

Arts and Culture

The arts sector in Manitoba is rapidly adding an increasing number of jobs to our economy, yet it does not get the same level of attention as other industries. The arts sector is labour intensive and produces few greenhouse gases, thereby offering a sustainable approach to growing our province's economy. The arts sector in Manitoba can prepare our youth for the future, provide our elders with support and encourage economic growth overall. Arts and creative industries are multidisciplinary and encourage the unification of communities from different backgrounds, which is of great value in the current political climate. There is much work to be done, however to make the arts more inclusive and responsive to Manitoba's growing diversity, and to be a meaningful part of reconciliation between settler and Indigenous communities.

There are four main reasons why we should be funding arts and culture in Manitoba:

- The positive economic impact that arts and culture has for the province
- The educational benefits for youth
- The growth of multi-disciplinary creative knowledge workers and jobs
- The emerging research showing the link between arts and health

Arts and the Economy

The arts have a significant impact on Manitoba's economy which is demonstrated in its contribution to provincial GDP. "Culture is an economic powerhouse, employing tens of thousands of people across a wide variety of creative and cultural sub-sectors. Its contribution to the province's GDP, at \$1.7 billion, is larger than it has ever been, and it is one of our fastest growing industrial sectors".¹

The size of the arts workforce continues to grow. Stats Canada has determined that Arts and Culture employs 22,500 Manitobans, or 3.4 per cent of the workforce.² A survey for the Winnipeg Arts Council Report *Ticket to the Future*³ suggested even higher employment numbers. The report determined that 6.3 per cent of Winnipeg's labour force (25,000 people) is employed in the arts and creative industries, with 5,400 employed by nonprofit arts and cultural organizations.⁴ The sector is growing rapidly: the Government of Canada reported that the arts sector grew by 3.6 per cent in 2018, following closely behind the construction sector which grew by 4.1 per cent. The strong growth was a result of maturing investments of the film and entertainment sector.⁵ Investing in the arts is important to many Man-



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itobans. Winnipeg has one of Canada's highest levels of spending on entertainment as a percentage of total household expenditures.⁶

Arts and Education

Recent studies have suggested that arts and cultural activities lead to higher graduation rates among lower-income students⁷ and that participation in arts can aid learning processes, problem-solving, and other transferable skills.⁸ It has been shown that arts and culture encourage "habits of the mind that support learning, as well as self-confidence, motivation, and pro-social behaviours".⁹ This can be beneficial to communities where there are lower rates of graduation, such as poorer communities in Manitoba.

Research by Brownell et al¹⁰ examined the link between poverty and education and concluded that it is highly probable that children who are born into poverty will not be prepared for school. The positive influences that the arts sector can have on education — an important antidote to poverty — are important considerations when considering that Winnipeg's child poverty rate reached a staggering 41.4 per cent in

2018.¹¹ Also of note is that Manitoba's Churchill-Keewatinook Aski riding has the highest child poverty rate in Canada.¹²

Arts and Skill Development

As Manitoba's youth enter the workforce, they will need an education that prepares them for the knowledge economy. At the same time, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business and Statistics Canada have shown that the Indigenous population is "the youngest, fastest growing demographic in Canada, with more than 46 per cent under the age of 25. While these exciting changes are underway, by 2022, 52 per cent of all jobs are expected to require cognitive abilities such as creativity, logical reasoning and problem sensitivity (the ability to recognize a problem) as part of their core skill set".^{13 14}

In order to properly prepare Manitoba's youth, research suggests that providing a thriving cultural and arts sector can "help young people acquire skills needed to succeed in the knowledge economy. A thriving cultural environment also helps retain young people in the province by providing an exciting place to live and raise a family."¹⁵ As Manitoba becomes more diverse so will



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the opportunities and the challenges as we learn to communicate with, accept, accommodate, and respect non-European cultures, thereby encouraging a creative blending of cultural and artistic traditions. A crucial component of this process is reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, whose culture and traditions have been so sorely neglected under colonization. Encouraging and supporting Indigenous arts and traditions accommodates healing within Indigenous communities, and understanding between Indigenous and settler communities. Prioritizing Aboriginal reconciliation and cultural reclamation is an essential part of developing policies and programs that move us towards social and economic equality.¹⁶

Arts and Health

The positive effects of participation in arts and culture do not end with the development of skills

and self-esteem. Research conducted over the last 40 years has clearly established a link between the arts, cultural participation and health.¹⁷ A higher degree of engagement in both arts and culture would increase the subjective-wellbeing of the province's citizens.¹⁸ This research has become increasingly relevant as many young Manitobans are faced with the high infant mortality rates, high levels of obesity, high levels of cancer due to tobacco use, and also above federal average levels of heart disease, strokes, respiratory diseases, diabetes and nervous system diseases. The province is also facing a mental health crisis, with suicide rates almost double the Canadian average.^{19, 20}

Arts and Seniors

In terms of the link between arts and health there have been some surprising findings between arts

and cultural participation and senior citizens. Studies have shown that participation in arts and cultural activities have led to reports of “improved wellbeing and higher degrees of social inclusion”.²¹ The impact of structured cultural and arts programming for the aging population of Manitoba alleviates pressure on the health care sector with “fewer doctor visits, less medication, positive responses on mental health measures, [and] increased social engagement”.²² Interestingly, engaging in storytelling with older adults has been found to reduce dementia amongst seniors and an overall increase in physical and mental health.²³ Currently, in Manitoba 14.8 per cent of the population is 65 years and older and the Government of Manitoba expects Manitoba’s population of seniors to increase by 43 per cent over the next 20 years. This change will present new opportunities and challenges.²⁴

Arts and Sustainability

As noted earlier, developing the arts sector is a more environmentally friendly way of creating jobs than other activities like mining or agriculture which currently have highest amount of GHG emissions. Although the arts sector has fewer negative externalities in comparison to many other industries, music streaming continues to grow²⁵ and new reports are emerging on the relationship between technology, streaming services and the environment. One of these reports from the University of Glasgow has determined that streaming services have exponentially increased the amount of GHG emissions, while simultaneously lowering plastic use and consumption.²⁶ Dr. Kyle Devine from the University of Glasgow comments that “From a carbon emissions perspective, however, the transition towards streaming recorded music from internet-connected devices has resulted in significantly higher carbon emissions than at any previous point in the history of music”.²⁷ Understanding the early challenges facing environmen-

tal sustainability in music, we are able to foresee the important role Manitoba Hydro could play in lowering GHG emissions for this sector. (See APB chapter on the Green New Deal).

Recommendations

Arts branch funding in the provincial budget has remained fairly steady since 2015, fluctuating between \$8.5 and \$9.7 million over the last five years and with a total of \$8.9 million for 2018. Arts Council has also remained steady over the last five years at \$9 million.

Policies and programming should reflect our growing diversity and include investment in reconciliation with Manitoba’s Indigenous people. There must be ongoing consultations with Indigenous artists and underserved communities to help shape the programming required for the success of all our Manitoban artists.

There still remains a large focus on Eurocentric art and maintaining the status quo, which is a large barrier to inclusion and participation. In the spirit and in respect of Indigenous self-governance and self-determination, the APB recommendation that a new Access to Arts Committee be created through the Manitoba Arts Council to support underserved communities and help those communities to create both traditional and contemporary art in film, music and visual art. The current funding system requires applicants to provide a business rationale for their projects: we recommend that for this funding stream the committee — which will have at least one Indigenous representative, someone from the disabilities community, and at least one newcomer, will review projects based on an *underserved* rationale, rather than a business rationale. The mandate of this new committee will be to oversee the growth of the arts — from traditional to contemporary — for underserved communities. The committee will work alongside the Winnipeg Arts Council, partnering on projects to bring Manitoba arts and culture to the global stage.

The new Access to Arts Committee will be funded by restoring the funding to 9.7 million dollars, using the \$800,000 to fund operations, hire staff and to create a new equity-driven project funding stream. The committee staff will oversee applications for grants and will create programming specifically designed to reduce barriers and cumbersome administration allowing all people “to participate in and contribute to cultural experiences, regardless of their geographic location, ability, age or background”²⁸ — a guiding principle of the “Our Way Forward” report. This cre-

ates jobs in the arts which would be filled from diverse backgrounds, and allow for funding to be spread out more equitably. This also encourages Manitoba’s growing younger demographic to celebrate their diverse cultures, accommodates reconciliation, encourages more tourism, retains more citizens and provides a safe space for newcomers to our province. Funding would be maintained at this level providing support for organizations over the long term.

New Expenditure: \$800,000

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