

# **STATUS OF THE ARTIST PROJECT SASKATCHEWAN INITIATIVE**

## **ACTION PLAN PROPOSAL**

JUNE 2001

### **CONTENTS:**

- 1. OBJECTIVE**
- 2. BACKGROUND**
- 3. OPPORTUNITY**
- 4. ISSUES AND OUTCOMES**
- 5. OPTIONS**
- 6. COMMUNICATIONS**
- 7. RECOMMENDATIONS**
- 8. ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**
- 9. RESULTS**

### ***OBJECTIVE***

For the Saskatchewan Government, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Recreation, to implement the Saskatchewan Status of the Artist Project through a three-year plan of action.

This initiative is necessary to respond to the problems and barriers articulated in the 1993 Status Report. The overall objective of the project is the improvement of working conditions, benefits and economic and social conditions for workers in the cultural sector and to bring these workers to an equal level with other sectors. In the process of achieving this objective the environment cultural workers will be improved and the opportunities for economic stability of the sector ensured.

### ***BACKGROUND***

For over 30 years status of the artist has been talked about internationally, nationally, and provincially. In 1980 Canada signed the UNESCO sponsored Belgrade Recommendations on Status of the Artist. Since then other countries have acted in a variety of ways. In Canada, Quebec began with legislation in the 1980's and the Federal government acted in 1992 with policy initiatives and legislation dealing with collective bargaining for artists working under federal jurisdiction.

The federal government has warned “ *it will be difficult to make improvements to the status of Canadian artists without the cooperation and participation of provincial governments.* ” Provinces of British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Ontario undertook to review status of the artist issues. While the actions of the federal government have

addressed one aspect of status, namely collective bargaining issues in federal jurisdiction, many other problems remain unresolved.

In Saskatchewan, implementation of the status project was one of the main recommendations of the Arts Strategy Task Force (1990) and in 1993 a committee of artists produced a report for the government calling for provincial action on legal, economic and social rights for artists, equal access for artists to government programs and recognition of the artist's contribution. The Saskatchewan Status of the Artist Report was the first and most comprehensive of the provincial initiatives. In 1995 / 96 a provincial inter-departmental committee considered the recommendations of the report [H](#) further action was not taken.

The cultural sector represents a work force of the future. Its distinguishing features are high levels of education and training, self-employment work patterns. It is highly versatile and diverse. Artists are knowledge workers, creators and suppliers of both form and content. In the current economy these workers represent valuable assets in meeting the training and education gap now predicted for the Canadian workforce. However, the sector is also distinguished by its inequitable position versus other sectors in areas of social benefits and access to protective rights and programs. These are the issues which status initiatives will address.

## ***OPPORTUNITY***

In 2000 the Canadian Conference of the Arts commissioned a report and action plan for advancing the status project. In 2001 the province of Newfoundland is in the process of reviewing the Association of Cultural Industries report which includes a status initiative as a major feature of an economic cultural development plan. The Federal Government, Department of Canadian Heritage announced in April that the federal Council on Status of the Artist would be reformed. The federal Status of the Artist legislation and the Federal Tribunal (CAPPRT) will be under review in 2002. The Saskatchewan cultural community is mobilized to support and encourage a status initiative.

The Department has commissioned a "Cultural Policy Framework" which will shortly be under review; the status initiative fits within this framework consistent with the objectives of the policy.

The Government has announced a five year plan for a "Strategy for Prosperity" elements of this strategy are directly linked to the status objectives and impact - retaining youth in the province, aboriginal development, income stability, self-employment sector initiatives, tourism, rural development and future oriented skills and enterprise.

In summary, there is renewed interest in action to advance the status project in Canada. This is an opportune time for Saskatchewan to begin the process of implementing the status recommendations of the 1993 Report opportune as well in that the project will provide sustaining support programs to improve the economic viability of the cultural sector and employment opportunities within it. Further it is opportune for Saskatchewan

to make the province attractive to cultural workers and new development, both in retaining the workforce and increasing it.

## **ISSUES AND OUTCOMES**

**EQUITY:** The central theme of the status initiative is to raise cultural workers to the level of other workers in society by providing access to collective protection, economic stability, and existing social benefits. Within this equity theme the issue aboriginal artists and women artists achieving greater access to social benefits and economic development.

**STABILITY AND GROWTH:** In providing economic and social stability issues of workforce growth and attraction of new workers to the province are addressed. By providing an attractive stable and welcoming (by progressive programming and supports) atmosphere the status initiative will enhance the provinces capacity to attract and hold new workers in a highly desirable sector. Further provincial initiative in this area will lever new federal government funding particularly in programs covering sustainability, youth development and rural access.

**COMMUNITY VIABILITY AND DIVERSITY:** The stability and attraction of cultural workers and thereby cultural activity will enhance the viability of Saskatchewan communities both directly and indirectly; directly in the provision of jobs and economic activity, indirectly in providing spin-off economic activity and training resources, to say nothing of the contribution to the quality of life. This enhanced community viability and diversity directly and indirectly affects the employment options for youth and the ability to retain youth. Culturally healthy communities attract and hold people.

## **OPTIONS**

1. Await further provincial developments, put the Saskatchewan initiative on hold. *Outcome:* Saskatchewan would lose the opportunity to take advantage of current climate and would further retard the development of the cultural sector socially and economically.
2. Review the Report internally within the department without taking any direct action towards implementation, that is, contain the development of the status project as a department process. *Outcome:* this places the department at greater risk without a community partner, it would slow the development of the project as in the 1995/96 experience
3. Take the initial steps to implement the status recommendations by advancing the plan as proposed: the formation of the advisory commission and launching the status initiative. *Outcome:* cooperation and partnership between the government and the cultural community is fostered, steps are initiated to ensure positive occupational environments for cultural workers thus advancing all workers in similar circumstances, Saskatchewan gains a prominent position in development of the status

project nationally. Funding sources are levered by increased activity and focused coordination.

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

This action proposal assumes the active cooperation of the community with the Department and the development of new means of communication and partnership. A special opportunity currently exists in Saskatchewan, one of the only provinces in which a provincial arts alliance exists. The Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, working together with the Canadian Conference of the Arts, offers a unique opportunity for the government of Saskatchewan to work in an innovative partnership to develop status initiatives at both the provincial and federal levels.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the Status Report Recommendation A2 be implemented by the Minister appointing an advisory commission. The mandate of the commission be as proposed in A2 or modified. The commission could be renamed for purposes of clarity the *Cultural Workers Equity Advisory Commission*.
2. That the following action plan be implemented.

## **ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

### **First Year - Saskatchewan status initiative**

#### **Formation of the Commission:**

- The Minister announces the Department's intention to establish the Commission in July / August 2001 as part of the governments response to the Framework Report on Cultural Policy.
- The Advisory Commission be established by order-in-council by September / October 2001. Announcement of the Commission appointment takes place in conjunction with, or coincides with, the Saskatchewan Arts Alliance Annual General Meeting in October 2001.
- The cultural community is consulted as to the appointments to the commission; proposal of the Report is five commissioners.
- The Commission is established with contracted officer responsible to the Commission. Estimated cost in the first year \$100,000 covering five person commission and support staff officer, salary / benefits travel, per diem, and miscellaneous costs.
- At Canadian Conference of the Art's National Policy Conference in November 2001 the Minister discusses the objectives and processes of Saskatchewan's status initiative.

### **Initiative Tasks:**

- Review of the 1993 Report and new relevant material, and establish core recommendation priorities. To support and speed this review SAA will provide an initial review and commentary.
- Research and review options for leveraging federal cultural funding for aspects of the status initiative in partnership with SAA.
- Establish working groups, which would include key industry stakeholders, to review and update the recommendations. (Many of the recommendations of the 1993 Report can be grouped into specific working areas. For example, economic development or education and training recommendations could be grouped. There may be functioning organizations representing the stakeholders.)
- Establish working relations with other government departments affected by the status recommendations.
- Establish and seek implementation of those recommendations that can be achieved through policy initiatives or / and programs that can be expanded to include artists and cultural workers within their present scope. Take immediate steps where quick solutions are available.
- Initiate review of legislative and regulatory options within the status recommendations.
- Initiate discussion with relevant national, provincial and international organizations to hold an international conference on Status of the Artists in Saskatchewan in the fall of 2002. Relevant national and international organizations would include Canadian Conference of the Arts, CAPPRT, Department of Canadian Heritage and UNESCO.
- Evaluate and report to the Minister on a regular basis, including an annual review.

### **Second year:**

#### **Initiative Tasks:**

- Implementation of core recommendations and legislative and regulatory projects. This would include Saskatchewan Artists Code.
- Host the proposed Status of the Artist Conference in Saskatchewan, potentially November of 2002.
- Review provincial options for reform of tax conditions for self-employed workers. Establish a working group with relevant national level organizations and government to review federal tax options.

### **Third year:**

#### **Initiative Tasks:**

- Review options for implementation of the remaining 1993 report recommendations.

- Establish a working group to assist in this review that would include major cultural organizations and artist / workers collectives.
- From the above step determine the implementation plan for further work on status of the artist: that is equity issues, social benefits and economic development.
- Review the status initiative implementation plan in relation to the provincial “Strategy for Prosperity” plan.

## **RESULTS**

**Equity:** Achievement of equal access to benefits will enhance the cultural workforce and advance stability. Aboriginal artists and women artists will have greater support and visibility, thus enhancing their position in relation to available development.

**Social:** Provision of access to social benefits will enhance the security of the workforce.

**Economic development and spin off benefits:** More employment opportunities in direct and indirect aspects, particularly advancement of opportunities for youth and aboriginal artists. Leadership in this area will lever federal cultural funding for such programs as cities of culture, youth training, sustainability and making connections.

**Diversity:** Improvement of the position of artists will encourage present workers to remain in the province and expand the diversity of the sector, and indirectly the whole community, laying the ground work for long-term growth and prosperity. Through this improvement options for youth, aboriginal and women artists will be expanded.

**Stability, sustainability:** Stability in the sector will encourage new development and sustaining programs will enhance the province’s capacity to attract new workers and new economic development.

**Leadership:** Saskatchewan will have demonstrated leadership in this area to the credit of the province and enhancement of its attractiveness to new business and new development.

**Community life:** Community pride and positive winning attitudes are inextricably bound to cultural options in the community and development of youth. “The spirit of the community is carried by its artists.”

## **THIRD YEAR ACHIEVEMENTS TO BE MEASURED:**

- ✓ Stability, retention and expansion of cultural workforce.
- ✓ Employment opportunities in the sector.
- ✓ New development in the sector in small business initiatives and expansion of current base.
- ✓ Advancement of tourism opportunities and economic growth through cultural activity.
- ✓ Increased aboriginal cultural activity, small business and employment.
- ✓ The status initiative project measured as means to achieve the objectives of the “Strategy for Prosperity”.

*Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, June 2001*