**

Over the past few years we have begun to see the emergence of a **“children and youth arts sector”** which has never existed in the past. With national, provincial and municipal support and community arts leadership it will continue to grow.

**The Children and Youth Arts Sector is a growth sector positioned to stimulate economic growth and job creation associated with expanded sector development.**

### **Recommendation #1: Creative Spaces Children and Youth Infrastructure Fund**

A beginning investment of \$30 million to be used for pilot infrastructure projects in urban, rural, remote and First Nations communities.

### **Recommendation #2: Children and Youth Arts Engagement Fund**

We ask that a minimum of \$15 million dollars be placed in the 2013 budget with the intent that this will also be an annual fund that will increase yearly as cost to other sectors decrease.

### **Recommendation #3: Training Fund**

We ask that \$20 million dollars be used to set up training programs for youth who upon completion will then be able to deliver community-based programs at the municipal level.

## Background

We are aware that in order to increase programming there is a need for improved infrastructure, more trained artistic staff and sustainable funding. ANCY continues to work with communities and government to try to fill these gaps and support communities in their efforts to develop and sustain programming.

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Arts Network for Children and Youth is to ensure that all children and youth have the opportunity to experience creativity and the arts for their personal growth, social development and community involvement.

A growing number of Canadians are becoming concerned that our children and youth do not have access to creative arts programs in the same way that we have access to recreational programming.

Research in Canada<sup>1</sup> shows the benefits to the health and well-being of children and youth when the arts and creative activities are included in community programming and education. The arts are **asset-based programs** that **focus on what children and youth do well** which continually shows positive results in increased learning, reduced drug use, suicides, substance abuse and violence and with a considerable reduction in cost to the educational, social, health and justice sectors.

Studies from Canada and other countries show a reduction in crime and high school drop-out rates, improved social skills and health, plus increased community involvement; again at a greatly reduced cost as compared to existing **deficit intervention-based programs** such as policing, counselling and incarceration.

**Cultural industries are one of the fastest growing sectors in this country** and have steadily increased in the past 30 years.

**Involving our creative children and youth from an early age through a diverse range of creative experiences at the community level gives them a greater opportunity to continue on to post secondary education and into the work force.**

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<sup>1</sup> When the Bough Breaks ( Dr. Gina Browne, McMaster University), Learning Through the Arts (Queen's University), National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project (McGill University)

Research is also showing that many of our most vulnerable youth are highly creative. Through the creation of **neighbourhood art centres** designed for both children and youth, these experiences are integrated into the broader community. Through the addition of community **place based arts infrastructure** and programs it also increases the number of jobs for community artists in the creative sector, especially in rural communities.

**In rural communities our creative youth are our largest number of youth who migrate out to cities or remain extremely under-employed in their home communities.**

Arts activities give our creative youth a greater opportunity to train and return to their home community knowing that there are creative jobs waiting for them. Not only will there be new jobs created delivering programming to children and youth, but with increased technology in rural municipalities our creative youth working in the **cultural industries field** such as graphic design, music engineering and animation can work from their rural communities for companies based in larger urban settings.

In addition, industries locating in a new community are looking for broader recreational programming and liveable communities which include cultural activities and quality art programs for their families. For these reasons, increased arts programming for children and youth has a strong **economic benefit**.

## The Children and Youth Community Arts Infrastructure Framework

(see Appendix A)

While the benefits of arts activities are increasingly recognized, there is a lack of corresponding long-term, stable funding from each of the three levels of government that would ensure the sustainability of this important work.

### **Operational core funding, infrastructure and training is needed to support existing programs and innovative new initiatives emerging at the community level.**

As with any *sector growth*, there is also economic growth that follows both in the creation of infrastructure and jobs to the artists who will staff them, causing a secondary ripple into the community. We have identified a need for *children and youth creative centres* including place-based infrastructure such as black box theatres and rehearsal space, recording studios, neighbourhood art centres and multi-disciplinary facilities designed for children and youth and accessible to families from all socio-economic backgrounds.

We are excited to see the emergence of pilot multi-disciplinary program models including visual art, theatre, music, dance, community arts, film and multi-media in Canada. These models have the potential to positively impact a greater number of children than in the past, aging from 3 to 30, and include programs that can be replicated in other communities.

They include:

- Creative pre-school programs
- After-school programs including structured and drop-in programs where activities are offered and equipment is available. These must be offered in neighbourhoods in *children and youth creative spaces* that are accessible all year and where children and youth have a sense of ownership to the space which is critical to their level of engagement.
- Art and multi-media studios in all neighbourhoods including high-risk areas. These can be in storefronts, mall spaces, and even in housing complexes where children and youth have easy access.
- Creative programs blending the arts and the environment
- Cultural community and outreach programs in rural, remote and First Nations communities
- Arts leadership and mentorship
- Youth engagement and youth-led programs, which use the arts to connect youth to their communities
- Programs using the arts as a vehicle to work with street-involved youth; the arts have been demonstrated to be one of the most valuable outreach tools for highly vulnerable youth who are often also our creative youth
- Traditional programs in visual arts, music and theatre, but with the inclusion of new media, multi-media, dance and community arts

**Taken collectively, these programs make up what the Arts Network for Children and Youth is calling the *Children and Youth Community Arts Infrastructure and Programming Framework* (see Appendix A).**

No other country has developed and adopted an overarching community model such as exist in communities for sports and recreation. Canada has an excellent opportunity to become a world leader in this kind of community infrastructure and programming.

## The Next Steps

Building on the academic and observational research that continues to demonstrate the benefits of the arts for children and youth, over the past 12 years ANCY and its national network of community organizations have collectively developed the professional knowledge of what is needed to move the sector forward with an **innovative and sustainable community development strategy**.

### 1) Sustainable Funding

The question of whether we can afford this type of program is answered by Dr. Gina Browne in her research project *When the Bough Breaks*, who writes that **“we can’t afford not to invest in these programs.”** It has been estimated that \$1.00 spent on asset-based programs such as the arts results in \$5.00 - \$7.00 in savings in other areas. Simply put, it is a fiscally prudent investment of tax dollars.

**The present annual cost of keeping one youth in both the social service or justice systems is over \$100,000.00 annually, which is equivalent to the cost of offering community arts programs to as many as 50 – 100 children and youth for a year.**

We have identified that, with the exception of short, project-based funding on a one or two year basis, there is little stable, ongoing funding available for these programs from the municipal, provincial and federal levels. **Unlike funding to other sectors including recreation, no one is taking responsibility to support this emerging children and youth art sector.**

Stable funding is not only critical to the health of children and youth arts organizations but more importantly, it is critical to their ability to have a positive impact on the lives of the young people they serve.

### 2) Children and Youth Creative Spaces Infrastructure

We are seeing an increasing amount of **children and youth creative spaces** and by looking to the best practice models that now exist in Canada it is time to “scale it up” to ensure that children and youth have access to these creative spaces in communities and neighbourhoods in the same way that they have access to sport and recreational facilities. **The cost of developing and maintaining these facilities is far less than the cost of correctional, health and recreational facilities.**

**Creative spaces will include:**

- Small, easily accessible, neighbourhood art/creative centres, where children and youth have ownership to the space with creative nurturing staff. These are often first points of contact.
- Multi-disciplinary art/creative centres for children and youth, much like we see for sports and recreation; with artists, equipment and supplies. These also act as hubs for outreach work into the community.
- New green multi-disciplinary facilities where training is included through the construction which can lead to long term eco/cultural tourism and housing, including First Nation housing.
- Facilities specifically designed for older youth including higher risk, street-involved youth where there are sufficient resources to assist with continuing their education and transition into the labour market.

**Present examples of existing arts facilities for children and youth include:**

- Retrofitted multi-disciplinary art studios in downtown areas
- Smaller neighbourhood art storefronts for entry point programming
- Studios set-up in high density apartment complexes
- Multi-disciplinary training facilities designed for apprenticeship programs

Reports such as the Province of Ontario's "The Roots of Youth Violence" speaks to the need for increased arts programming and cultural community spaces designed for youth. While this is a recognized need emerging from studies across Canada, it is never acted upon. ***It is time to act.***

**Given the present level of public anxiety over youth alienation and violence and the need for more community gathering places for youth, these are important and timely infrastructure opportunities.**

We also see the potential in the infrastructure projects for multiple innovative objectives. Wherever possible we would like to see the process of building or renovating facilities to include:

- Opportunities for youth to take part in the construction phase, offering youth apprenticeships and encouraging youth to continue with their education or to transition into the labour market.
- Sustainable, green, safe and natural building components. This will reduce long term operating costs, create environmental awareness and provide a healthier environment for end users.
- A planned, long-term economic development ripple effect for the community through short and long term employment opportunities. First, during the construction of the facilities and then through increased job opportunities for artists and youth once the facility is complete and programming begins.

**The creation of children and youth arts facilities is an investment that will not be a drain on public funds, but will return the investment back to government in tangible ways.**

In the case of arts funding for children and youth, this investment will provide an even greater return through costs savings to other sectors, job creation, and most importantly, **the improved overall health of our children and youth.**

### **3) Trained Staffing**

We are also aware that there are **few training programs** that are specific to the training of artists to work at the local levels with children and youth in a community based setting, outside of the school. This can be achieved through a variety of training models from post-secondary to apprenticeships and internships.

## Budget Recommendations to the Government of Canada

The Arts Network for Children and Youth (ANCY) has three specific funding recommendations for the 2011 federal budget. We recommend that the Government of Canada develop a ***Creative Spaces Children and Youth Infrastructure Fund***, a ***Children and Youth Arts Engagement Fund*** and a ***Youth Arts Training Fund*** to support the training, capital and operating costs associated with both the creation of facilities and ongoing programming at the community level.

We are recommending that these be ongoing funds that will build as the sector develops and grows. Over time, and as we see savings in other sectors, we ask that the funds saved, continue to be reinvested to support the ongoing develop and support for the ***children and youth art sector***.

We believe that the responsibility for programs and infrastructure must be a priority of all three levels of government and in creative partnerships with the private sector. **We are urging the Federal government to take a lead role.**

### Recommendation #1: Creative Spaces Children and Youth Infrastructure Fund

We urge that a **“Creative Spaces Infrastructure for Children and Youth Fund”** be developed. This would be an ongoing annual fund, beginning in 2012, with a recommended starting investment of \$30,000,000.00 to be used for pilot infrastructure projects in several urban, rural, remote and First Nation communities. This fund could be an expanded fund within the “Creative Spaces Fund” at Canadian Heritage.

### Recommendation #2: Children and Youth Arts Engagement Fund

We urge that a **“Children and Youth Arts Engagement Fund”** be developed to support the annual core operating costs to community organizations. This would begin with existing organizations and then be expanded to sustain both existing and new organizations. We are asking that an additional \$15,000,000.00 be placed in the 2012 budget with the intent that this will also be an annual fund that will increase yearly as more organizations and community programs are created, prove themselves and show a savings to other sectors.

### Recommendation #3: Youth Arts Training Fund

We urge that a **“Youth Arts Training Fund”** be developed to support the training of youth artists who, once training is complete, can deliver arts and creative programming to children and youth at the local levels. We are asking that \$20,000,000.00 be placed in the 2012 budget.



## Appendix A: The Community Children and Youth Arts Infrastructure Framework

### NEIGHBOURHOOD ART CENTRES (STOREFRONTS, HOUSING COMPLEXES)

These are small neighbourhood art centres designed as first points of entry for children who would not be comfortable being engaged in larger art centres. Many children who have never experienced arts or creative activities will feel comfortable coming to these smaller centres because they are safe, creative spaces with nurturing and creative staff. It is important that they are easily accessible both geographically and all year, 6 to 7 days of the week.

They will:

- Be small facilities of 2,000 – 3,000 sq. ft. located geographically close to schools, high density housing areas and designed for a wide range of multi-disciplinary programs for children including programs from pre-school to older children, during the day and in after-school programs
- Include a kitchen to support culinary arts activities, nutrition and life skills development and as a hub for celebrations
- Where possible, include outside access to parkland and green areas that can be used by the children for environmental art projects and arts gardens and play programming
- Support continuity in the creative staff and artists they hire and offer a sense of ownership and community to the children they serve

**Cost Per Facility:** \$100,000.00 – \$300,000.00 depending on size and location

**Operating costs per year:** \$200,000.00 - \$300,000.00 offset by grants, revenue generated, fundraising

### YOUTH ART CENTRES

These are small neighbourhood art centres designed for creative youth that are slightly larger to include more arts equipment. These spaces will be first points of entry for many youth.

They will:

- Be small facilities of 3,000 – 5,000 sq. ft. and will include multi-media equipment, small performance space and visual art materials
- Include a kitchen to support culinary arts activities, nutrition and life skills development and as a hub for celebrations
- Be designed for multi-disciplinary programming, including planned classes and programs as well as open studios
- Be designed and planned to facilitate youth led-programs
- Always be a primary arts centre but will also include programs and facilitated opportunities for more general training, mentoring, educational support, community involvement and volunteering
- Allow for entrepreneurial projects by the youth
- Be an entry point to introduce youth to creative activities, to allow them an opportunity to be with friends, be in a safe space with supportive creative staff and artists and develop creative skills advancement opportunities

- Work with the youth to integrate them into the larger arts facilities and arts projects such as community theatre, art exhibits, music and performance opportunities for additional portfolio building, networking for future employment and to feel part of the broader arts community

**Cost Per Facility:** \$200,000.00 – \$300,000.00 depending on geographic location.

**Operating costs per year:** \$300,000.00 offset by grants, revenue generated and fundraising

### **MULTI-DISCIPLINARY CHILDREN AND YOUTH ART CENTRES**

These are larger, professionally designed multi-disciplinary facilities used for children and youth programming by the whole community. The level of arts excellence will be important to the programs and classes that are delivered from these centres.

They will:

- Include small auditorium for theatre, dance and music
- Include visual art studios and multi-media studios – including a recording studio, video editing studio and woodworking shop
- Include a kitchen to support culinary arts activities, nutrition and life skills development and as a hub for celebrations
- Be accessible to schools and the community
- Allow for a wide variety of programs for both school students, children and youth including fee for service programs, reduced fees and professional arts training programs
- Be a hub for administration and other arts programming in the community specific to children and youth, to support outreach arts programming in the community and with community partners including schools. They will also work closely with the smaller neighbourhood centres

**Cost per facility:** \$1.5mil – \$3 mil depending on geographic location

**Operating Costs per year:** \$800,000.00 – \$1 mil including grants, revenue generating, fund raising

### **FIRST NATIONS AND REMOTE MULTI-DISCIPLINARY CULTURAL SPACES**

These facilities are designed as Cultural Centres for the whole community while giving priority to children and youth.

They will:

- Include multi-disciplinary studio spaces
- Include an auditorium and kitchen for community functions and celebrations
- Include fiber and woodworking shops that will also allow for entrepreneurial and sustainable creation and building projects
- Be educational spaces for students, especially in remote communities, that will allow for learning opportunities to complete their education
- Have training opportunities integrated into the building project that will allow for skills development which can be transferred to future local housing construction and entrepreneurial opportunities
- Include sustainable green and natural building practices integrated into the facilities

**Cost per facility:** \$2 mil – \$5 mil depending on geographic location

**Operating costs per year** – \$800,000.00 – \$1 mil offset by grants, revenue generated, fundraising

## **YOUTH TRAINING CENTRES**

There will be a small number of these Centres located across the country designed to train creative youth as staff to support the community based **children and youth creative centres**.

They will:

- Work in partnership with community organizations and accredited programs – high school and community colleges
- Offer initial entry programming in partnership with high schools to gain experience and build portfolios for post secondary training at the university and college levels that could lead to the growing cultural and knowledge based industries
- Train youth in technical programming e.g. music recording to be able to work as mentors with younger children or other arts facilities including community theatre as volunteers at the local level

**Cost per facility:** \$1.5mil – \$3 mil depending on geographic location and resources

**Annual budgets per year** – \$800,000.00 – \$1 mil including grants, revenue generation, fundraising

## **COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

### **Primary Schools**

- Artists on staff at the multi-disciplinary and neighbourhood centres will work in the schools and act as a bridge between the schools and the communities. They will take projects into the schools and get to know the students.
- Schools will come to the multi-disciplinary centres to use the equipment and for special art projects.
- Visiting and Resident artists will be brought into the schools from the art centres.

### **Secondary Schools**

- Students will also use the studios in the multi-disciplinary centre.
- Students will use the multi-disciplinary centres for special events such as art shows and theatre performances.

### **Community Art Centres (Public Art Galleries, Community and Professional Theatres and Libraries)**

- Both the neighbourhood centres and the larger multi-disciplinary art centres will work with public art galleries and theatres to give youth opportunities to showcase work, screenings, and to perform in community art/theatres, providing youth with a sense of importance and community value.
- Youth can also be trained as volunteers at arts venues. These organizations will also be supported to continue to deliver the exemplary children and youth programs that they have always offered.
- Art Galleries, Art Centres, Theatres and Libraries will also be eligible for operating funding to support their children and youth arts programs.

## Children and Youth Service Organizations

- Partnerships with children and youth service organizations will be invaluable in connecting vulnerable youth to neighbourhood centres and developing programming collaborations that are responsive to local needs.
- Children and youth can be referred to the neighbourhood centres to develop life and social skills

