

***The Menace of Measurement:  
A discussion about arts indicators***

Written by Marnie Badham  
PhD Candidate, University of Melbourne  
Artist researcher in Canada and Australia

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## **Abstract**

*The arts are multifaceted, complex, and have both intrinsic and instrumental values. Intrinsic values have little language to articulate, therefore we typically decline trying to articulate these and rely on evaluating the arts sector through instrumental impacts that are much easier to qualify. Therefore, the arts are measured through economic and social benefits and often, the true nature of the arts - the aesthetic, communicative and cognitive development roles, remain unexpressed. We resist measurement because we are asked to measure the wrong things and we feel little resources should be spent on the creation and dissemination of the arts.*

*Arts indicators are not evaluation. They are often misunderstood as social or economic indicators, because they are measuring wealth, service provision or evaluating policy. Arts indicators, as a branch of cultural indicators, measure changing social values over time, and as such, not be used to compare locations or measure performance of isolated individual phenomena (like economics) within the arts sector. Indicators require a conceptual handshake between practice and policy, and can provide better understanding of the arts by observing the changing public perceptions. This data, embedded in a larger theoretical framework, can communicate to the public about the value of the arts and, as importantly, provide evidence to decision makers for policy change.*

*This discussion paper provides an overview of the argument about measurement and the arts, a detailed theoretical review of international arts and cultural indicators, and proposes some thoughts for steps forward for arts indicators in Saskatchewan.*

## **Discussion Paper Contributors**

### **Writer**

Marnie Badham is an artist researcher who lives and works in both Canada and Australia, working in prisons, universities, neighbourhood centres, and on the streets. She is interested in socially engaged art practice, subaltern communities, and relational aesthetics. Her PhD investigates the potential of locally determined cultural indicators in community engagement, policy dialogue, promotion of cultural self-determination and measuring social change. Both Marnie's research and creative practices work within an advocacy participatory framework.

### **Reference Group**

Nancy Duxbury, PhD, Researcher, Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra, Portugal

Kelly Hill, MA, President, Hill Strategies Research

Don Kerr, MA, poet and playwright, Lecturer, University of Saskatchewan

### **Saskatchewan Arts Alliance**

Saskatchewan Arts Alliance (SAA), a non-profit coalition of arts organizations, provides a collective voice for the arts in Saskatchewan. Established in 1984, SAA advocates on issues such as public funding of the arts, freedom of expression and artists' working conditions. This Discussion Paper has been commissioned for the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance. Its purpose is to stimulate discussion and provide some background into the variety of international approaches to arts and cultural indicators.

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## **Executive Summary**

In Saskatchewan, the arts and cultural industries are an important part of the province. To maintain their lively existence and continued growth, the Saskatchewan arts community, including artists, patrons, policy makers and those who benefit need to do a better job of articulating the value of the arts. We need to know more about art and how it relates to our lives. We need to know how the public feels about the arts. We need to gather, develop and distribute more knowledge about the arts: improved statistics and indicators (top down), map the existing local arts and cultural activities (bottom up) and translate this into relevant policy language. **Arts indicators may be one tool to help us.**

The recent global resurgence of social indicators has governments and communities interested in new ways of measuring progress. Indicators typically measure things that are easily quantifiable, however, we know the arts are complex, multifaceted and difficult to quantify through instruments of social science. As a result, measurement and value has typically been focused on instrumental, social, and economic arts outcomes. Therefore, the intrinsic qualities of the arts: aesthetic merits, communicative qualities and contributions to the public sphere - are seldom articulated, regularly overlooked, and often undervalued. We ask the wrong questions and do not collect the right data. This does not help to account for public monies or help us understand the value of the arts. The state of Saskatchewan cultural metrics is generally weak.

Indicators have evolved from measuring the economic health of systems (how much) to social provision (how good) to understanding broader values and cultural change over time. Indicators are used to measure performance and predict systems, inform evidence-based policy, and promote democratic engagement around important local issues. Arts indicators are often confused for economic indicators (the economic performance of the arts industry) or social indicators (the social provision and access to subsidized programming). Part of this confusion is due to the vagueness of cultural policy where the terms *art and culture* are used almost interchangeably. This discussion paper explains that arts indicators are part of the broader category of cultural indicators: tools used to better understand public perception and social values towards particular phenomena (art) over time. The field is under-theorized, lacks interagency coordination, data lacks quality, existing frameworks are unwieldy, and many government reports on indicators sit gathering dust on shelves. To consider an arts indicator framework, this discussion paper details six approaches to arts and cultural indicators to better understand the policies and theories at play:

- |                             |                        |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Culture as a way of life | 4. Cultural vitality   |
| 2. Culture as a resource    | 5. Creative vitality   |
| 3. High culture             | 6. Cultural industries |

Many practical lessons are learned through the review of the literature: from international policy in cultural industry frameworks, from economists and marketing experts on creativity indexes, to practical measures of local neighbourhood activities. Each framework brings its own set of goals, local context, and policy frameworks, and therefore are not easily compared, so this paper appraises each on their own merits. Arts indicators should be measured over time and be developed within a strong conceptual and policy framework, linked to relevant contexts.

A draft arts indicator framework is then presented for discussion combining the strengths of three approaches. The hybrid draft includes the Urban Institute's Cultural Vitality Indicators (presence, participation and support) and Mercer's Cultural Industries Indicator Floorplan (creation, production and reproduction, promotion and knowledge, dissemination and circulation and consumption and usage), alongside additional public value research interests from Throsby in Australia (public perception). Example indicators relevant to the Saskatchewan context are listed.

Finally, some practical advice is offered, suggesting a coordinated approach is required for the development of an arts indicator framework. Clear goals are imperative: advocacy, research, or policy, as these goals can be in conflict. Strong leadership, resources and political will are essential, therefore leaders from the arts, policy, and the private sector, alongside individuals with research capacity should be invited to the table early on. A narrow strategic range of indicators is much more powerful than a long sprawling list, but to get started, a generative process of mapping the arts sector is encouraged. Selection of the final indicators will depend on a range of factors: who is the target audience, what data is available, the regularity of reporting, and many concerns. Each of these of these considerations is included for reflection before commencement.

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## *Introduction to arts and cultural indicators*

The value of the arts is not up for debate, but how we articulate and measure their significance is at the heart of this discussion. We must also, to a certain extent, respect the complexity of the arts and their inherent inability to be quantified. However, a better understanding of arts and cultural indicators may provide us with tools to better articulate this value. This investigation compiles existing international research from the field, summarizes lessons, and suggests practical steps forward in the Saskatchewan context. Arts indicators can help provide evidence of public perceptions towards the arts, to stimulate dialogue about both the intrinsic and instrumental values of the arts, and help to better inform policy decisions. This discussion paper starts to consider how arts indicators could be developed in Saskatchewan.

While the field of cultural indicators has been **an important conceptual tool for considering the role of arts and culture in human development for international agencies** since the 1980s, there is little progress in putting them into action – largely due to lack of coordinated and reliable data. At federal, provincial or state levels, they often remain as isolated measures embedded within larger *quality of life indicator* frameworks, or sit as shopping lists in dusty reports on office shelves. At the local level, they are used as marketing strategies, overlooking the true nature of our rich cultural landscapes, or are left to the devices of fleeting policy paradigms. Arts and cultural indicators and their many approaches are simply misunderstood, lacking links to theory and policy frameworks.

***Arts indicators can help provide the tools for description – by providing the evidence of public perception towards the arts***

This paper introduces the subject by presenting the current international debate on measurement and the arts. Historical influences for the popular resurgence in indicators are then provided as a backdrop, with theoretical roots in western economic metrics and comparison of social provision. Next, a range of practice is presented through a lens of cultural policy frameworks, making the case that indicators and policy are unequivocally linked. After a detailed critique, lessons from the field are summarized with some advice on how to move forward on developing a framework of arts indicators in Saskatchewan. A broader ecological model of the arts is offered as the start to an arts indicator framework, inclusive of Saskatchewan's unique arts landscape and acknowledging activity ranging from community cultural development, traditional arts, creative and cultural industries, arts education activity, and high art excellence. Finally, some concluding questions are posed for discussion.

## *The argument: why we resist cultural metrics*

The arts contribute to our sense of identity, document our history, and help to make sense of our future through creativity and innovation. They are a way for us to engage in our community, to reflect and document our world. By extension, cultural metrics is a challenging subject, eliciting much resistance from those working in the arts and cultural community itself. Metrics were first developed for the physical sciences. It has been suggested *that applying these methods and ways of thinking to other highly complex human endeavours like the arts, is a gross misapplication.*<sup>1</sup> This is the firm critique of the drive to establish metrics for efforts of the creative community is taken up by Arlene Golbard, a provocative writer on culture and the arts in the USA in a recent article, *The Metrics Syndrome*. The arts are tremendously complex and multifaceted.

Indicators typically quantify things that are readily measurable: the instrumental values of the arts. While equally important, the educational, social, and economic outcomes of the arts are things more easily measured, and very little work has yet tackled on the intrinsic values of the arts. John Holden explains this problem in the UK, saying how the arts community and funders, in an attempt to make our management of our activities accountable and transparent, have obscured the true nature of the artistic act itself:

*But a growing sense of unease pervades the cultural sector as it sets about justifying its consumption of public money. Instead of talking about what they do – displaying pictures or putting on dance performances – organizations will need to demonstrate how they have contributed to wider policy*

<sup>1</sup> Golbard, Arlene. "The Metrics Syndrome." 2008., accessed December 13, 2009 at [www.communityarts.net/readingroom](http://www.communityarts.net/readingroom)

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*agendas such as social inclusion, crime prevention and learning.*<sup>2</sup>

**This missing link is the explanation of the aesthetic experience**, the communicative value, and contributions to the public sphere. These intrinsic benefits are more difficult to measure, and as such, we typically resolve by declining description, claiming respect for art's inherent inability to be qualified. **Clearly, the case can be made for more research on the intrinsic value of the arts.** While many have made this claim, most of us have avoided this call, however promising thinking has been done in *Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts: Gifts of the Muse* by McCarthy et al:

*Intrinsic benefits of the arts are intangible and difficult to define. They lie beyond the traditional quantitative tools of the social sciences, and often beyond the language of common experience. Although many advocates of the arts believe intrinsic benefits are of primary importance, they are reluctant to introduce them into the policy discussion because they do not believe such ideas will resonate with most legislators and policymakers...*<sup>3</sup>

Some members of the professional and community arts sector resist developing these benchmarks for evaluation, feeling the arts are undermined or threatened by definition and measurement.<sup>4</sup> This is a significant resistance from many regarding cultural metrics, with concern that the qualification can undervalue their importance. This defensive stance is not required to protect the arts. Rather, it could be explained as a larger

***They lie beyond the traditional quantitative tools of the social sciences, and often beyond the language of common experience.***

issue tied up with lack of resources, the relationship of evaluation to funding, leadership, and the often-romantic view of the artist at the edge of society. These barriers to quantitative evaluation suggest that more research needs to be done in these areas, not to measure quality or even quantity of the arts, but to better articulate their intrinsic values.

**We resist measuring the arts because we have seen cultural metrics done so badly before**, and even seen the wrong things measured. Mainstream definitions of the arts

have historically excluded the culture and the many groups who live in rural areas or in the inner city and their expressions of artistic creativity, not previously understood as art.<sup>5</sup> The data presented in inappropriate contexts, telling us things we did not want to know, or had to waste a lot of time collecting a lot of information that goes nowhere. Artists, creators, and producers should be determining what knowledge needs to be developed about the arts and what data needs to be collected, rather than being told what they need to collect.

**The bottom line** is that we would rather spend public money designated for the arts on the production, dissemination and appreciation of art, rather than on things like counting bums in seats of other types of research evaluation. Because we are so used to the inappropriateness of measurements, we have lost faith in finding suitable instruments. Data collected about the arts is typically only about itself, about things like last years ticket sales, who attended and what was shown. Data is not collected about what the general public thinks about the arts or how the general public feels about the arts – and this might be where we learn a thing or two. A recent UK paper written by UK economists Bakhshi, Freeman, and Hitchen explain:

*Arts leaders naturally fear asking the public whether it [the public] likes what they do because they believe the general public won't appreciate its social criticism, novelty or inventiveness; or because the arts do not always yield tangible benefits. Such fears are not supported by the evidence.*<sup>6</sup>

Two important studies can confirm **these fears are just not supported by the evidence.** In Australia, independent academic research by cultural theorist, David Throsby, sought directly to assess the public's own validation of the arts. The survey showed that a little less than half of adults participated in arts events, and a

<sup>2</sup> Holden, John. "Capturing Cultural Value: How Culture Has Become a Tool of Government Policy." edited by DEMOS, 2004. pp 13.

<sup>3</sup> McCarthy, K. F., Ondaatje, E. H., Zakaras, L., & Brooks, A. . *Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Goldbard. "The Metrics Syndrome.", Bakhshi, Hasan, Alan Freeman, and Graham Hitchen. "Measuring Intrinsic Value: How to Stop Worrying and Love Economics." edited by Mission Models Money. London, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Garcia Canclini, Nestor. *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

<sup>6</sup> Bakhshi, Freeman, and Hitchen. "Measuring Intrinsic Value: How to Stop Worrying and Love Economics."

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more crucial and surprising finding was that even among those who did not participate in the arts – the arts were still appreciated. This research finding was echoed by a 2007 public value inquiry in England. People take pride in the arts, not just for attending events, but also in their very existence.

*People are pleased to have a theatre, museum or gallery in their town or neighbourhood, regardless of whether they visit them (cultural economics calls these ‘existence’ benefits). People are also happy that their descendants will receive benefits after they are dead (‘bequest’ benefits), and they enjoy having access to an increased range of arts genres, activities and artists, even if they do not see all of them (‘option’ benefits).<sup>7</sup>*

**When the right information is collected over time, linked to clear and relevant theoretical frames, better arts policy can be developed.** This process can engage policy makers and the arts community in new dialogue about the role of the arts. These benefits can happen during the course of indicator development, not only upon the publishing the indicator data.<sup>8</sup> This process can help to engage the public in appreciating the value in the arts and their right to participate in local culture. Better quality data will then travel up the knowledge chain to help us understand society’s changing attitudes towards the arts, providing evidence for decision makers when making arts policy for the future of Saskatchewan residents.

### ***A little indicator history: how much and how good?***

The field of indicators has evolved to measure progress and performance with economic indicators telling us *how much?* and social indicators explaining *how good?*<sup>9</sup> Indicators are more than statistics, they intend to analyse performance of systems - economic, social and cultural - and to predict their performance for the future.

***Millions of dollars at organizational, local, national and international levels are spent on research and development in this area in isolation and many “remain on shelves gathering dust.”***

There is mounting international material theorizing this recent resurgence of social indicators and measuring *quality of life* (see Innes and Booher, 2000; Bauer, 1966; Cobb, 1998; Garret-Petts, 2006; and Legowski, 2000).<sup>10</sup> Measuring *what matters* is now not only about economics, it is now about the quality of our lives.

Typical social indicators are quantitative evaluative data linked to policy goals and frameworks, intending to measure progress over time, or to compare geographical locations, constituencies, or even nations. A recent Australian social indicator project, Community Indicators Victoria,<sup>11</sup> claims that ***while indicators can’t change day-to-day reality, they can frame the way we perceive it,***

*endorsing a common understanding of development.* Benchmarks intend to shape a consensus about the goals of progress, about what ‘indicates’ the positive development of our society. Some indicators are more easily measured like *average life span* that can be collected from national census data, while others like *quality of life, freedom, and social cohesion* are much more complicated and difficult to quantify, and are subjectively understood. Measures of arts and culture also often get placed in this *too hard basket*. Indicator theorists, Innes and Booher explain how millions of dollars at organizational, local, national and international levels are spent on research and development in this area in isolation and many *remain on shelves gathering dust*.<sup>12</sup> This lack of coordination suggests there is little contact between agencies, lack of critical analysis, and lack of common goals.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Innes, Judith, and David E. Booher. *Collaborative Dialogue as a Policy Making Strategy*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California at Berkeley, Institute of Urban and Regional Development, 2000., pp 10.

<sup>9</sup> Bauer, Raymond A., and American Academy of Arts and Sciences. *Social Indicators, Technology, Space, and Society*. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1966., Innes, Judith E., and David E. Booher. "Indicators for Sustainable Communities: A Strategy Building on Complexity Theory and Distributed Intelligence." *Planning Theory & Practice* 1, no. 2 (2000): 173., Cobb, C., and C. Rixford. "Lessons Learned for the History of Social Indicators." San Fransisco: Redefining Progress, 1998., Garret-Petts, Will. "Quality of Life Reporting Systems and Cultural Indicators for Smaller Canadian Communities." Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2006., Legowski, Barbara. "A Sampling of Community- and Citizen Driven Quality of Life / Societal Indicators Projects." 126. Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Networks, 2000.

<sup>10</sup> Innes, and Booher. "Indicators for Sustainable Communities: A Strategy Building on Complexity Theory and Distributed Intelligence."

<sup>11</sup> Wiseman, John , Anne Langworthy, Neil McLean, Hayden Raysmith, Mike Salvaris, Joanne Pyke, and Warwick Heine. "Measuring Wellbeing, Engaging Communities: Developing a Community Indicators Framework for Victoria: The Final Report of the Victorian Community Indicators Project." 84. Melbourne: VicHealth Centre for the Promotion of Mental Health and Social Well Being, University of Melbourne, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Innes, and Booher. "Indicators for Sustainable Communities: A Strategy Building on Complexity Theory and Distributed Intelligence." pp 2.

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A gathering of African arts leaders in Maputo in 2004, for the Observatory of Cultural Polices in Africa, intending to measure progress, recognized the need for *a relevant local basket of priorities and measures*.<sup>13</sup> The wide variety of approaches internationally is evidence that frameworks are not a *one size fits all*, but must be developed uniquely in their own contexts, locations and relevant theories. Recognizing local and plural value(s) also points to the benefit of citizen and stakeholder commitment, ownership and development of indicator frameworks, definitions and measures.

**Economic and social indicators are often used to describe the arts and cultural sector, but should not be mistaken for cultural indicators.** This significant warning was offered by both of the two major bodies of existing theoretical literature from the contributors to the 1984 Vienna Symposium on Cultural Indicators and UNESCO's series of commissioned position papers.<sup>14</sup> Cultural indicators have often been mistaken to be measures of other systems, such as economic indicators of culture like cultural export data (production of wealth), or social indicators of arts participation or provision, like gallery audience numbers or measures of numbers of theatres. Without explicit interest in changing societal values and beliefs, these are purely economic and social statistics. These measures serve to quantify the instrumental values of the arts. Leading thinkers have provided strong arguments for the need to recognize and measure the intrinsic values of art and culture (see McCarthy; 2005, Holden; 2006)<sup>15</sup> providing extensive and needed research on the value of the arts.

Cultural indicators are what these other indicators do not attempt to describe; a leading cultural indicator expert, Namenwirth<sup>16</sup> explains. Cultural indicators "*tap the structure of beliefs and values serving to maintain society, but also serve to change and innovation.*" The conceptual differences between these three schools of thought are best explained through their theoretical objectives: what progress or change they intend to measure, providing examples of such measurement, and the appropriate data required for this type of indicator.

**Figure One: Economic, Social, and Cultural Indicator Summary**

	Theoretical Objectives	Data Source	Examples of Measure
<b>Economic</b>	Measures wealth and production of goods, quantitative, predict markets, informs investment strategy, competitive outcomes	Objective indicators based mainly on statistics from reports and registers	*Comparison of Gross National Product (GNP) #s between countries or over time Consumer Price Index, a measure for inflation
<b>Social</b>	Measures distribution and consumption of benefits and disadvantage (welfare and wellbeing), informs evidence-based policymaking	Objective and subjective indicators based on purpose designed surveys, 2 <sup>nd</sup> source data for objective indicators	*Perception of safety # of residents who feel safe in their homes at night (subjective) # of reported crimes against persons in neighbourhood in one year (objective)
<b>Cultural</b>	Measures changing values and beliefs of a society, used to track particular phenomena (ie: art) over time to recognize cultural and social values change.	Context analysis, survey, second source behavioural data from statistics available, or ethnographic research	*Presence of the arts = # of working artists and arts organizations *Support for the arts = explicit arts policy from government and advocates

<sup>13</sup> Observatory of Cultural Polices in Africa (OCPA). "Cultural Indicators of Human Development in Africa, International Seminar: Maputo, 3-5 March 2004, Final Report." Maputo 2004.

<sup>14</sup> Reinjnders, N., and Bouwman, H., "Cultural Indicators State of the Art." In *Cultural Indicators: An International Symposium*, edited by G. Melischek, Rosengreen, K., and Stappers, J., 565. Vienna: Alle Rechte vorbehalten, 1984, Rosengren, Karl Erik. "Cultural Indicators for the Comparative Study of Culture." In *Cultural Indicators: An International Symposium*, edited by G. Melischek, Rosengreen, K., and Stappers, J., 565. Vienna: Alle Rechte vorbehalten, 1984, Namenwirth, J. Zvi. "Why Cultural Indicators? A Critical Agenda." In *Cultural Indicators: An International Symposium*, edited by G. Melischek, Rosengreen, K., and Stappers, J., 565. Vienna: Alle Rechte vorbehalten, 1984, Gouiedo, L. H. "Proposals for a Set of Cultural Indicators." *Statistical Journal of the United Nations* 10 (1993): 227-89, UNESCO. "Towards a World Report on Culture and Development: Constructing Cultural Statistics and Indicators." In *Occasional paper series on culture and development*. Paris: UNESCO, 1996, Pattanaik, Prasanta K. "Cultural Indicators of Wellbeing: Some Conceptual Issues." Paris: UNESCO, 1997, Mercer, Colin. "Towards Cultural Citizenship - Tools for Cultural Policy and Development." 13, 2002, McKinley, Terry. "Cultural Indicators of Development." In *Occasional paper series on culture and development*, edited by UNESCO, 19. Geneva: United National Research Institute for Social Development, 1997.

<sup>15</sup> McCarthy, K. F., Ondaatje, E. H., Zakaras, L., & Brooks, A. *Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2005, Holden, John. "Capturing Cultural Value: How Culture Has Become a Tool of Government Policy." London: DEMOS, 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Namenwirth. "Why Cultural Indicators? A Critical Agenda."



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***Communities and cultures cannot be compared because they are dynamic, unique and changing.*** These changing cultural systems are a reality of the way that people and communities live together, interact and cooperate.

***If cultures were closed and static, one or a few indicators could assess the state of the whole culture.***

McKinley for UNESCO, explained that indicators of changing cultural systems can be justified through their beliefs, values and norms.<sup>17</sup> These are difficult things to measure independently, but the interest of cultural indicators is to measure change over time. Much cultural indicator work – like typical mainstream measures of cultural participation and access – assumes that cultures exist as independent closed systems, with boundaries and static existence. Again, Namenwirth using content analysis in his own research explains this challenge simply: if cultures were closed and static, one, or a few, indicators could assess the state of the whole culture.<sup>18</sup> This misleading idea prefaces most cultural and social policy, and most societies in general.

Comparison is not only impossible, but it is also an ethical value judgment often made by mainstream society. This judgment would suppose a 'super' culture powerful and popular enough to impose and transcend other realities and ways of life. This is just not true.

Beyond the Vienna and UNESCO work mentioned, there is very little arts indicator practice that includes theoretical material. The content produced over the last decade reports material often only published via the Internet.<sup>19</sup> These limited perspectives seem primarily to disseminate cultural statistics of the current government-imposed standards of culture: data of the expediency (utilitarian uses) of culture, not intrinsic aesthetic, spiritual or social values. A handful of contemporary academic and international policy analysts (see Gouiedo, 1993; Matarasso, 1999; Duxbury, 2003; Madden, 2005; Mercer, 2002; and Jackson et al, 2006)<sup>20</sup> have made valiant and insightful efforts to analyse the field and provide interesting critique, but still, it remains difficult to understand the complexity of the field. Nancy Duxbury's paper of 2003, regarding the Canadian context, recognizes the multifaceted theoretical layers at play:

*The many dimensions, many perspectives, many audiences, and many possible uses of cultural indicators make a journey into this world a complex one. The required linkages between models, policy frameworks, research foundations, purpose and application, data (availability and quality), the pragmatic realities of creation – and the dangers of inappropriate interpretations – are all dimensions that should be considered.*<sup>21</sup>

These preliminary observations suggest that more conceptual work is required for this field to be effective, to measure the changing values and beliefs of society. While many assessment tools and statistics within the cultural sector self-regard their work under this stretching umbrella of cultural indicators, they may be only providing economic or social statistics. It is the aim of this review to develop some of the theoretical groundwork required in the analysis and understanding of contemporary cultural indicator practice. The field is under-theorized. To move forward in the consideration of an arts indicator framework, the discussion paper provides a detailed literature review to better understand the theoretical and policy frameworks at play.

### ***The challenge of definition: culture, arts, and the policy context***

<sup>17</sup> McKinley. "Cultural Indicators of Development."

<sup>18</sup> Namenwirth, J. Zvi. "Why Cultural Indicators? A Critical Agenda." In *Cultural Indicators: An International Symposium*, edited by G. Melischek, Rosengreen, K., and Stappers, J., 565. Vienna: Alle Rechte vorbehalten, 1984.

<sup>19</sup> Some of the better internet resources on Cultural Indicators include a variety of initiatives like: The Urban Institute ([www.urban.org/communities/arts.cfm](http://www.urban.org/communities/arts.cfm)), The Boston Indicators Project ([www.tbfi.org/indicatorsProject/](http://www.tbfi.org/indicatorsProject/)) The Hong Kong Creativity Index ([http://www.hab.gov.hk/en/publications\\_and\\_press\\_releases/reports.htm](http://www.hab.gov.hk/en/publications_and_press_releases/reports.htm)), Creative Community Index, Silicon Valley (<http://www.cpanda.org/cpanda/getDDIsummary.xq?studyID=a00233>)

<sup>20</sup> Jackson, M, Kabwasa-Green, F. Herranz, J. . "Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators." In *Culture, Creativity and Communities Program*, 98. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2006, Mercer. "Towards Cultural Citizenship - Tools for Cultural Policy and Development.", Matarasso, Francois. "Towards a Local Culture Index: Measuring the Cultural Vitality of Communities." edited by Comedia. Nottingham, 1999, Madden, Christopher. "Statistical Indicators for Arts Policy." In *D'Art Report*, edited by International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies (IFFACA), 2005, Gouiedo. "Proposals for a Set of Cultural Indicators.", Duxbury, Nancy. "Cultural Indicators at the Local Level: Cities and Communities." Vancouver: Centre of Expertise on Culture and Communities, 2003, Gouiedo, L. H. "Proposals for a Set of Cultural Indicators." *Statistical Journal for the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe* 10 (1993): 227-89.

<sup>21</sup> Duxbury, Nancy. "Cultural Indicators and Benchmarks in Community Indicator Projects: Performance Measures for Cultural Investment?" In *'Accounting for Culture Colloquium'*. Gatineau, QC.: Strategic Research and Analysis, Department of Canadian Heritage. , 2003.

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This journey into arts and cultural indicators is an interesting challenge. Across the many approaches, it is often unclear what exactly is being measured. The many applications and changing terms for arts and culture within policy make them difficult to quantify. These variables make the field tricky to analyse with definitions ranging from the authentic culture of the grassroots and local, unique communities, or the mainstream arts in galleries and theatres named by hegemonic policy tools of government.

**What is Culture?** This discussion paper will use the term culture to *try on* the many various connotations and assumptions developed and applied by scholars and policymakers in the field and, as importantly, the creators, users, and beneficiaries of culture. Culture can include meanings, representations, networks, objects and political connotations to describe a way of life, as a resource, as high culture, as vitality and as industry. This paper reviews these six approaches to arts and cultural indicator frameworks. Later, in the concluding section of the paper, a draft framework will emerge, referencing components of these examples, relevant to the local context, arts and culture, and policy context of Saskatchewan.

**What is Art?** Art is but one manifestation of a culture. The Britannica dictionary defines art as *the use of skill and imagination in the creation of aesthetic objects, environments, or experiences that can be shared with others*. Others suggest that *good art* must be transformational or stand the test of time. We each have our own subjective evaluative criteria of what is art. Informed by our own experiences, these criteria may be utilitarian, aesthetic, or even political. In the recent (2010) Saskatchewan cultural policy, the arts are described as:

*an expression of inspiration, innovation and imagination, ranging from the individual to the collective, from the grassroots to professional and institutional. The arts include literary arts; visual arts and crafts; electronic and recording arts such as film and television; and performing arts such as theatre, opera, music, dance, mime, circus and variety entertainment.*<sup>22</sup>

**What is cultural policy?** Cultural policy, as the intended transmission of public good or as the aggregate of citizens' values and beliefs, whether aspirational or practical, is not just funding, rather, its effects can shape our children's values and morals of the future. The foremost debate within cultural policy is that of **arts versus culture** and the inherent definitional applications of the terms art and culture. Whereas arts policy once governed activities with purely aesthetic concerns, cultural policy throughout much of the twentieth century almost exclusively shares the same jurisdiction.

While it might be expected that cultural indicator frameworks would include arts indicators, this is not always so. When broader definitions of culture (as a way of life, as a resource) are used to describe shared communal experiences, the individual cognitive development or aesthetic experience indicators are excluded. It is assumed that cultural policy, in practice, would intend to cover a much broader envelope of activities than were addressed under arts policy, a broader rhetoric about how we live our lives and the values we share.

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Culture's utility and aesthetic objectives (including fine arts, arts education, heritage, community cultural development, libraries and museums), **there has been a discursive shift towards an instrumentalist framework**. Another bold suggestion is that housing, immigration and health policy often affect the lived culture of communities more than arts policy.

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<sup>22</sup> Government of Saskatchewan, "Pride of Saskatchewan: A Policy Where Community and Commerce Meet." edited by Government of Saskatchewan: Government of Saskatchewan, 2010..

## **An international review of arts and cultural indicator approaches**

Without belabouring the *arts versus culture issue* or ongoing definitional debates, this paper positions cultural policy themes as a theoretical framework for the analysis of arts and cultural indicator activity. This mapping of the literature review, like cartography, makes deliberative choices about what is put in, left out and what is purposefully positioned beside each other.

These associations created develop a practical relationship between conceptual development and application. Threads of cultural theory will be injected within the review, attempting to establish a new map of the cultural indicator field and its relationship, when possible, to the arts. Each of these practices mapped employs its own characteristics of the elusive term culture, therefore positing a larger history of theoretical understanding to a practical framework.

1. Culture as a way of life – freedoms and dialogue
2. Culture as a resource – investment and relatedness
3. High culture – professional arts, excellence, and democratization
4. Cultural vitality – participation, access, support
5. Creative vitality – arts occupations and community arts
6. Cultural industries – production and consumption cycles

Understandably, specific indicator motives will vary with fleeting political will and local circumstances. While not always explicit in the literature, the arts are a manifestation within each of these broader cultural policy frameworks. When possible, concluding comments will tie these broader ideas back to the context of the Saskatchewan arts context.

### **1. Culture as a way of life – freedoms and dialogue**

The broadest application of culture, ‘as a way of life,’ has been applied in many international projects in the protection and exchange of cultures of nations, of local indigenous tribes, and of global society in general. This anthropological point of view rejects the idea that culture is a privilege developed and controlled by the wealthy or powerful. International cultural development agencies, like UNESCO, champion this concept by promoting equitable and just treatment of the exchange and protection of culture. The *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity* in 2002 provided the following definition of culture to include the arts:

***... protection of human development and cultural rights by many international agencies, acknowledged through Article 27 of Charter of Human Rights, the right to participate in community’s cultural life.***

*Culture should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group... it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.*<sup>23</sup>

McKinley, Pattanaik, and Gouiedo, although almost entirely theoretical, have theorized UNESCO’s Cultural Indicators for Human Development.<sup>24</sup> Their thinking has provided conceptual headway, discussing indicators of cultural exchange, provision, freedom, and culture’s role in human development. Herein lies the challenge, between international comparison and the lack of consistent categories of

assessment. This is a larger symptom than the failure of interagency and international cooperation; rather, the issue is a lack of comparable data. While culture’s role in human development may seem indisputable, many nations do not subscribe to the benchmarks set forth, and other priorities may dominate their current political

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<sup>23</sup> UNESCO, 2002, *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*

<sup>24</sup> McKinley. "Cultural Indicators of Development.", Pattanaik. "Cultural Indicators of Wellbeing: Some Conceptual Issues.", UNESCO. "Towards a World Report on Culture and Development: Constructing Cultural Statistics and Indicators.", Gouiedo. "Proposals for a Set of Cultural Indicators."

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agendas. In recent decades, organizations such as the OECD and UNESCO grapple with how to monitor this commitment to cultural rights, particularly in developing countries or indigenous cultures threatened by exploitation and cultural appropriation. There are huge disparities in the quality of life for people across the globe, disparities which have deep roots in colonialism, and which now have to be tackled within a global economic system that, in fact, favours and serves the interests of the already rich.

UNESCO's commissioned work offers cultural development as an alternative definition of progress to the historically popular economic comparison of the Gross National Product, expanding the potential use of indicators.<sup>25</sup> There is an interest in the protection of human development and cultural rights by many international agencies, acknowledged through Article 27 of Charter of Human Rights, *the right to participate in community's cultural life*. This international statutory right to cultural provision has not been acknowledged through many nations' legislation, or local policies. Gouiedo provides a clear technical overview of social and

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UNESCO's Our Creative Diversity, 1995

cultural indicator movements, with particular attention to international indicator development, offering an admittedly subjective framework of cultural output-based indicators for international comparative use.<sup>26</sup> He also discusses the values and attitudes involved in development of such a framework managing to expressively negotiate the often conflicting ***outer material orientated aesthetic values and the inner orientated ethical and religious metaphysical values*** that cultural indicators describe.

Anthropological applications suggest culture is the total and distinctive way of life of a people or society: collective values, ideologies and customs. **'Culture as a way of life' does not limit our understanding of culture.** It intends to bring attention to

global disparities not only in wealth, but also in the protection of cultural rights, freedoms and expression. The challenge of this approach is technical in nature, as the data required for the application of *Cultural Indicators of Human Development* does not exist. Examples of literature provide the broader wisdom required for this field rather than the often trivial shopping lists of arts and cultural activities that one is confronted with in much existing literature. In the context of international development, these works share insight into the development of cultural indicators as not mere statistics. They impose benchmarks and values that must be integrated between framework, policy and measurement. These benchmarks for measurement or international comparison of cultural freedom, provision, protection and creation remain conceptual; however, their significance lies in understanding the role that cultural indicators may have for valuing arts and culture within a broader understanding of social justice, democracy and freedom.

## **2. Culture as a resource – investment and relatedness**

Closely linked by international scope to the first application of 'culture as a way of life' is the more practical approach of 'culture as a resource.' In a similar way, Colin Mercer's work in the UK, Australia, Hong Kong, and parts of Europe investigates the role of cultural indicators and citizenship.<sup>27</sup> He stresses **the necessary conceptual handshake between policy and practice** required to support the tools of cultural assessment when grappling with the relationship between culture and development. Policy frameworks must subscribe to conceptual underpinnings aligned with the context of its particular place and shared values. Mercer's *Indicators for Cultural Citizenship* proposes citizenship as a commitment to social justice. He also discusses how culture can be defined, not as an object, but the way it relates to our lives. He provides a powerful anecdote to illustrate:

*In India, the Narmada River Sarovar dam project has caused massive displacement and hardship to communities in the area affected. The development project was no doubt subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment in order to gain funding and formal approvals. It is unlikely, however, that there*

<sup>25</sup> UNESCO. "Towards a World Report on Culture and Development: Constructing Cultural Statistics and Indicators."

<sup>26</sup> Gouiedo. "Proposals for a Set of Cultural Indicators."

<sup>27</sup> Mercer. "Towards Cultural Citizenship - Tools for Cultural Policy and Development."

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*was anything like a Cultural Impact Assessment that would measure its effects on the ways of living, lifestyles, identities, value systems, and beliefs of the communities affected. Such factors are crucial to the acceptability and sustainability of any development process. We have learned this for the environment, can we also learn it for culture?*<sup>28</sup>

This example provides evidence for his case: the need for an integrated approach, linking the conceptual and practical through cultural mapping, assessment and policymaking. He reminds us that we forget that land and environment are cultural resources in which we can invest with meaning and significance. He borrows from UNESCO's *Our Creative Diversity* of 1995 - *Culture can no longer only be or mainly be restricted to the opera house or gallery "the arts", but must be looked upon and treated as a basic driving force behind human behaviour and central to human development.*<sup>29</sup> Mercer's theory proposes a comprehensive cultural indicator framework of four inclusive categories: cultural vitality, diversity and conviviality; cultural access, participation and consumption; culture, lifestyle, and identity; and culture, ethics, and conduct. These categories create a well thought-out, **multilayered approach to measuring the value and changes in cultural systems**, providing what he calls 'open architecture' for strategic linkages to macro policy agendas and context-rich application.

'Culture as resource' suggests not just our relationship to it, as Mercer has explained, but can also be explained by discussing utilitarian value. George Yudice explains that 'culture as a resource,' as characterized by globalization, is increasingly wielded 'for both socio-political and economic amelioration.'<sup>30</sup> This utilitarian

***'Culture as resource' argues that culture requires investment, protection and management.***

argument shares the democratic approach to 'culture as a way of life,' as it does not favour the value of one culture over another. There are increasing arguments for this approach, building the anthropological understanding of culture, and extends the understanding that all cultures and culture is valued. 'Culture as a resource' steps away from the case for values, taste, and privilege. Also weighing in on the cultural indicator debate, Yudice agrees there are difficulties in developing a methodology, stating, *of*

*course, there are different approaches to the design of indicators, depending on which issues are foregrounded: economic, professional or social justice.*<sup>31</sup> He applauds the democratic ethos of the last option. However, he states that the 'bottom line' is that measurement of utility is the only accepted legitimation for social investment.

Also suggesting a parallel to environmental sustainability, John Hawkes, among other contemporary theorists,<sup>32</sup> explains simply that culture is much broader than purely manifestations of high art, it is the social production of meaning. Hawkes suggests that culture is the "fourth pillar of sustainability" and argues for **culture's essential role in public planning.**<sup>33</sup> Culture must not be marginalized from other public policy areas; rather, it should be used as a filter, like the undertaking of impact assessments for economic, social and environmental impacts on communities and resources, as part of holistic development. This view is not exclusive from the model of culture and macro policy. It builds on the definition by means of utility and value. 'Culture as resource' argues that culture requires investment, protection and management.

There are many contemporary cultural indicator examples that use this model of 'culture as resource,' many of which do not explicitly describe their methodological or conceptual underpinnings. The 'culture as a resource' model can be illustrated by a variety of applications: 'Federation of Canadian Municipalities Quality of Life Reporting Systems' and Cultural Indicators for Smaller Canadian Communities', New Zealand's leadership work for Local Government Associations on indicators with culture being one of four categories, Bhutan's 'Gross

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp 5.

<sup>29</sup> World Commission on Culture and Development. *Our Creative Diversity: Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development*. 2nd ed. Paris: UNESCO Pub., 1996.

<sup>30</sup> Yudice, George. *The Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era*, Post-Contemporary Interventions. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003., pp 9.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., pp 1.

<sup>32</sup> Cunningham, Stuart. *Framing Culture: Criticism and Policy in Australia*, Australian Cultural Studies. North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992, Koivunen, H., and Marsio, L. "Ethics in Cultural Policy." In *D'Art report (number 24)*, edited by International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies., 14 p. Finland: International Federation of Arts Councils and Culture Agencies, 2008., Mercer. "Towards Cultural Citizenship - Tools for Cultural Policy and Development."

<sup>33</sup> Hawkes, Jon, and Cultural Development Network of Victoria. *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture's Essential Role in Public Planning*. Melbourne: Cultural Development Network (Vic.) in association with Common Ground Publishing, 2001.

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National Happiness Index', 'Infrastructure Canada' on Cultural Capital, among other various levels of government's assessment worldwide looking at investment and protection of cultural resources.<sup>34</sup> These initiatives look at culture as one of the main components of measuring value, however, 'culture as a resource' does not necessarily mean indicators only of material value.

These examples demonstrate value provided to policy areas such as heritage, community cultural development, cultural infrastructure (like museums and galleries), as well as language and traditions. As cultural resources require protection and management, cultural indicators measuring these resources provide practical quantitative data linked to policy outcomes and are used to compare regions and programs. However, what does the data really tell us about cultural change over time beyond the success of policy goals in cultural provision? They can describe the changing values of the current political leadership, not necessarily of societies governed by them. Like social indicators, these examples explain the distribution of culture, rather than values or meanings.

### **3. High Culture - Arts Excellence and Access**

Following the French Revolution, culture became a **call to nationalism and its products represented the uniqueness and strengths of how countries aspired to represent themselves**. Cultural patronage, elitism and glorification were popular throughout western history since the Renaissance. Arts patronage of kings and merchants had differing motivations; yet, the accumulation of cultural capital was aligned with personal or state power and an expression of taste preference. Bourdieu's interest in this distinction argues that judgments of taste are related to social position.<sup>35</sup> Without being overtly named this within arts policy, the 'high culture' approach assumes that some aesthetic expressions are superior. Advocating esoteric culture, aesthetic discipline, sophistication and professionalism above amateurism and development, the 'ivory tower' is defended. Elitists will argue that this taste must be upheld by the state.

However, **in light of mass decentralization of government** and with recent policies of arts access and democratization, the intention of 'public good' is assumed fulfilled by providing educational opportunities and 'cultural enlightenment' for the general public. Democratic governments must, of course, articulate

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benefits and be accountable regarding investments and policy decisions, therefore supporting a wide number of interests. This democratization of the arts, with the positive intent to provide inexpensive, decentralized cultural capital access to the masses, is problematic. Through the assumption of core tastes and interests, elitism is still propagated through democratizing policy, argues American political scientist, Mulcahy:<sup>36</sup>

*The problem with this policy [is] that, fundamentally, it intend[s] to create larger audiences for performances whose content [is] based on the experience of society's privileged groups. In sum, it has... taken for granted that the cultural needs of all society's members [are] alike.*

**The most popular category of arts and cultural indicators is the typical mainstream arts policy indicators, which can often be linked to the promotion of the democratization of this 'high culture.'** These indicators regard participation, access and audience numbers as measures of healthy communities. These indicators will suggest that certain cultural activities resembling main stage theatre and regional art galleries, which share a particular aesthetic, are important to 'public good'. 'Access' and 'opportunity' indicators can suggest that government-funded activity is preferable and provided for the benefit of all citizens. Failure to reach a benchmark of cultural provision under this definition of culture would suggest that government policy is not successful. The

<sup>34</sup> For more detail on these initiatives, see [www.usask.ca/cuisr/docs/pub\\_doc/quality/JanzenFINAL.pdf](http://www.usask.ca/cuisr/docs/pub_doc/quality/JanzenFINAL.pdf), [www.tru.ca/clusters/](http://www.tru.ca/clusters/), [www.stats.govt.nz/analytical-reports/cultural-indicators-2006.htm](http://www.stats.govt.nz/analytical-reports/cultural-indicators-2006.htm), <http://www.grossinternationalhappiness.org/gnh.html>, [www.cultureandcommunities.ca/resources/publications.html](http://www.cultureandcommunities.ca/resources/publications.html) - 21k

<sup>35</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.

<sup>36</sup> Mulcahy, Kevin "Cultural Policy: Definitions and Theoretical Approaches." Winter (2006).

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resurgence of social indicator projects would include arts and cultural indicators of this kind. Initiatives seen across North America, Australia and beyond over the last decade appear to have mislabelled their work, focusing primarily on cultural components of social indicators: measuring the progress of social systems, otherwise known as 'quality of life indicators'. Many of these projects host cultural statistics, city indexes of liveability that recognize arts, culture and cultural diversity as amenities for tourism or relocation attraction, or arts policy evaluation.

***Mainstream arts policy indicators will suggest that certain cultural activities resembling main stage theatre and regional art galleries, which share a particular aesthetic, are preferable and important to 'public good'.***

These indicators may provide more insight into changing habits and tastes in government-funded cultural systems over time, but not the intended measurement of societal values or beliefs. While these economic and social statistics on art activity may measure the success of cultural policy, they are not arts indicators per se. Art and cultural indicators track the changing values of a society towards the arts.

These are useful measures for understanding the comparison of cultural provision and in advocating the value in funding the arts, particularly when there is inequitable provision, or when funding is cut.

### **4. Cultural Vitality – participation, access, support**

Over the last decade, momentum is building through scholarly contribution from the Urban Institute's Arts and Cultural Indicators Project in the USA (Jackson et al, 2006, 2002)<sup>37</sup> by way of indicators of 'cultural vitality.' This research has heavily influenced the considerations of this discussion paper. To help policy makers make better decisions for neighbourhoods and cities, their work on cultural vitality suggests three broad areas to be monitored by indicators: 'the presence of arts and culture', 'participation in arts and culture', and 'support for arts and culture'.<sup>38</sup> Their work is **deliberately inclusive**, including conventional manifestations of 'high culture' like high art and audience participation, as well as artistic expressions that reflect the values and preferences of the population groups that actually make up local communities.

The language of 'cultural vitality' provides another broad approach to culture, **inclusive of both professional arts and local cultural development activity**. Specifically, 'cultural vitality' is defined as *evidence of creating, disseminating, validating, and supporting arts and culture as a dimension of everyday life in communities*. *Everyday life* is an important and calculated qualifier within this concept,

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diverging from the professional understanding of 'high culture', suggesting that citizens value different types of participation and recognizing that cultural resources actually *come out of* communities, rather than *brought to* communities from the outside. Also significant to this research proposal is Jackson's awareness of the implication of embracing this more democratic approach. This 'broader and more powerful set of stakeholders' is where this new research stakes its claim, considering a more engaged model of self-determination and value within local cultural assessment.

*Cultural vitality has many implications for people both inside and outside the professional cultural field. On the one hand, it can be threatening to some people. It puts some historically privileged and subsidized forms of arts and cultural participation in the same realm as other forms that have not enjoyed the same stature in the formal arts world. On a related note, it expands the range of stakeholders in arts and culture to include people who are not necessarily arts 'experts' or acknowledged arts professionals. On the other hand, the concept of cultural vitality as we define it is attractive to many people because it is inclusive and makes possible the engagement of a wider set of*

<sup>37</sup> Jackson. "Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators." Jackson, M., Herranz, J., "Culture Counts in Communities." In *Culture, Creativity and Communities Program*, 98. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute, 2002.

<sup>38</sup> Jackson. "Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators."

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*stakeholders with potentially more power, who are concerned with making sure that a place has what it needs to be culturally vital.*<sup>39</sup>

Another application of 'cultural vitality' is Silicon Valley's Creative Community Index.<sup>40</sup> The Creative Community Index also provides a detailed methodological preamble to introduce their findings regarding their creative economy framework. As Mercer, McKinley, and Goueydo have explained, **arts and cultural indicators require conceptual frameworks linked to values and strong methodology**. Silicon Valley transparently explains their assumptions and definitions regarding the desired outcomes of creativity, connectedness and contribution. They explain 'creativity' to be 'the process by which ideas are generated, connected and transformed into things that are valued.' This clearly states what they are measuring. The report links goals to evidence provided from a variety of sources: survey material from residents and organizations, externally collected statistics, and quantitative ethnographic research generated from the arts sector. The resulting document provides a comprehensive overview of their defined cultural system and provides a convincing case for the arts by illustrating a working model of the broad dynamics of the arts and cultural sector and of its interactions with the broader community life of the region.

In a similar conceptual way, it is important to note the earlier work of Matarasso in 1999, *Toward a Local Cultural Index: Measuring the Cultural Vitality of Communities*, which proposed over fifty indicators.<sup>41</sup> The paper proposes input indicators across activity and participation, diversity, education and training, commercial creative activity and output indicators: personal development and community development. These indicators focus heavily on the role of the arts in community development, but can be criticized for showing little of the intrinsic value of the arts, an evidence of challenge in measurement. An appendix is included from a discussion held with local government authority stakeholders a year later, **highlighting the role these activities have in fostering dialogue and the need for stakeholder input**.

The development of these initiatives by the Urban Institute and Silicon Valley in the US and Matarasso in the UK are driven by strong conceptual foundations, backed by rigorous engagement and research methodology. Because they provide reliable evidence for communicating how the arts contribute to local life, they succeed with convincing arguments. They build on a range of research from the last three decades that has documented the influence of arts activity on growing and healthy economic systems, human development, and the social connectedness of cities and regions. Yet, these are only a few examples from the growing literature and theories developing about the arts and civic life. These reports, as advocacy tools, provide strong cases for the arts, with the context and detail required to affect policy change at local government level and could be used to increase support for arts and culture in the future. While these reports are detail rich, we do not see research regarding the public perception of the arts, perhaps their only absence. As cross-sectoral strategies, with some connecting business, government, philanthropic, research, not for profit and arts communities, these approaches are unique to their local contexts.

### **5. Creative Vitality – arts occupations and community arts**

In the state of Washington, when arts leaders wanted to *expand and enrich the economic argument for support for the arts* they needed to better understand their creative economy.<sup>42</sup> Seattle's *Creative Vitality Index* narrowed the notion of cultural vitality to focus on the arts-related activity within the creative economy in a specific geographic area. **An index, as opposed to an indicator, is a single number acting as a mechanism to summarize the content, scope and dynamics of a phenomenon to describe a complex set of variables and data related to this phenomena.**

The index focuses on the creative vitality limited to the arts, not the broadness of cultural activity in general. Creativity only covers activities that engages in arts activities like drawing painting, music, community arts activities like festivals and arts education (60%) and traditional arts occupations like design, fashion, architecture or artistry (40%). It does not include activity that is creative but not part of the economy like

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. pp 7.

<sup>40</sup> Rawson, Brendon. "Creative Community Index, Measuring Progress toward a Vibrant Silicon Valley." edited by Cultural Initiatives: Silicon Valley, 31. Silicon Valley: Knight Foundation, 2006.

<sup>41</sup> Matarasso. "Towards a Local Culture Index: Measuring the Cultural Vitality of Communities."

<sup>42</sup> Research, Herbert. "Creative Vitality Index, City of Seattle ". Seattle: WESTAF, 2007.



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cooking or gardening. The index is built to measure the health of the creative economy from year to year, and cautions against cross-community comparison, **calling attention to the unique nature of each creative 'eco-system'**. This index, and other indicator frameworks can illustrate the relationship between the contributing factors within the system: for example, if there is a significant drop in private foundation contributions to the creative economy and three architectural firms leave the area, what does that tell us?

***When arts leaders wanted to "expand and enrich the economic argument for support for the arts" they needed to better understand their creative economy.***

This methodologically clear report provides us with many lessons. The CVI chose to use existing data from second and reliable sources but admits, *by relying on data streams from other endeavours, there will inevitably be some lost sensitivity to the capture of certain elements of the dynamics of the creative economy of a community.*<sup>43</sup> Additionally, they admit, there is extensive unreported and underground creative activity they cannot track. Even with the warning of comparison, the Creative Vitality Index has now become a national framework, a tool for a reporting against. A comprehensive report card was published by Oregon Arts Commission, presenting easy to understand facts, figures, charts and stories for 2006 and work has also come out of Denver and California, to name a few.

### ***6. Cultural Industries – production and consumption cycles***

Many nations, in light of our globalized world, have recently adopted the policy strategy of 'cultural industries,' better known as the entertainment industry in some economies. This approach is often **tied up with nationalism and the expression of cultural identity** via export of cultural product like film, books, and music. More specifically, from the 1980s to the present, government policy in England and Australia has experienced a shift from the ideology of public support for 'the arts as a public good', to that of government funding for and regulation of the 'cultural industries' and more lately the 'creative industries', on the condition that they provide tangible economic or social benefits.<sup>44</sup> Glow and Johanson suggest that 'cultural industry' is a shift in policy moving away from cultural value.<sup>45</sup> Building on arguments from Holden, Bennett, Throsby, Caust and Cunningham, they warn this an inevitable outcome when policy is driven by instrumental outcomes.

***...market-driven objectives don't necessarily encourage the creative risk and innovation required from creators for a vital sector.***

The 'cultural industries' approach is a **case for the arts to be considered as sound financial investment** and the recognition of income generating capabilities of culture. The case for instrumental value, to some extent like the earlier models of 'cultural vitality' and

some applications of 'culture as a resource', is made with 'cultural industries' together with cultural diversity policies, explaining the economic and social benefits derived from culture. The 'cultural industry' policy model uses the creation, production, distribution of cultural services and goods to generate local wealth and employment. While it is important to note that this model gives value to the creative environment and intellectual property required for production, market-driven objectives don't necessarily encourage the creative risk and innovation required from creators for a vital sector. This is a shift to production, rather than consumption, but there remains a lack of consideration of creator within 'creative industry' policy.

Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, many regions in Canada, as well as The South African Development Community (SADC) all currently use this conceptual framework within their national cultural policy, explained as the 'culture value chain.' The value chain recognizes each of the domains and inputs within a healthy system:

- *Beginnings: the idea, context, rich heritage, funds and finance*
- *Production: the people, processes, sites of productions, facilities, equipment and suppliers, designers*

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp 10.

<sup>44</sup> Glow, Hillary, and Katya Johanson. "Looking for Cultural Value: Critiques of Australian Cultural Policy." *Asia Pacific Journal of Arts and Cultural Management* 4, no. 2 (2006): 259-69.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

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- *Circulation: distributors, agents, marketers, intermediaries*
- *Delivery mechanisms: exhibitors, broadcasters, retail outlets, venues, performance and exhibition spaces*
- *Audience receipt: journalists, trade journals, festival commentary, awards, academies*<sup>46</sup>

SADC builds on the utilitarian model, beyond pure commodification and consumability of culture, by including the supporting goals of community cultural development: human security, human rights, linguistic diversity, indigenous knowledge and social cohesion. These principles recognize pluralist values and the benefits of Culture beyond purely economic outcomes.

Of a similar theoretical vein, it is difficult to conclude whether Mercer's other proposal on cultural indicators (2003)<sup>47</sup> serves to inform or borrows from the 'cultural industry' model in his proposed 'Indicator Floor Plan' below. This paper builds on his previous work regarding cultural citizenship and moves forward to develop a framework of indicators for **sustainable cultural development that includes economic sustainability**. Here, Mercer offers a clever floor plan for the development of indicators that works from the industry model, from creation to distribution. Importantly, he includes knowledge of existing policy frameworks, which is essential in his argument of the 'conceptual handshake between policy and practice.' This link is regularly overlooked in the development of statistical or indicator information. This floor plan was also used in his 2005 Hong Kong Arts & Cultural Indicators report. The Hong Kong report provided extensive wisdom on the state of the arts and cultural indicator sector linking the creative and cultural economy to the creation and production values required for sustainability. Sustainability, in this context, is used to describe production that can be maintained, that will not destroy the economic, cultural or other balances required for continued development in the context of this particular area and culture.

**Figure Two: Mercer's Indicator Floorplan, Tools for Cultural Policy and Citizenship**<sup>48</sup>

<b>CREATION</b>	<b>PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION</b>	<b>PROMOTION AND KNOWLEDGE</b>	<b>DISSEMINATION AND CIRCULATION</b>	<b>CONSUMPTION AND USAGE</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistical data from Standard Industrial Codes (SIC) and Standard Occupational Codes (SOC) and other sources for those professionally involved (employed or otherwise) in cultural creation broken down, as necessary, by sub-sector.</li> <li>• Data, statistical and other relating to training, funding and investment in cultural creation.</li> <li>• Information on the existence of policy frameworks and strategies to encourage/facilitate cultural creation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistical data on production turnover in the cultural sector</li> <li>• Statistical and qualitative data on availability of infrastructure for cultural production (facilities, infrastructure audits, etc.)</li> <li>• Statistical and other data on reproduction of original product</li> <li>• Information on the existence of policy settings and strategies to address infrastructure and other production support needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistical and other data on marketing support, e.g. marketing spend as % of total spend.</li> <li>• Statistical and qualitative data on research capacity and outputs.</li> <li>• Statistical and other data on 'export' capacity (national as well as international)</li> <li>• Information on the existence of policy settings and strategies to address marketing, research and promotional needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistical and other data on audience reach and diversity for produced cultural forms.</li> <li>• Statistical and other data on number of institutions and agencies for distribution of cultural product.</li> <li>• Statistical and other data on use of ICTs and Broadband as a means of dissemination.</li> <li>• Information on the existence of policy settings and strategies to address dissemination and circulation needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistical and qualitative data on diversity of cultural forms consumed and modes of consumption and usage.</li> <li>• Statistical and other data on expenditures on cultural products per capita/family and by demographics.</li> <li>• Statistical and other data on proportions of domestic and international consumption of cultural product.</li> <li>• Information on the existence of policy settings and strategies to address consumption and usage issues</li> </ul>

Economist Richard Florida's controversial creative class theory uses the 'cultural industry' to democratize culture, but it also highlights its economic value.<sup>49</sup> Here, 'cultural industries' depends not just on cultural amenities or 'culture as resource' like museums or public art. His theory suggests **the economy is dependent on creatively generated intellectual property**. This theory underpins the policy framework of 'creative

<sup>46</sup> Joffe, Avril. "The Production of Culture - Towards a Creative Region\_ Cultural Industries in the SADC Region - Findings from Research." Small Enterprise Development and Employment Generation in the Cultural Sector in SADC Region, 2004.

<sup>47</sup> Mercer. "Towards Cultural Citizenship - Tools for Cultural Policy and Development."

<sup>48</sup> Mercer, Colin. "From Indicators to Governance to the Mainstream: Tools for Cultural Policy and Citizenship." In *Accounting for Culture: Thinking through Cultural Citizenship*, edited by Caroline Andrew. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2005.

<sup>49</sup> Florida, Richard L. *The Rise of the Creative Class and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*. North Melbourne, Vic.: Pluto Press, 2003.

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industries.' Florida argues that regional economic outcomes are tied to the underlying conditions that facilitate creativity and diversity. Thus, the creative class thesis suggests that the ability to attract creativity and accept diversity provides distinct advantages to regions in generating innovation, growing and attracting high-technology industries, and spurring economic growth. This argument has been useful in urban planning departments in local government in the allocation of resources for cultural amenities.

In a scathing criticism of Florida, another American policy researcher Steven Malanga makes an interesting point, [*Florida*] *doesn't seem to recognize that the cultural attributes of the cities he most admires are not a product of government planning but have been a spontaneous development, financed by private-sector wealth.*<sup>50</sup>

This is the point that Jackson also makes, that culture is developed with the community, not brought in from the outside. Florida's approach can be criticized for its lack of attention to the often-rich local culture inherent in community, not requiring political construction for success. Malanga also recognizes another part of the cultural sector that is not often recognized in cultural indicator measurement: private or philanthropic roles that are instrumental to a healthy sector.

***Art is not just defined by the market, but the entire value chain. We must be aware of the values we are promoting within policy frameworks and be aware of the rich bias of the arts.***

Mercer, Jackson, and others concur that indicators and results must be clear, relevant and applicable to the stakeholders whom you intend to describe, the cultural sector and the

policy frameworks in which you are working. The relationship of context relevance does not just include communities; it also includes the political environment. The 'cultural industries' approach is frequently resisted by much of the arts community because of its paramount focus on the economy (consumption) ahead of creation. If we connect the 'culture as a resource' paradigm, perhaps it is easier to swallow. One of the UNESCO papers explains: 'it is imperative that poor are included so that they not considered culturally inferior.'<sup>51</sup> This must be included in the broader paradigm: the knowledge economy is exclusive, it only counts activity that where money is exchanged. We need to develop **a paradigm that values activity that does not cost money.** Art is not just defined by the market, but the entire value chain. We must be aware of the values we are promoting within policy frameworks and be aware of the rich bias of the arts.

### ***Conclusions: towards arts indicators in Saskatchewan***

As Duxbury noted, the arts and cultural indicator field is **complex and under theorized.** What is truly lacking is not only clear definitions of art and culture, but a clearer understanding of how the arts relate to our lives. A proposal for arts indicators needs a coordinated effort from arts leaders, policy makers, and the private sector to develop a framework that is informed by research expertise from many disciplines including the arts, but also public policy, economics and sociology. This approach will also help us collect better data, both qualitative and quantitative, about the arts and their relationship to our lives and our environment. Over time, this would not only tell us more about the arts, but about how the public feels about the arts, and will help to inform better policy decisions about the arts.

**In Saskatchewan, a broader ecological model of the arts needs to be considered, inclusive of Saskatchewan's unique arts landscape that acknowledges activity ranging from community arts, creative and cultural industries, a range of indigenous and multicultural practice, and arts excellence.** Saskatchewan arts are a valuable resource that can participate in the wider global knowledge economy, making our province more competitive externally and internally, being able to better resource the development of the arts. ***If we view the arts industry as an ecology,*** we must then consider the relationships of each of these participants to each other, as variables of the whole. Within an arts indicator framework, therefore, we then choose not to measure individual inputs or outputs but they would be seen in context of the greater interrelated ecological arts indicator framework. These are the internal indicators we would look at by collecting data about for the arts industry.

<sup>50</sup> Malanga, Steven. "The Curse of the Creative Class." *The City Journal* 14.1, no. Winter 2004 (2004): 36-45.

<sup>51</sup> Goldstone, Leo. "Cultural Statistics." In *Cultural Economics*, edited by Ruth Towse, xii, 293 p. Berlin; New York: Springer-Verlag, 1992.

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***A narrow range of indicators is much more powerful than a long laundry list.***

This ecological model proposed for Saskatchewan can include Mercer's value chain used within a cultural and creative industries model and Jackson's model of cultural vitality. Combined, this hybrid framework can mix Mercer's wisdom of the policy and practice handshake and Jackson's practicality and inclusiveness of the multi-layered realities of communities.

The Urban Institute's Arts and Culture Indicators Project specifically defines cultural vitality as evidence of creating, disseminating, validating, and supporting arts and culture as a dimension of everyday life in communities. This will be modified to focus on the arts but include culture when possible. While Mercer's model within the creative industries implies economic participation, this model must clearly recognize that arts participation includes activity that does not require exchange of money.

**Figure Three: Arts Indicators Framework: vitality and perception**

<b><i>People, place, and context</i></b>	<b><i>Presence of the arts</i></b>	<b><i>Participation in the arts</i></b>	<b><i>Support for arts</i></b>	<b><i>Public perception of the arts</i></b>
<b>Ideas, creation, artistic expression</b>	# of professional artists (as reported to revenue Canada) # of practicing art and music studios # small arts organizations	Practitioners Teachers Memberships in arts orgs # of affordable arts participation options for amateur artist	High incidence of artists in one area funding investment for creation (arts and gov't funding philanthropic)	Artist role indicator – Public perception that artists have a valued role in society
<b>Production and reproduction</b>	# of arts workers – artistic directors, managers, storytellers) presenters – (reported to revenue Canada) # of galleries, publishers, music	Amount of \$ spent on purchase of art materials # of people who participation in arts programs like open mics, art shows, dance clubs	Public expenditure Public facilities	Integration of funding from another public policy area (ie: from justice or youth to support arts activity)
<b>Promotion and knowledge</b>	# of promoters and knowledge producers – curators, cultural researchers (as reported to revenue Canada) Journals and magazines	Critics, supporters Students # of enrollments in arts schools and university programs # of local festivals and community celebrations	Public expenditure Direct public policy to support the arts Training available Existence of Strong advocates	Knowledge and validation indicator – I am glad a gallery or theatre is in my community, even though I may not use it.
<b>Dissemination and circulation (trade and flow)</b>	# of distributors, agents, marketers, and intermediaries <i>arts and cultural venues, community venues</i> Public space and cultural districts used for the arts	Exchange and provision in local cultural community # of available accounts of public discourse in magazines, radio, public and private stations, TV, web based programs, 'zines', books clubs, etc. Statistical information audiences	Public expenditure Tax incentives for export of goods (ie books)	Bequest indicator – I am glad the arts will be there for my children.
<b>Consumption, audience receipt, usage, and archiving</b>	# of new archived art works (of all mediums) added to archives (all organization, government)	Consumers purchase of books, CDS, art work	Public expenditure Awards	Commitment indicator – The amount of time spent in arts activity - leisure or professional

The preliminary framework presented in Figure Three borrows directly from good practice in the field, to start the discussion. **A shopping list of indicators is not provided**, as the process of the development of the framework, is often as important as the data collected. This framework sketch proposes a value chain, a combination of Mercer's Indicator Floorplan and *SADC Creative Industries Model* identifying each of the stages of the creative economy, that could be inclusive of arts activity, ranging from: a community art festival, to website

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design, or traditional aboriginal dance costume beading, to book publishing.<sup>52</sup> Mercer's model has been broadened to include activity outside of the economic system and to pay attention to the context of cultural rights and place. Most arts activities can follow this chain, stopping along many of the stages. Each of the following genres of arts activity are evolving, but must be considered in arts indicators for Saskatchewan:

- community cultural development and community arts
- festivals, celebration and ritual
- traditional arts, ethnic or multi-cultural arts
- traditional indigenous art and craft
- hybrid and emerging forms of art practice, including underground subcultures and social media
- mainstream definitions of art, defined by professional excellence and traditional art forms
- amateur art and emerging artists
- arts education
- creative and cultural industries: publishing, design, broadcasting

Next, across the top horizon, the Urban Institute's cultural vitality indicator framework is applied to generate a list of locally, context-specific indicators for Saskatchewan.<sup>53</sup> Mercer stresses this need for cultural mapping: that is, documenting the arts landscape. This paper firmly states that there is much more arts activity that exists outside of the mainstream that is not currently documented, funded, and therefore often validated. An inventory exercise can be partially done through this process.

- **Presence of arts opportunities:** Opportunities in the arts exist because of catalysts including a mix of organizations that support arts activity, including not-for-profit arts organizations, art- and entertainment-related businesses, and non-arts groups that engage in cultural activity. Space is an important factor as well, including arts and cultural districts, public buildings and open shared spaces (churches, libraries, community centres, hang outs), anywhere where people can congregate, organize and celebrate.
- **Participation in the arts:** Participation includes a much broader spectrum of activity than is currently documented by arts organizations and funders; it includes a variety of levels of skills, genres, and people involved in arts activity: artists, teachers, students, critics, supporters, and consumers.
- **Support for the arts:** The Urban Institute's research includes evidence much broader than expected, encompassing items such as: public expenditures, philanthropic support, funding from other departments like recreation, parks, corrections, economic development or health, advocates (arts councils or activists), explicit public policies, integration of arts and culture into other policy areas, the media's representation of the arts, and a high incidence of working artists in one place. Some of these items may be appropriate for the next area.

Lastly, a column has been added to the framework entitled 'perception'. This is where more research needs to be done- data regarding public perceptions of arts activities would be placed here. Mercer's work on the Hong Kong indicators in 2005 has adopted this philosophical approach of ecology to look at the arts and culture in relation to the wider environment as well: *An 'ecosystem' of creativity and innovation are now widely understood to reach far beyond their intrinsic values and touch on matters and policy domains such as social cohesion, economic innovation, regeneration, the creative and knowledge economy, inward investment strategies, tourism and quality of life.*<sup>54</sup> This is an even wider approach for us to better understand the arts relationship to the society and the perception of the arts.

- **Public perception of the arts:** This indicator requires development, however data would be collected via survey of another source. Perception regarding how Saskatchewan residents feel about the arts would include data to cover existence (happy the arts exist even if I don't participate), bequeath (want the arts to be there for my kids once I am gone), and option (I think its important that there are options to choose

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<sup>52</sup> Joffe, Avril. "The Production of Culture - Towards a Creative Region, Cultural Industries in the SADC Region - Findings from Research." Small Enterprise Development and Employment Generation in the Cultural Sector in SADC Region, 2004.

<sup>53</sup> Jackson. "Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators." pp 26.

<sup>54</sup> International Intelligence on Culture in Association with Cultural Capital Ltd and Hong Kong Policy Research Institute. "Hong Kong Arts & Cultural Indicators." 124. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Arts Development Council, 2005.

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from, as I have a particular taste in the arts) measures outlined in the Australian and English studies on public perception of the arts.

This framework is a draft model and could be developed to be extremely complex with a multitude of indicators or could be designed to be very simple, to sample within a gross shopping list of indicators representative of a broader and micro-detailed arts mapping exercise for the sector. For now, it will remain a skeleton, before some important questions are considered before the before the undertaking of such a task. As an ecological model, the final framework will be illustrated in a more organic form, with the value chain showing a cyclical and regenerative relationship.

### ***Arts Indicators for Saskatchewan– some initial questions***

#### ***1. Purpose***

Often, there are tensions between indicators designed for advocacy purposes and policy purposes, so your goals for an arts indicator framework must be clear. There may be multiple goals for a set of indicators, however, navigating these priorities amongst the partners involved in their development must happen before the measures are set. Once the specific purpose of the arts indicator set is clarified, then your partners, audience, detailed framework, particular measures and the rest of the development will be much more clear.

Because there are no other provinces in Canada currently involved in arts indicators, therefore Saskatchewan could develop a set of indicators to better understand the health of the arts sector in this region over time (not to compare against other localities). A set of indicators and measures would be developed to review the health of the sector against the previous annual performance. What are your goals?

- To better understand the nature of the arts? To describe both intrinsic and instrumental value of the arts?
- To gather reliable evidence regarding the health of the arts sector to inform policy development or reform?
- To gather reliable evidence regarding the economy of the arts sector to garner additional investment?
- To better understand the perceptions of the public regarding the arts sector?
- To develop a source of information for advocacy messaging?
- To measure the other areas of performance of the arts sector?

#### ***2. Leadership and responsibility***

This type of endeavour requires substantial leadership, commitment of resources, political will and, most importantly, a coordinated approach from arts leaders, elected officials, decision makers and statistical analysts. For the conceptualization stage alone, it is important to have these representatives at the table. Quite often, policy dialogue about the arts is stimulated while the indicators are being developed, by the very engagement of these stakeholders, so get them at the table early!

A new cultural policy has recently been released, perhaps now is the time for a joint approach between government and the arts community to develop an arts indicator framework. Within the Saskatchewan 2010 Cultural policy vision it is stated: "Government should work with the culture sector and communities to provide vision and leadership, and to heighten the value and appreciation of our arts, culture and heritage. Communicate, Coordinate and Collaborate – take advantage of opportunities to learn from one another. Sector development is a shared responsibility... bridge gaps and develop partnerships inside the culture sector and with nontraditional partners. Working together creates new and creative connections. Increased coordination and collaboration can result in new market opportunities and an exchange of ideas."<sup>55</sup>

Secondly, expertise in design and implementation is required, as noted by the extensive list of consultants and academics in the accompanying bibliography. Many of these initiatives have been initially developed in times of crisis, with the support of private or philanthropic support. Later, this 'start up' funding was replaced by public support, as government saw the role this data could play in providing evidence required for policy change. Many initiatives have also been led from university centres, hosted as independent, less political agents.

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<sup>55</sup> Government of Saskatchewan, "Pride of Saskatchewan: A Policy Where Community and Commerce Meet." 2010, pp 13.

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- What organization will lead the initiative?
- What expertise exists locally? Who else can help?
- Who else needs to be at the table?
- Is the time right?

### **3. Conceptualization stage**

This literature review has made the case that a **'conceptual handshake between practice and policy' is required**. A variety of cultural policy frameworks and cultural indicator approaches have been surveyed, many which may seem practical; however, indicators are not a 'one size fits all.' A three-way relationship is required: provincial government policy frameworks and language, local context and content, and a clear grounding in theoretical approach that makes sense for your circumstance.

This theoretical approach may be directly connected to policy or may be a step beyond, as policy objectives are generally vague. This approach must be agreed on by the parties involved, and have a clear message that is relevant and can be understood by stakeholders. This framework needs to stand the test of time: for a minimum of ten years if you plan to get your investment out of it.

- What conceptual approach makes sense for the local context of Saskatchewan? Creative industries, cultural development, cultural vitality? A combination?
- Is this approach appropriate to the socio/cultural landscape and the multiple approaches to the arts?
- What are the corresponding policies this arts indicator framework needs to shake hands with? Are their other key documents, historical issues, tensions or debates that need to inform this process?
- Who has the expertise to work with you theoretically in building a conceptual framework for your indicator set?

### **4. Target audience**

Once the mandate of the project has been determined, the audience should be clear. Ensure indicators are understandable and accepted by the people involved with the implementation outcomes. Indicators should be easy to understand and represent issues of direct concern (for public consumption as well as more technical indicators). Key indicators should be made public on a regular basis to allow stakeholders and the general public to become engaged. This type of 'report card' is a way for the arts sector to engage the public in better understanding the role of the arts in society (see Creative Community Index: Silicon Valley,<sup>56</sup> Creative Vitality in Oregon<sup>57</sup>).

### **5. Data availability**

Many arts and cultural indicator initiatives are limited because they rely on existing secondary source data, for example census data that is reliable and easily disaggregated. Tier two data is less easily negotiated, still from public sources like provincial or municipal governments, but it is collected annually through participation rates through funding, ticket sales at festivals or statistics from police services, transit or schools.

The Urban Institute research has focused energy on understanding what data is available for measures, another important technical issue in the design phase. Jackson provides a technical explanation of four tiers of data:

- Tier one: quantitative data (nationally available statistics),
- Tier two: quantitative and publicly available, annual, specific and able to be disaggregated to local level, like festivals, police statistics, not nationally comparable (immediately suitable for development of indicators),
- Tier three: quantitative, sporadic, episodic data, but single-point statistics (provides examples of how data could be collected),
- Tier four: qualitative anthropological and ethnographic studies of arts and culture in communities

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<sup>56</sup> Trounstine, John Kreidler and Philip J. "Creative Community Index, Measuring Progress toward a Vibrant Silicon Valley." In *Inquiry into Culture Series*, edited by Cultural Initiatives: Silicon Valley, 24. Silicon Valley: Knight Foundation, 2005.

<sup>57</sup> Commission, Oregon Arts. "Creative Vitality in Oregon." 2006.

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(provides rich contextual information about cultural vitality and informs design of quantitative data collection efforts).<sup>58</sup>

Be prepared to design your own survey, but consider who else can collect the data: a partnership with the university? Remember Seattle, by sticking with existing data to cut costs, there was a lot of detail lost, "By relying on data streams from other endeavours, there will inevitably be some lost sensitivity to the capture of certain elements of the dynamics of the creative economy of a community."<sup>59</sup>

- Who collects data already? What exists already? What can be disaggregated?
- Who could collect data for you? Should these people or organizations be partners in the project?
- What other type of information needs to be collected? Where are the gaps?

### ***6. Framework development (indicators, measures, data collection)***

When developing the indicator framework, start in a generative and exhaustive way. Develop a very long shopping list of ideas and indicators that you would like to collect data on. Start big as a way to 'map' all of the existing and potential content to choose from. Many of the initiatives listed in this bibliography will provide these lists for you, but without discussion of the local context and appropriate data sources, this data remains only information. *A narrow range of indicators is more powerful than a laundry list.*<sup>60</sup>

A long-term plan for an arts indicator framework must be sustainable over many years. The indicators must be selected to choose a balance between baseline data, headline indicators and those items you know you will see some real significant change in the data from year to year. If there is no change, is it really worth reporting on?

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<sup>58</sup> Jackson. "Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators.", McKinley. "Cultural Indicators of Development." pp 38.

<sup>59</sup> Research. "Creative Vitality Index, City of Seattle ". pp 10.

<sup>60</sup> Cobb, and Rixford. "Lessons Learned for the History of Social Indicators.", pp. 18.



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